

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.

1813  
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. <sup>1. Sent.</sup> In this capacity <sup>first</sup> I was sent to Anger, France, <sub>P. 7</sub> 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, <sup>Breschov</sup> 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 Bruschoy 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 Nowosolna, 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 Novisoncz, 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 <sup>finimage / -> sense</sup> - 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 Borkomorevski. 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, Pozak, 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. <sup>(2)</sup> the Jewish leaders learnt about it, <sup>(3)</sup> 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 <sup>in</sup> assume you know, they had a multitude of political parties, groups, orientations, etc. The most important groups were the Bund and the Zionists. <sup>- in/inage -</sup> 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 wanted to see me, <sup>(4)</sup> apparently they wanted to use my services. Did <sup>you</sup> I want to see them? "Yes, I will". <sup>R.9</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. ] <sup>10.10</sup>



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 <sup>68.13</sup> [ So now for the meetings. ] <sup>p.10</sup> A meeting was arranged, <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>1944</sup> ~~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 ~~him~~ 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 <sup>10</sup> [ 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 <sup>id</sup> 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, <sup>as a matter of fact</sup> 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 <sup>President of the</sup> 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. *fin / page 5.*

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

*fin bob I.*

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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 <sup>I</sup>you understand <sup>it</sup>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 desperation?

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, <sup>Jews</sup> 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 <sup>actually</sup> 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 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 <sup>two</sup> nightmarish 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 <sup>may</sup> ~~must~~ 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 <sup>is</sup> Allied leaders. At that time I did not know, and they did not know, that I would reach <sup>also</sup> America ~~too~~ - they did not expect it. So, British Government leaders. The message was: <sup>the</sup> 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 <sup>purely</sup> 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. <sup>></sup>

C.L.: That is what they said?

K. Yes <sup>for many &</sup> "The Allies cannot disregard the uniqueness of our problem."  
<sup>→ a. sent.</sup>

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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. <sup>And now,</sup> If there is no such evidence, (~~they~~ are to announce) publicly, officially, ~~that~~ certain objects in Germany will be bombed, destroyed as <sup>a</sup>retaliation 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." <sup>it-</sup>

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. <sup>whatever</sup> 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?"

<sup>by word</sup> 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?) <sup>for / in May 8 -</sup> in London. Probably they cannot do too much. 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. <sup>Jonow,</sup> 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 Mikhowalczyk*.

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, Mikowalczyk* and the Polish leaders *Jews*. I was specifically forbidden <sup>by law</sup> 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 IRGUN 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 Sikorski, to issue orders that those arms will be given <sup>in June 1944</sup> to the Jews.

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

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

Bobine n° 302

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 10

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* *cannot my hand in 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 commander-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 *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

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.

Bobine no 303

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

KARSKI - 11

*Ms*

C.L.: Who asked you to visit the Warsaw ghetto? Who organised the visit, and why did they want you to go there?

K. Between those 2 Jewish leaders, somehow - and this belongs to human relations - I took to the Bund leader, probably because of his behaviour. He looked like a Polish nobleman, a gentleman - straight, beautiful gestures, dignified. I think he liked me, also, personally. At a certain point he suggested it. He said "Mr Vitold, I know the Western world. You are going to <sup>deal</sup> be with the English. You will give them your oral report. I am sure it will strengthen your report if you are able to say, I saw it myself. They are this way. (Apparently he knew English) <sup>Now</sup> We can organise for you to visit the Jewish ghetto. Without great difficulties we can organise for you to visit the Jewish camp in Belzec .

C.L.: An extermination camp?

K. Yes. He said "I do not think you will run into some extraordinary risk, but of course you may say no. Would you do it? If you <sup>do</sup> go to the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, I will go with you, <sup>to</sup> be sure that you will be as safe as possible. To Belzec we have good contacts. Will you do it?" I said I would. A few days later we established contact. He told me, "Of course no fancy dress, don't shave before, we have to look as much as possible the way they look over there. It will be a very unpleasant experience for you, but it will be useful." It was very easy. No accident of <sup>Whatever was in mind</sup> ~~any kind~~. <sup>By</sup> At that time, by the way, the Jewish ghetto as it existed in 1942 until July did not exist any more. Out of approximately 400 000 Jews, in the meantime some 300 000 were already deported from the ghetto. So within the outside walls there were practically some four units. The most important was the so-called 'Central ghetto'. They were separated by areas inhabited by Aryans, some not inhabited by anybody. The story was, there was a building constructed in such a way that the wall which separated the ghetto from the outside



*he glibly said*  
-25-  
world - the back of the building was a part of that wall. So the front was facing the Aryan area. Very simply, there was a cellar with a tunnel and they were smuggling food, whatsoever, the Jews coming out and going in. We went through this tunnel without any kind of difficulty. I was not disguised, he was not disguised, what struck me - completely different man.

C.L.: The Bund leader, the Polish nobleman?

K. The Bund leader, yes, the Polish nobleman. Fantastic. I went with him - he was broken down, a curving little Jew. A different person completely. He looked like a Jew from the ghetto, as if he lived there all the time. Apparently this was his nature, this was his world.

C.L.: And did he wear the 'Davidstern'?

K. Oh yes. I too. Only children did not wear it.

C.L.: So you had to wear it?

K. Sure, naturally. So we walked in the streets. He was on my left. We did not talk very much. So now comes the description of it, yes?

Well. Naked bodies on the street. I asked him, "Why are they here?"

C.L.: Corpses, you mean?

K. Corpses. He said "Well, they have a problem. If a Jew dies and the family wants a burial they have to pay tax on it. So they just throw them in the street."

C.L.: Because they cannot pay the tax, cannot afford it?

K. They cannot afford it. So then they say, "Every rag counts", so they take their clothing. Then, once the body is on the street, the Judenrat has to take care of it. Women publicly feeding their babies, they have no breast, just flat. Babies with crazy eyes, looking.

C.L.: Did it look like a completely strange world?

K. This was not a world, it was not humanity. The streets full - apparently all of them lived in the street. What was the most important - everybody

offering something to sell. Three onions, some cookies, selling, begging each other, crying, hungry. Horrible children, some children running by themselves or with their mothers, sitting. It was not humanity, it was some hell. This part of the ghetto, German offices were there, in the Central ghetto. If the Gestapo released somebody, and Gestapo officers, they had to pass through the ghetto to get out. So there were also Germans, German traffic. The Germans in uniform - they were walking - silence. Everybody froze until he passed. No movement, no begging - nothing. Germans - contempt. Apparently this is subhuman. They are not human. At a certain point some movement starts, Jews are running from the street I was on. *for / in my 12*  
The Bund leader - "Follow me, follow me".

Bobine n° 304

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 12

K. So now, apparently he understood what was taking place. "Follow me, follow me". We jumped into some house. He just hissed "Open the door, open the door". They opened the door. We moved in. The windows give on to the back of the street. We go to the opposite. Some woman opened the door says "all right, don't be afraid, we are Jews". He pushes me the window, says "Look at it, look at it". There were two boys, nice-looking boys, Hitler-Jugend. They walked, every step they <sup>made</sup> take the Jews disappearing, running away. They were talking to each other. At a certain point a boy reaches to his pocket and without even thinking, shoots them. Shouts "Aaah!" Broken glass. Shouting "Aaah!" The other boy is saying something, congratulating him. They go back. I was paralysed.  
The Jewish woman - probably she recognised that I was not a Jew - embraced me, said "Go, go, it does not do you any good, go." So we left her house.

Then we left the ghetto. So then he said, "You did not see everything, you did not see too much. Would you like to go again? I will go with you. I want you to see everything. Next day we went again. The same house, the same way. Now I was more conditioned, so I felt other things. The stench, the terrible stench everywhere, suffocating. Dirty streets...

(Cassette n°13)

(suite de la bobine n°304)

K. Dirty streets, nervousness, tension... bedlam. This was Platz Muranovsky. In one corner, children playing with rubbish, throwing the rubbish to each other. He said, "They are playing, you see. Life goes on, life goes on". I said "They are simulating playing. They don't play".

C.L.: It was a special place for playing?

K. In the corner of the Platz Muranovsky. Open.

C.L.: Were there some trees?

K. There were a few trees... So then we just walked the streets, we did not talk to any body. We walked probably for one hour. Sometimes he would tell me, "Look at this Jew" - a Jew standing there, without moving. I said "Is he dead?" "No, he is alive, Mr Vitold. Remember, he is dying, he is dying. Look at him. Tell them over there you saw it, don't forget". We walk again. It was macabre. Only from time to time he would whisper, "Remember this, remember this". Or he would tell me: "Look at her". Very many cases. I asked, "What are they doing here?" His answer: "They are dying. That's all right, they are dying", and always "Remember, remember!" We spent perhaps one hour, then we left. I could not take any more. "Get me out of it!" I never saw him again.

C.L.: You write in your book that you (K) can .

K. I was sick. Even now I don't want... I understand your rôle... I am here...

I don't go back in my memory. I could not take any more. But I reported what I saw.

C.L.: You could not take it?

K. It was not a world, it was not part of humanity. I was not part of it. I did not belong there. I had never seen such things... nobody wrote about this kind of reality. I never saw any theatre, I never saw any movie... this was not the world. I was told that these were human beings, but they did not look like human beings. He embraced me then, "Good luck, good luck". I never saw him again.

[ La fin de la bobine-images n° 304 a été tournée avec la 2ème caméra et correspond à des plans-coupe 157

fin b.b III

Bobine n° 296a

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 13

chevigné

C.L.: You are a unique witness, because nobody was ever able to enter an extermination camp like Belzec and come back alive, and there are no survivors of Belzec .

K. There are, or there are not?

C.L.: There are not.

K. There are a lot of them!

C.L.: No, there are not. There are no survivors of the Belzec extermination camp. 600 000 Jews perished in Belzec in about 8 months, and there are no survivors.

It is not true, what they say. There is - there was one 2 years ago. He lived in Canada. He was 95 years old, and he was in Belzec for four months.

(C.L.) At the time you went to Belzec , he was there. He escaped in November.

K. Well, a few days later contact was arranged - with some Jews whom I did not know, of course. We took a train to Belzec .

C.L.: From Warsaw?

K. From Warsaw. (It is rather a long trip) <sup>A</sup> about 4 hours as far as I remember. (am)

C.L.: Belzec is 150 km south of Lublin...

K. Yes, so Sobibor <sup>was</sup> is north of Belzec , which will enter the picture.

So, we came to Belzec . Of course, I did not know what to expect. We went out of the station. First of all, I went disguised, a little. They were using...

C.L.: Excuse me, you had no idea what you would see.

K. No. Well, I had heard about Belzec , I knew there was a camp. What I heard, by the way, at that time, even from some Jewish people, was that this was what was called at the time a 'transitional' camp. As I understood after the war, at that time they were liquidating the camp as such. By November there was no longer a camp. Whatever the reason, I don't know, but apparently the last shipment of Jews were taken out of Belzec and either shifted to Sobibor , which became an extermination camp; or Jews who were taken from the Warsaw or other ghettos would be for some reason shifted to Belzec for a short time and again go somewhere else.

C.L.: At the beginning, Belzec was settled to kill the Jews who were living around Belzec , the Jews of L'Vov , of all this area.

K. Yes. My point was...

C.L.: They were not from the Warsaw ghetto, the Warsaw ghetto people were sent to Treblinka, Belzec was made for the people of Cracow. The people of Cracow were sent to Belzec .

K. I was not even aware of all these details at that time.

C.L.: Did you know they called all these camps 'transitional' camps, Sobibor and Treblinka too, it was the name they gave. This is a specific (?), as

a matter of fact.

K. So there I went...

C.L.: And Belzec started to be operational as a death camp in March 1942.

K. Yes, only at the moment I visited it, it became apparently truly transitional, which means the Jews were shifted somewhere. The Germans announced that they were going to forced labour, they were going to have good conditions...

C.L.: This was to the Jews.

K. They said this to the Jews, yes. The Germans always, if they could avoid open trouble, they wanted to avoid it. They wanted everything in as much order, of course, as humanly possible.

So then, from the station we walked to the camp. No difficulty whatsoever. I had documentation, my guide had documentation...

C.L.: Can you explain this precisely? You were disguised?

K. I was an Estonian militiaman.

C.L.: Because the camps were guarded by Ukrainians

K. Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians, Polish policemen and regular German Gestapo, SS men etc.

C.L.: So they were mercenaries of the Germans.

K. Yes. Of course at that time, which is understandable, the Germans even for this kind of work wanted to spare as much of their own men - they wanted to send them, I imagine, to fight or to work - not for this business. So they were using others.

C.L.: What was the colour of your uniform?

K. Yellow. With some sort of a parity (?) boots, black cap I remember. Undistinguishable otherwise, with no sign that it was Estonian whatsoever. The documentation was that I was an Estonian militiaman.

C.L.: The trip had been arranged by the Jewish underground? Or by the Polish underground?

K. No, by the Jewish underground. All this part - as a matter of fact I

did not talk too much to the Poles while still in Poland. They knew that I had established contact with them. They might want to stop me, you know, not to endanger me.

C.L.: So it was specifically on behalf of the Jews.

K. Yes. This was my Jewish chapter, so I followed their instructions. So, by whom was it organised? I imagine, by the Bund leader, because he initiated this matter. But he was not there, some unknown Jewish fellows. So, we walked, and then we entered the camp. This camp was totally different from the Warsaw ghetto. Mainly, total confusion. Everything in movement.

C.L.: You say 'we'. You and who?

K. A Jewish guide, but a guide whom I did not know who established contact with me.

C.L.: But you did not walk inside the camp with this Jew?

K. What's that?

C.L.: You did not walk inside the camp with this Jew?

K. Oh, yes! He had some sort of identification papers. And then I followed him, he goes his way, I go his way, only I was following him and he led me to some official and I just showed this. Of course, counting I am an Estonian I don't speak bad German whatsoever and he went on some identification papers, whatever it was, I don't know, Judenrat, whatever; he entered as a civilian. Only I was disguised. Then I entered the camp.

Bobine n° 305

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 14

C.L.: Professor Karski, I must tell you that I understand very well that it is impossible, what I am asking from you now, because I ask you to describe the undescribable, to describe what was at this camp. I just

want you to know that I know how difficult it is.

K. I understand. We entered the camp. As a matter of fact that camp, at the point where I entered it, had no wall. Wire was around it; barbed wire. Whether there were walls in other parts of it, I do not know. I spent in that camp probably no more than 20, 25 minutes - again, I could not take it. The difference between this camp and the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw was that here there was total confusion. The Jews, the population of it, were going somewhere. As I saw it at that time, from the station railroad, as I understood it, there were some rails leading to the camp. Rather primitively built, but I could recognise it, with some sort of a platform. And then the train, which consisted of <sup>some 40</sup> cattle trucks. The train facing the camp would move two or three cars, and stop again. From the gate I was standing and observing militiamen, Gestapo Germans - "Juden 'raus! Juden 'raus!" - directing them to the tracks.

C.L.: You had to cross the camp before arriving at this place...?

K. Yes, I saw this from the camp.

C.L.: ...where you were able to see the loading of the rails.

K. Where I was able to see the loading of that primitive rail.

C.L.: Yes, but before this you had to cross the camp. Can you describe how you crossed it? What you saw at the time when you crossed it?

K. I did not go very deeply into it, because the guide, apparently, and the Estonian wanted to show me this scene. The train was facing that particular gate. We entered the gate, and then we stayed there observing what was happening.

C.L.: How long was it between the moment you entered the camp - through another gate - and this point? Was it a big camp?

K. I entered through the same gate. I did not wander in the camp. I did not go deeply in the camp. From the Belzec camp, my recollection was the shipment of the Jews from the camp to the trucks in the train. The second



thing, again, I could not take it. Then I was physically sick.

C.L.: Can you say why it was impossible to take it?

K. In this confusion, those shouts - "Juden 'raus, 'raus!" - pushing them through the platform to the trucks. Then the train would move the two trucks away, pushing them there. The room in one truck was for some 16 horses.

C.L.: And 40 men?

K. Yes. Military trucks, at least 100, 130.

C.L.: The people who were loaded into the freight cars - according to you they were working inside the camp since a long time?

... These people, these Jews - were they working inside the camp since a long time? How many days, how many hours?

K. I only saw total confusion. They did not look like inhabitants, they looked, as I interpreted it, as some sort of transitional camp. They brought Jews from somewhere, they are taking them somewhere. It did not look to me like an inhabited, regular... At this point I was standing in the camp, it was total confusion. Shipment of the Jews to the train. What I understood at the time - where are they taking them? They were apparently taking the Jews for forced labour. That horrible, horrible scene. Those shouts, despair, mothers dragging their children. They enter the truck - they cannot reach it, they are too weak.

C.L.: They were pushed, forced?

K. Gestapo, militia, beating them like pigs, like non-humans, more and more...

C.L.: Were they shooting with guns?

K. Yes. To terrorise them, but in the air, mostly. Total hell, total hell. And now comes the story. The train moved a little, by three trucks. On floor there is a whitish powder. I asked the Estonian militiaman, "What is it?" He says, "That's all right, it is for their hygiene. This is quicklime. So when they die there is no problem, they will not contaminate the air whatsoever. They are getting what they are... receiving. They

are getting their share. Well, Himmler delivers his goods. He said publicly 'The Jews will die', and they will die in agony. They will die."

"Where are they taking them?" He said "Don't you worry, they will die".

What I understood was that the train went somewhere, and they actually died in these trucks. Some of them were taking, later I learned, to Sobibor.

And in Sobibor they were finished.

C.L.: They were gassed.

K. Yes. Why they did not do it at that time in Belzec , I don't know.

Because they were doing it before, in Belzec , for months. They actually were gassing the Jews before.

C.L.: There were six gas chambers in Belzec .

K. Yes. The date now is important. When later on, trying to investigate how it was, apparently at the end of October or November the camp (was) liquidated completely. The last remnants of the Jews shifted to Sobibor. and secondly, at that last stage Jews from other ghettos passed through Belzec being shifted somewhere.

C.L.: But the quicklime in the wagons - it was to kill them?

K. It was for an apparently hygienic purpose. They were dirty, they were smelling. If they died, decomposition. And secondly, from what I understood, they died in agony. They had to urinate, and of course it would burn their feet if they were barefoot. <sup>for / since 14</sup> At the same time, from the Nazi standpoint, it was to purify.

C.L.: Yes, but to kill them too.

K. And to kill them! And to make them die in agony, some sort of... undescrivable.

Bobine n° 306

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 15

C.L.: Professor Karski, I know that the Jewish underground organised for you - and this is rather unbelievable - to visit inside the extermination camp of Belzec in November '42. I would like you to try to recall, and to describe what you saw in this death camp. As a matter of fact, this has never happened, we have no testimonies whatsoever of anybody allowed to enter the extermination camp of Belzec, or other camps too, Sobibor or Treblinka, and coming out alive. This is something absolutely extraordinary, and probably very difficult for you to remember and to describe. But please try.

K. Evidently, the whole visit to Belzec was organised by the Jewish underground. Evidently they had many means to organise this kind of trip. I did not know the details of how they did it. I entered the camp in the company of an Estonian militiaman, wearing the uniform of an Estonian militiaman and having some sort of 'Ausweis' that I was allowed to enter the camp and leave the camp, having shown the Ausweis. I approached the camp from Belzec, got the uniform, guided by another genuine militiaman. In who evidently was a scoundrel./our conversation he took me for a man who, as it was called at that time in Poland, 'dealt with the Jews,' which meant through bribery, money, trying to save some (?).

C.L.: This was a usual traffic in Poland, dealing with the Jews?

K. Very well known. Of course I have had no dealings with this kind of person, so I do not know whether there were many cases or if it was occasional, but the term 'dealing with the Jews' meant you were trying to make some money - blackmailing the Jew in some cases, denouncing the Jew in some cases, helping the Jew to escape wherever he wanted in some cases, selling him

a false passport, false Arbeitskarte, whatever it was. Generally it was called 'dealing with the Jews'.

Approaching the camp, at half a mile or 1 km, already I heard wild shouts, tumult. <sup>12:00 PM.</sup> I already realised I was approaching some unusual situation. Of course, I had had experience, I was twice in the Warsaw ghetto.

C.L.: Did you know when you went there that Belzec was a death camp?

K. Yes. The Bund leader told me that I would see something I had never seen and which I would never forget, and that I was going to see a death camp, actually a death camp. A Jewish ghetto was not a death camp. It was only degradation, a way to death. I was going to see a death camp now. "You will see it, and you will tell them later on. They will believe you - you saw it", assuring me "we will do everything possible, and you will be safe. You will get over it, we will get you out" <sup>12:00 PM.</sup> Approaching the camp now, hearing those inhuman... shouts, shots, I approached a railroad which seemed to me rather primitively built. It was not one of the main railroads. It was on my left. The camp was on my right. There was no wall like in Warsaw. Essentially barbed wire. I don't think it was electrified, but genuine barbed wire. The Estonian militiaman leads, so on my right I have the camp; on my left side I see the track. There were several exits - some of them primitive, mainly barbed wire between two poles - the walls could be open, outside then. But there was apparently a main entrance; the gate was solid, posts solidly built, and then the continuation of the barbed wire. I entered the camp not through the main gate, through one of those primitive entrances. Apparently the militiaman had instructions that for one reason or another I want to see as much as possible what is going to happen. So already within the camp he directs me to what he called a 'good spot', which was...

C.L.: Did you ask him the meaning of the screaming and shouting you heard on the way?

K. Oh yes, on my way. His answer was, "The Jews are hot (?). You will see, today the Jews are hot". I remember he said something: "There is a new batch which is going to be processed today". So he leads me to the area of the main gate. Now he whispered to me "I am going away a little; if something happens, remember: You don't know me, I don't know you." So at this point I am alone. From the main gate there was... the main gate at this point was open, again, outside. The gate consisted of two parts, and it was open outside. From the gate, in front of it there was a cattle train. I counted 46 trucks. I had no difficulty counting them because the train was moving. There was this ramp, a platform, from the gate leading to the train, almost directly. As you know, a cattle train does not have steps, ] it is only on a high level so it is not easy to enter the train. If you want to leave it you have to jump down. In that part of the camp - and I do not know how many, it must have been 5 000, 4 000, 6 000 - this cannot be described. Not humanity, crowds, some collective moving body, the Jews - women, children, men - shouting, quarreling with each other, fighting against each other. Evidently hungry. Evidently not knowing probably what is happening here. I specifically remember some Jew totally, completely naked, standing. <sup>In June 15.</sup> Why was he naked? I don't know, perhaps he threw his clothes(away), perhaps people took his clothes. In this agony...

ISA  
28a

pano  
de la  
Karsh

[Le son de la bobine 306 est synchrone en 2 endroits avec la 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra chargée avec la fin de la bobine-images n° 304]

[Bobine 307: le son de la bobine 307 est parfois synchrone avec celui de la bobine 308 correspondant à la 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra ; plan de coupe 16 H 7]

Bobine n° 307

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 16

K. I understood my rôle; it was 35 years ago, at that time I was strong... *et*

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 17

*Chose perdue en 1948*

K. At that time I was strong. I understood my mission: I was not supposed to have any feelings. I was a camera. And I did not have any feelings for some time. I did not see humans. There was a crowd, out of reality - a crowd which had many heads, legs, many arms, many eyes, but it was something like a collective, pulsating, moving, shouting body. I was observing this. From the back of this crowd, shots, pushing the crowd with butts, shouting "Alle Juden heraus!", pushing them to the front. By the gates: shots, "Raus! Raus!" through the gate to the platform; they were moving on to the platform.

C.L.: It was very different from the Warsaw ghetto? A completely other scene?

K. Oh yes, yes. In the Warsaw ghetto there were humans - misery, degradation, but they were living. Those at that point were not humans. They did not live; they were moving, they were shouting, beating each other, scratching each other. By the gate, pushing them through the gate, on to the ramp, towards the trucks. They had to climb, probably 120, 130, I don't know, into the truck. There was no room, so again they were pushing with butts, shots, pushing them into the trucks. Jews in the trucks helping them, then they did not want to help them any more, so then the Jews who were on the ramp were raising their bodies, pushing them on their heads, into the trucks. Two trucks filled, the train moved. Two empty trucks - the same

procedure. The Jews now realised that they apparently had to fill the whole truck. They did not want to go, those who were on the ramp now did not want to enter, they wanted to go back but they could not because the crowd was pushing them forward, the Jewish crowd, because from the back they were pushing them, shooting from the back. So it was unbelievable, unbelievable. How long did I stay there? I don't know. And then I could not take it any more. At a certain point I saw that they were humans. I went back, in the direction of the gate by which I had entered.

C.L.: What do you mean? Suddenly you realised yourself that they were human?

K. I did not want to see them as humans. I controlled myself - I don't know, 20 minutes, half an hour, however long I stood there. I did not want to have any feelings, I did not have any feelings. I was just seeing something which I was supposed then to tell the people.

C.L.: Excuse me for these questions. Do you think the people had been waiting inside the camp for a long time already?

K. I think, as it looked to me, that they might have been there for days.

C.L.: Starving?

K. Starving - well, apparently no food - I saw how they looked. Starving, hungry, insane, mad - you saw their eyes. And then again, unlike the Jewish ghetto they were actually fighting each other, scratching, quarreling, swearing, this moving, moving... some organism, with legs, eyes, noses, whatsoever. I controlled myself. I realised, again, with no feelings, look; look; look; no feelings. Then, after a certain time, apparently it came too deeply into me - humans! they are individuals here! And then I lost control. I realised I don't know what I would have done - I might jump at some Gestapo and start fighting, I might go with the Jews to the train - I realised things got out of control with me. I went back in the direction of the gate I came in by.

C.L.: Do you know what happened in the train?

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(26)

K. The train. I saw it because I was by the gate. Empty, the train moves, and then by the ramp, for a fraction of whatever time, the truck is empty. I see it, the floor covered with some white powder. What was this powder? And then I learned - quicklime. Why quicklime? The Jews who were being pushed into the train, they were to die there. But the Germans, apparently, wanted to avoid disease. ] The Jews evidently had to urinate, whatever, so for some sort of... it is horrible to say for hygienic, for medical reasons, there was quicklime in there. The Jews were standing on the quicklime. Apparently they kept them until they died, when they moved the whole train. And they had no disease, and the atmosphere, the environment was not diseased by the decomposed bodies, there was less smell, less stench.

C.L.: (?)

K. So I went to the gate. The militiaman understood there was something funny; he goes by me, without any difficulty we left the camp. I go back to the store, and then I was sick. ] FIN CHOIX PROTECTION

C.L.: This was a problem of Belzec . By the time you went to Belzec they had stopped the gas chambers. There were six gas chambers in Belzec , but they could not handle the corpses. The corpses were buried in huge pits dug in the soil, and we know that the pits were (?) and the corpses' liquid was running <sup>down</sup> out. And that is one of the reasons they stopped the gas chambers in Belzec.

(fin de la bobine 307)



(Cassette 13B)

C.L.: So they killed them like this, <sup>in the train</sup> with quicklime, because they were already half-burnt and it was easier for them.

K. In this camp, it is evident, I saw only a fraction of the camp from the gate I entered to the main gate, keeping as near as possible to the barbed wire. What was deeper in the camp, I never went there. I saw some barracks, <sup>the</sup> I saw a solid (perhaps 8 feet) high fence...

Bobine n° 309 (première caméra)

[La 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra est toujours chargée avec la bobine 308, en deux endroits synchrone plan de coupe 18 et plan de coupe 19]

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 18

K. So then I left the camp.

C.L.: Did you see the loading of the 46 freight cars?

K. I counted them, but I left before. I had the opportunity because they were open. I did not stay to the end. So then I returned to the store. By the way, at that time it was full day. People were coming to the store. I entered the store - of course the owner knew me - and I just asked him, "Could I use your kitchen?" Apparently the store-owner was living there, there was a kitchen with a sink. I was insane. I was crazy. I entered the kitchen, and as if in - I don't know - self-preservation, animal, I actually disrobed myself and started to wash myself, with soap, everything. I was washing myself! I remember I was washing my shoes, started to wash my shoes! So I stayed there, and then the man entered. He was furious: "What a mess you are making here!" Then he said "All right, alright" - he understood, probably. So I took the uniform, my clothes, and stayed there. People were coming to the store. Then he came again. I just asked him one

Q. Yes. "May I stay here tonight? I could not go back." He said "Sure, you can stay over night". So I stayed overnight.

Q. Was there a stench all over the area?

K. No, it did not reach the store. The store was in Belzec, in the town, but going there - say at half a mile, 1 km - yes, the stench was there when I approached the camp and when I was leaving it. I stayed there overnight, but during the night I was sick. My problem was some sort of crazy vomiting. I vomited food and blood, it was crazy. I finished the night over there, and still I stayed a few hours. Then the guide came who had brought me from Warsaw. Apparently he had stayed the night somewhere in his own encampment. He took me back to Warsaw. This was my (?) story.

FN BELLEC

KARSKI - 19

Q. How long time with Shmuel Zigelboim - did it take place a long time after you arrived in London?

K. No. I arrived in London either by the end of November or the first days of December.

Q. How?

K. 1942. From the first moment I began to report. I could not report to Sobolevsky, he was in the United States at the time. The Deputy Prime Minister, <sup>1</sup>Nikolaiczek, I began with him. My mission in London was difficult. I consider I was doing very well because I understood my rôle. In London I was not, so to speak, a human being; I was purely a camera, a recording machine. I carried messages from one political party to another, from one individual to another, from some political party to the Prime Minister only. Those messages...

Q. All this was purely memory?

K. Purely memory. I had a very good memory. Those messages - and I knew it -

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were sometimes contradictory. The Socialist Party would say "Our vision of future Poland: this time the working classes will not allow themselves to be manipulated by another dictator like Pilzuvsky. We are strong; the working class will take up government, and we are prepared for it. We will do it". The Peasant Party giving messages to the peasant representatives: "75% of the Poles are peasants; we feed this nation. We were never allowed to govern Poland. This time we are ready; when Poland emerges, Poland will have a peasant Government and we will take the fate of the nation into our hands". So I understood this - that I was purely a recording machine. I was instructed and sworn in by every political party, by the delegate, by every individual that I will not comment on their messages. I might answer questions, but on my initiative I was supposed to be only a tape-recorder.

C.S.: But it must have been a horrible experience, the killing(?)

K. I did very well. There was not a single complaint against me. I reported precisely, I had everything in my head. I reported correctly - there was never a single complaint. Eventually rumours started that the emissary from Poland told different things to different political leaders. But Prime Minister Schikovsky eventually took care of it. At one of the Council of Ministers when the problem started that "Just recently we received information from Poland" (one leader says); "We recently received information from Poland of a different nature"... General Schikovsky eventually told me "Lieutenant, we have a problem, but I straightened it out, because I told them: You did not receive information from Poland recently, you received messages from your own people to you. Be careful, keep it straight. Don't say that such is the situation because we don't know what that individual you have in mind - all of you - told you. [He did not know himself". At that time I was thoroughly convinced this was within my structure; I was to go back to Poland again, so I was extremely careful. Precision, no comments unless I was asked for some personal] comments, I must do well. I wanted to go

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2<sup>nd</sup> cam  
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back to Poland. I liked this kind of work, and I think I was successful with it. I got the highest military decoration for my work.

So now. The first days. I reported the first, I remember "I have a message for the President of the Republic". "What do you have?" "Well, let the President of the Republic pass the information to the Government. My instructions were to the President of the Republic". <sup>And they</sup> I recognised all of this, I had no difficulties. One of the first contacts - it must have been 2, 3 or 4 days after I began to circulate - as I was instructed: "You have messages for the Jewish leaders. What leaders?" I said "Three individuals: Shmoel Zigelboim, Dr Schwarzbald and Leon Grossfeld. Zigelboim was the first. The message I carry was given to me in a joint session with the Zionist leader and the Bund leader. <sup>Could</sup> ~~Can~~ I see both of them together?" Yes, it was so organised. Schwarzbald did not show up, for one reason or another. I saw him for the meeting with Zigelboim. Zigelboim is alone. Zigelboim. <sup>in image 19. same.</sup> I saw him in the government office, Stratton House.

Bobine n° 310

La 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra est chargée avec la bobine 308 et tourne la coupe n° 20

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 20

K. Stratton House was one of the main Government offices. I entered the room. With my mission, what was also very important was to size up men. I saw in Zigelboim a man - with this kind of man I had no dealings, frankly, very much, either in my underground activities or before the war. (Before the war I entered the Polish diplomatic service). Zigelboim, first: in every respect - his face, the way he walked, his gestures, his language - typically proletarian. He could be an unskilled worker. I did not know this kind of

2<sup>1</sup> cam.  
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person in my life in Poland. Next: very Jewish. His Polish was not literally Polish, unlike the Bund leader in Warsaw, who spoke beautiful, literal language. In Zigelboim I had before me a proletarian, so I was careful.

C.L.: Did he have a Yiddish accent when he spoke Polish?

K. Yes.

C.L.: And he looked very Jewish?

K. He looked Jewish. He had rough hands, you know... nothing refined about Zigelboim.

C.L.: How did he look?

K. Rather smallish, not tall at all. Not fat, physically. Nervous. Agitated.

C.L.: Very nervous?

K. At the beginning, no. But then during the conversation, most of the time he was pacing the room. When I spoke about the ghetto and Belzec, on numerous occasions I would stop. He said "Why don't you talk? Talk! You came here to talk!" From the very beginning we didn't start well. I entered the room, he got up, we shook hands. He asked me in a rather sarcastic way "Mr emissary, I was told you want to see me. What do you want?" I answered, "Mr Zigelboim, I don't want anything. I have messages, and I am supposed to give you messages. They concern Jewish matters in Poland and I am going to see Dr Schwarzbald, and Dr Grossfeld."

"Jewish messages? So who sent you here?"

"I had a meeting with the Bund leader and the Zionist leader. They introduced themselves in this". He looked at me. "Well, you don't look Jewish to me.

They sent messages; are you Jewish?"

"No, I am not Jewish".

"All right. Well, so what?"

I gave him the messages, one after another, as I described previously.

C.L.: All the requests?

K. All the requests, yes. He interrupted me several times-- "But I know all

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about this!" At that moment I didn't realise he did know, through the radio, despatches etc. He was not impressed. "I know all about this!" So then I said <sup>well,</sup> "The Jewish leaders organised for me two visits in the ghetto and one visit in Belzec camp] and my instructions are to report on this, particularly to the Jewish leaders.

He said "The Jewish ghetto? Belzec ? How did you get there?"

C.L.: The ghetto?

K. The Warsaw ghetto and then Belzec.

C.L.: He said "The Jewish ghetto, Belzec"?

K. The <sup>Warsaw</sup> Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, and then camp Belzec. He said "You were there? How was it organised? Who organised it for you?" I told him how actually it was organised, and then I gave him the material. My information, what I saw. At that time I was a machine. I reported very often with closed eyes. Sometimes I did not want to see to whom I was reporting.

C.L.: You did not want to see to whom you were reporting?

K. Sometimes, yes, I did not want to see, I was with closed eyes. I was conditioned very well. It was not my first mission, as you know from my curriculum of wartime activities. With Zigelboim, when I began to describe this he got up and paced the floor. Most of the time now he paces the room. Sometimes I would stop. "Why did you stop! Talk! This is what you are here for!" I controlled myself very well. Then he started to ask me questions. I described the Jewish ghetto and those children, the dying Jew.

"Did you talk to any of them?"

I said, "This was not my business. I did not talk to any of them."

"Why didn't you talk to them? Are you not interested in how they felt?"

It was altogether something like a challenge against me.

C.L.: He was aggressive?

K. Oh yes, and rather unfriendly. I said "Mr Zigelboim, it was not my mission.

I talked to the representative of the Bund, the representative of the Zionists

in Poland, not to the Jews in the ghetto. I was not interested in talking to them. This was not within my instructions".

"Are you interested so much in the Jewish problem?"

I said "I don't know, Mr Zigelboim, now I don't know what I am interested in. I lost myself, I am not interested in anything. I was sent here to report." At a certain point I got upset: "Mr Zigelboim, you have no right to ask me this kind of question. If you want to listen to my report, listen to my report. If you want I will walk out."

"All right, so talk! Talk, man! Talk!" He called me 'Mr Emissary', but rather sarcastically, 'Mr Emissary'. Talking again about the ghetto in Warsaw, the camp in Belzec.

C.L.: Did he ask many questions about Belzec?

~~No~~

K. Lo. He was walking. And then I saw him, something like disintegrating.

Apparently he didn't see himself what I saw. He started to ask me questions. Some of his questions: "How did you feel about it?" My answer was, "I had no feelings. I am not interested in my feelings." And again I said "Mr Zigelboim, you have no business asking me these things. Do you want to listen to my report?"

"All right, man! Talk! Talk!" Walking like a nervous, mad man, nervous, disintegrating almost, minute after minute. He sits down. He gets up. And then comes the point, after the ghetto and Belzec. Before, he interrupted me several times: "I know all of this, I know all of this!" So then he says:... <sup>fin /image.</sup>

Bobine n° 311 [première caméra: Karski]

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 21

K. At a certain point he sits behind the table - I am on the other side of the table, sitting as well. He is in front of me. And then, as if with hatred, frustration, after I had given him all the material, he says:

"So what can I do! What can I do that I am not doing? I do everything! I do everything possible. So what do they want me to do? What can I do?" So then I, also half in anger at that time, I gave it to him. I closed my eyes. "Jews are dying. There will be no Jews. What is the use of having Jewish leaders? Let the Jews go to the most important officers, Allied officers. Let them demand. If they are refused, let them go out. Let them stay outside. Let them refuse drink. Let them refuse food. Let them die. Let them die a slow death. Let humanity see it. Perhaps it will move humanity." And then he jumps: "Madness! Madness! They are mad! The whole world is mad! Madness! Madness! They are crazy! They do not understand anything! They will not let me die! They will send two policemen, they will arrest me! They will take me to an asylum! They will feed me artificially! This is madness! Madness! They are mad! Everybody is mad! So I have to do something? I don't know what! So what can I do? I have to do it, but I don't know what! So what to do? Madness! Madness! This is a mad world! I have to do! I don't know what to do! To whom do I do?"

I was sitting there. Then he sat down and began somehow to be more rational. as if more friendly. He began to ask me questions, how am I doing? Is it very difficult? Personal questions. He knew about my previous missions. Is it difficult for me? Rather more friendly. Then I left him.

C.L.: Do you think he was already in complete desparation?

K. This is the point. For a moment I did not have any doubt. He is not mad, he is totally normal. I did not attempt any kind of what today we call psychiatry. He was a leader, only he was lost in helplessness.

C.L.: Helplessness?

K. Helplessness. And apparently now, with my report, this showed up. He looked to me almost hateful towards everybody: the Polish Government, the Allies, the war. It was this total helplessness which he could not take. He could not control himself. Then of course I knew, everybody knew about



Zigelboim, he was a prominent leader. He was a Member of the Council, etc. He was a genuine leader doing his best, only in that particular conversation somehow we did not establish common ground. He was the only man I reported to.

C.L.: It was a long conversation?

K. Yes. It must have been long. As a matter of fact I was embarrassed. He was keeping me there.<sup>n.</sup>

C.L.: He said "I know everything", and he was keeping you.

K. After his 'breakdown' he started to ask me personal questions, sympathetic. And then questions about Poland, about how the Bund leader looked, the Zionist, did they look undernourished - human questions. Then the conversation was long. What I don't mention in my book - and it may sound cynical, but remember at that time I was a machine - in the second part of the meeting I was thinking only about one thing: if he keeps me longer I am going to be late for my next appointment. At that time, all my life consisted of: from one contact to another, from one man to another; eating, sleeping, reporting. If possible, being <sup>coming</sup> on time for the meeting. All the people I was reporting to were very important people, and I was an insignificant little man. My mission was important, so I kept myself under control. And this shows perhaps that at that time I was in a way morally corrupted because, with my previous record I took it (so to speak) for granted that whomever I saw, everybody was showing me respect or admiration. Everybody was complimenting me. With Zigelboim, whatever I said a few minutes ago, it was as if he did not want to show it. He was suspicious.

C.L.: Do you think that the demands you asked from him - the demands for the Jews in Poland - had an influence on his suicide, which he committed exactly six months later?

K. He committed suicide on May 11, 1943. This was just a few days after the Warsaw ghetto was totally destroyed as a result of the genuine Jewish

declaration of war against Germany. Only a few days later he committed suicide. He left a letter; of course I have the text of his letter, addressed to the President of the Polish Republic. In this letter he reproached the Polish Government, the Allied Governments. ] *cher abrie*

[ La fin de la bobine 311 est alors chargée sur la 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra et correspond aux plans de coupe 22 et 23 du son de la bobine 312, première caméra ]

Bobine n° 312 (première caméra)

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 22

C.L.: Do you think that the requests you made to him from the Jews in Poland had a direct influence on his suicide, which he committed exactly six months later?

K. I don't know. I prefer to think not. What can I tell you? It is not a very comfortable idea to live with. As you mentioned, and I mention in my book, I think about it. But I defend myself as much as I can. But I will tell you about Zigelboim.

...I cannot escape it. Very often I have to think about what happened to the Jews during the Second World War. It may be a result of still self-discipline and emotional self-defence. In my memories, even when I teach my classes - and I have to touch the war situation in <sup>Eastern</sup> Central Europe - I don't go back to my memories of the Jewish ghetto or of Belzec. I don't speak about it.

C.L.: You avoid it?

K. I avoid it. When I teach, when I speak, when I discuss, when I think myself, as you can imagine, for years I had nightmares, I disciplined myself; the Jewish problem during the Second World War - in my mind - is the

death of Zigelboim. This is what shows, this total helplessness, indifference of the world, indifference of the world, and the Jews perishing. The Jews perished, and you have a Jewish leader. His name is Zigelboim. And he says "I am a leader, a Jewish leader, and there are no more Jews. I go with them. They don't need leaders!" The death of Zigelboim for me shows more than anything else the Jewish tragedy of the Second World War. About him I speak. You forced me into this interview about the ghetto and Belzec ; I don't go there when I have free will. I do go to Zigelboim. I did not have one single class in 20 years of teaching the course 'Governments and Politics of Eastern Europe' where, when I come to the war situation, I did not tell my students "There was Zigelboim!"

C.L.: Do you remember his last letter?

K. Oh yes. The letter was friendly, as a matter of fact, written in a rather matter-of-fact way. No violent recriminations, a very measured style. It was addressed to the President of the Polish Republic, but also to the Allied Governments and the public opinion of the world, stating what I said: The Jews perished, he will go with them. And then he hopes that perhaps his death will arouse the consciousness of the world. (I know his letter!) Then he finished the letter in a very humane way: 'Goodbye, friends. I wish you success. Goodbye'. He signed it 'Shmoel Zigelboim'. He took gas in his apartment.

C.L.: This was after the end of the uprising.

K. A few days after the end of the ghetto. The Jewish war against the Third Reich.

C.L.: (?)

the European Jews, the Holocaust. I would like to know among all the official political leaders to whom you delivered your report, did you have the chance to mention specifically the Jewish problem, this destruction of the Jews. I assume you had a lot of other things to report, but because the subject of this film is the one I have just named, I would like to know what possibilities there were for you to talk about this, who was interested and how? And how did they react?

23A  
PM

K. I understand the subject of this film you are making. You hope it will be shown eventually, probably the second part. You want to have testimonies, interviews, for historical records - for archives. This I understand, and I must be very precise. And now I ask you to bear with me, and to understand my possibilities and my mission in the so-called Western 'free world'. Dealing with Polish Government leaders, political leaders, Polish Jewish leaders. Because of the nature of my mission I travelled, as you know, several times, because within the statute of my mission was I as going back to Poland. I was a very important man; I was a hero. Everything was at my disposal. I met the most important men; they catered to me. To whomever I spoke I could say "I have not finished - I have more to say". On many occasions I was in such a situation with General Schikovsky, whom I saw at least five times: "General, I have not finished yet". He would say "Lieutenant, my secretary will inform you when I will be free for you". So with the Polish side of my mission I had great possibilities to report, and I did report.] You are asking the second part of my report. We have to make a distinction now: with the English or Americans certain political leaders, like Jewish leaders - they listened to me, they even let me report. With those great intellectual leaders - poets, writers etc. - frankly I felt free. [I would press myself, 'still there is more, still I want you to know more' - H.G. Wells, Koestler, this kind of people. Speaking about Government leaders in Great Britain and the United States, I met all of

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23A

them as a result of the Polish Government's <sup>usually the Prime Minister's -</sup> request. "Mr Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I wish that you receive <sup>final map</sup> a most recent agent from Poland, who has material of interest to His Majesty's Government".

Bobine n° 313

WASHINGTON - KARSKI - 24

K. Even at that time I had suspicions, having met some of those leaders - and whenever I met, I speak only about Government leaders, they were the most important people in the United States and in Great Britain - sometimes I could not avoid the suspicion that altogether they <sup>show</sup> saw me as a matter of courtesy. In London the Prime Minister asked them to see some recently arrived agent from the Polish underground, and his report might be of interest to His Majesty's Government or to that particular Minister or Government leader. In the United States it was the Ambassador, of course - everything was in his hands. You must realise that at that time I was not allowed to have any contacts. I had to report to the proper offices of every man I met. I was free to go to the theatre, to a night club, to dinner - I had plenty of money, of course - to buy myself new clothes, or whatever. I could not have contacts on my own initiative, only as instructed: "You are going to see such-and-such a leader". The same in the United States, of course. I had to live in the Embassy, I was not allowed to live in a hotel. I lived all the time on the premises.

C.L.: How did it happen with Roosevelt?

K. With President Roosevelt. The Polish Ambassador in Washington was informed about my existence in London. Before coming to London I did not expect to go to the United States. It was the Polish Ambassador who in his reports

to the Prime Minister suggested he thinks that it may be useful if, before returning to Poland, Karski will come secretly to the United States. The Ambassador is pretty sure he will get him in touch with the key members of the Government and the proper people. He hopes the President himself will be interested in his report.' Once we received this report, General Schikovsky told me "Lieutenant, you go to Washington before you go to Poland".

I arrived in Washington...

(fin cassette 13)

(cassette n° 14)

I arrived in Washington, Ambassador CZIKANOWSKI already totally acquainted with my material. I stayed at the Embassy. As you can imagine, every morning and every evening we talked about what happened in Poland. The most intimate talks were when there was a sort of ritual in the evening after dinner, before going to bed. The Ambassador would walk his dog, GROLZER, and I would go as the Ambassador always invited me to come with him. Then we would, most intimate, even Madame CZIKANOWSKA- she may see this film, she now lives in Belgium - even she was not present. And then, sometimes, (he told me?) his worries and his fears, and all that. At a certain point he tells me, "Johnny , listen: the President of the United States wishes to see you". He briefed me. As a matter of fact, all the time he criticized me on one point, mainly: "Johnny , you are inclined to talk too much. You must acquire precision. You have precision, to be concise. You realise the people I am going to introduce you to are the most powerful people. Poland is a minor concern for them; they have the whole world. They waged this war, so be careful, concise, precision. Concentrate rather on their questions. Try to answer their questions."

The President comes. He gives me the same briefing: "Now you be careful. You are going to see the most powerful man on this globe. This man evidently is busy. He thinks in terms of the war, of humanity."

Roosevelt had this inclination, which Ambassador ~~CZIRANOWSKI~~ instructed me.

"He thinks that after this war the human race will be organised in such a way: no more wars, and he will play a key role in this arrangement. So, again, be brief, be concise. I am not going to take part in the conversation. I will go with you, as required by diplomatic protocol. I have to certify your veracity, introduce you to the President, and then I will sit quietly. So don't rely on me. I will be unable to help you in any way. It may be that the President will ask me a question, and then I will answer the question. So I don't know how the conversation will develop. I don't know how long you will stay with the President. You are on your own, now be wise."

With this kind of briefing, the limousine brings us to the White House.

The Ambassador is punctual, the President is punctual. His secretary leads me to his office. I see Roosevelt. He looked like a world leader.

C.I.: A world leader?

K. A world leader, yes. It struck me he was more than the President of the United States. His formulations, his gestures - he did consider himself a world leader. He sits behind his desk. Behind him of course all the American flags, very impressive, the whole wall covered by them. A very high chair - the 'Grand Seigneur'. I was warned, 'He will not get up to shake your hand, he is crippled'. He shakes hands. "Please sit down, Mr Ambassador. Mr Karski, I know about you. I have been informed of your great contribution to the Allied cause. I am sure that you would like me to be informed about things in Poland. You realise that throughout my entire mission, for me the Jewish problem was not the only problem. For me the key problem was Poland, , Soviet demands, Communists

in the underground movement, fear of the Polish nation; What is going to happen to Poland? This was the emphasis.

C.L.: Of your mission?

K. Yes, of my mission, and of my concern, naturally. I speak to the President in those terms, expectations, fear among the leaders. "All hope, Mr President, has been placed by the Polish nation in the hands of Franklin Delano Roosevelt".

C.L.: You said this, in proper words?

K. Oh yes, in the same words: not "the President", but "Franklin Delano Roosevelt". He sits. I describe to him, thinking how much time I have. Then I come to the Jewish problem. "Mr President, <sup>in my map. 24.</sup> I have also a mission on behalf of the Polish Jews...

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"Mr President, before having left Poland I was charged with this mission by the most important Jewish leaders. They organised for me <sup>two</sup> visits in the ghetto. I saw an extermination camp, the name is Belzec - B-E-l-Z-E-C - Mr President, the situation is horrible. The point is that without outside help the Jews will perish in Poland. The end of them". I remember every second of this conversation. "The allied nations..."

C.L.: What did he answer specifically?

K. He enters the picture now - nothing.

C.L.: This was the end of your report? It came at the end, the Jewish...

K. I never had the chance... So now, his answer: "The Allied nations are going to win this war! No more wars! Justice will be done. Your country will be alive again, more prosperous than before. Criminals will be



punished. The United States will not abandon your country. Poland, as recompensation, will receive East Prussia, or a part of East Prussia.

No more corridor." Now to the Ambassador: "What do you think about it?"

Of course Mr Ambassador loves it, only he wants all of Eastern Prussia!

Not part of Eastern Prussia! A short conversation. Then: "When you return

to Poland you will tell your Polish leaders that this country will

never fail them. They have a friend in the President of the United

States". And now he asks me questions. Do you know the questions he

asked me? "Do I understand correctly, young man, that before the war

Poland was essentially an agricultural country?"

"Yes, Mr President; it was so".

"From what we understand of the Russian campaign, the Germans had to

use a tremendous number of horses. Did they take those horses from

Poland? Because with your agricultural economy, you need horses."

"Mr President, yes". He asked me other questions. I had no chance,

except my initial statement, to say "Mr President, listen to me"... Well,

you don't speak to the President of the United States. No Jewish problem

was mentioned until the end of the conversation, which lasted one hour and

20 minutes.

C.L.: Excuse my insisting, but this is my 'Thema'; about the Jews, did he ask specific questions?

K. No. Not a single one. What I said, I said only on my initiative as an opening statement, when he asked me "I presume you want to pass certain information, bring attention to it."

C.L.: You said everything about the Jews at the end. And he did not ask one specific question?

K. Not a single one.

C.L.: How do you explain this?

K. I don't know. He did make a gesture; what was the significance of this

gesture? Was it a gesture, or was it an expression of good will of the centre of power, who does not deal with particular problems? I don't know until today. Wiser people than I could not decipher FDR, he was a great man. After we left the White House, of course we returned to the Embassy. The Ambassador gave me a typist, he went to another room with another typist, and his instructions: "You write your report, and I write my report. Johnny, be careful. Everything counted. If you noticed his smile, put it in the report. We just saw the centre of power of humanity. And then we will compare our reports. I have to send a report to London." So we cooked up whatever it was. Then comes the problem. I think it was the next day, very soon, it might even have been the same evening. The Ambassador sees me and says "I have got a message from the White House. Apparently the President would like you to see the following individuals, and he wants you to pass to them all your reports. On that list - it was a long list - some individuals: there was Rabbi Weiss, whom I saw already, by the way; Goldmann; Waldmann I remember; as a matter of fact there was a Jesuit priest, a certain Father Walsh...

C.L.: And there was a Justice of the Supreme Court?

K. Yes, Justice Frankfurter I saw on the recommendation of President Roosevelt. There were other names: Secretary of War, Simpson; Secretary of State, Gordon <sup>HALL</sup> ~~HOPE~~ (?); Archbishop Sperman(?); Archbishop Moonie(?); Archbishop Strich; the Apostolic Delegate, <sup>CICOGNIANI</sup> ~~Tecklenburg~~ (?)...

C.L.: The delegate from the Pope?

K. The Apostolic Delegate from the Pope. I interpreted this, as did the Ambassador, that the President was interested in the Jewish problem. Only, on his level the problem was not, so to speak, under his direct jurisdiction. He sent me to the people who, he considered, could actually take some action, knowing that I was sent on his recommendation.

C.L.: Did you yourself feel the tragic discrepancy between the demands, the

hopeless expectations of the people in Warsaw - the Jews you met - and the result of this visit, where there was no communication?

K. I understand. History has passed, 35 years have passed, so I understand your film archives. After my audience with President Roosevelt I was so overwhelmed by this fact: I reported to the President of the United States. I did not think about anything else. I was totally overwhelmed. Years passed, of course now I think about it: what was the significance? I don't have the answer. Perhaps he wanted, expected others to do, perhaps they did do things. None of the Allied leaders, on the level on which I met them, would tell me what he was going to do. Perhaps if I want to be sceptical or cynical, perhaps he passed the buck. Perhaps it was an act of courtesy towards the Polish Ambassador: I am doing something within your man's mission. *I don't know.*

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K. A few days later the Ambassador tells me: "Johnny, you are going to see Justice Frankfurter. He will come here."

C.L.: Justice Frankfurter was a member of the Supreme Court?

K. Of the Supreme Court. Again he gave me his briefing- "He will come here". Except Cabinet members, usually people came to the Embassy. I lived in the Embassy. So, "He will come here". Again he gave me his briefing: "Now, Johnny, again be careful" - he always briefed me - "all knowledgeable people consider this man the most brilliant man in the Administration. As a Justice of the Supreme Court - the institution is very important, but for years he is a confidant of the President. All America knows about it."

C.L.: And he was a Jew?

K. He says "Johnny, he is a Jew, so be sure he will be interested in your report". So I wait. On the appointed hour - I remember it was between breakfast and lunch, in the morning - on time, I was sitting in the living room, the salon. The Ambassador comes from the first floor with Justice Frankfurter - a little man. He did emanate brilliance. Very alert, his eyes. Unimpressive physically, a little man, Jewish-looking. Very friendly, smiling, towards me all the time friendly. Several times he called me 'young man' during our conversation. We introduce ourselves, we sit down.

He in front of me, <sup>SLIKANOWSKI</sup> ~~CITOGHANI~~ on my left. Justice Frankfurter starts:

"Mr Karski, I have been invited by my very good friend your Ambassador to come here to see you. I was also advised that I should see you. Apparently you have some information which I should know. What do you have to say?"

~~My~~ answered "Sir, I don't know what you are interested in. Could you ask me some questions? It would be easier for me."

"Young man, do you know that I am a Jew?"

"Yes, Sir. Mr Ambassador told me about this".

"Well, tell me about the Jews. We have here many reports. What happens to the Jews in your country?"

I become a machine again. I give my (?). The man sits. I remember he looked as if smaller and smaller. Somehow like (?). Looking at the floor; he listens, he does not interrupt me. I report, as you know from this film. Usually it lasted fifteen, twenty minutes. I told him: the Jewish leaders, the ghetto, Belzec ; those fifteen, twenty minutes passed and then stop. Justice Frankfurter sits, looks at me still at this moment. Then tells me the following: "Young man, as I mentioned I have been informed about your activities; I was told that you came out of hell, and I was told that you are going back to hell. My admiration for people like you. <sup>(A W)</sup> Young man, I am no longer young. I am a judge of men; men like me, men like you must be totally honest. I am telling you I do not believe

you!"  
CZIKANOWSKI

~~CROENMAN~~ breaks in: "Felix! What are you talking about? You know about him, he saw the President, he was checked and rechecked ten times - in England, here. Felix, he is not lying!"

Frankfurter: "Mr Ambassador, I did not say that he is lying. I said that I don't believe him. These are different things. My mind, my heart, they are made in such a way that I cannot accept it. No! No!" <sup>(s'amenir)</sup> I murmured something, that it was a shock to me. He began (?). Eventually he did ask me a few friendly questions.

C.L.: Did he tell you "I know the human soul..."

K. "I am a judge of men. I know humanity, I knew man! Impossible!" Was he sincere?

C.L.: That was my question

K. Was it an act? A theatrical act? What could I do? How can you argue with Justice Frankfurter? ~~CROENMAN~~ tells me he is a powerful man.

C.L.: He was even a key figure in the Jewish community, the centre of power there too.

K. Yes. when he asked "Mr Karski, do you know who I am?" I said "Yes, you are an associate Justice of the Supreme Court." And then I cracked a little: "My Ambassador also told me that you are a very important man". Justice Frankfurter looks at ~~CROENMAN~~, and then he introduced himself.

C.L.: That was the meaning of this, according to you - "I don't believe you".

K. I think he believed me, of course; I have no doubt he did his best, whatever he could have done. He took it for granted I was going back to Poland; probably he wanted to show me that the world is unprepared, this is an unprecedented problem, a horrible problem. Probably he wanted to impress upon me...

C.L.: Did he ask you specific questions, like Zigelboim?

K. No. he did not come to Zigelboim. *fin 26*

<sup>Answer</sup>  
C.L.: No, I am not talking about Zigelboim. If, like Zigelboim, he asked specific questions?

Bobine 316

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K. On a certain day I received instructions: "You are going to see Lord Selborne" - the instructions coming from the Prime Minister, as always.

"Who is Lord Selborne?"

"Public opinion does not know about it of course, but he is in charge of the British Government of the European underground movements."

C.L.: A member of the War Office?

K. Of the War Office, it was called, yes. Organisational problems; radio; communications; financing - on behalf of the British Government he belonged to this. The instructions were: it is worth while seeing him, to report; he may be helpful in every respect. He is an operational officer. I go to see Lord Selborne. An old man by that time already, a typically English aristocrat - self-disciplined, precise, friendly, correct, receiving me as he should.

C.L.: Your report?

K. My report. He was essentially interested in the operations of the Polish underground movement. Diversion, sabotage - what was my evaluation? What do we need? Does cooperation with the British work correctly? I come to the Jewish problem: "Your Lordship, I have also a mission on behalf of the Jews. I visited the ghetto twice, I visited the camp at Belzec. Would your lordship like to hear? I more or less told him the whole story, and then, at a certain point, I finished. Lord Selborne, with typical English correctness, benevolence, tolerance, rationality.

answers: "Mr Karski, during the First World War we were propagandising that the German soldiers were crushing the heads of Belgian babies against the wall. I think we were doing a good job. We had to weaken German morale, we had to arouse hostility towards Germany. The war was a very bloody war. We knew it was untrue. Speak about your problem, your report. Try to arouse public opinion. I want you to know you do contribute to the Allied cause. We want this kind of report. Your mission is very important".

He was clearly telling me, "Mr Karski, you know and I know it isn't so".

C.L.: "It's not true, but it's good for propaganda?"

K. Yes

C.L.: "The same problem as in the first World War?"

K. Yes

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C.L.: I understand you conveyed the requests of the Jewish leaders to all the people you met in England and the United States. Without entering the details of the answer of each one, what is your general appreciation of their answers? Were they interested, or was it considered by them as a minor affair?

K. The Allied Government leaders - British and Americans - did not show interest in details. They did not ask me questions to elaborate on my generalities - "horrible, unprecedented, I saw it," etc. The people I met were actually the key people in the British and American Governments. Evidently for them, an altogether Polish problem was not an essential problem. With a Polish problem, a young agent coming from Poland reporting on the Jews. The Jews had no country of their own; they were not members of the Allied Council.

C.L.: Do you think you succeeded in your report, in the way you reported,

do you think you succeeded in conveying the most essential fact - that it was the extermination of a whole people?

K. Yes. In most cases in no more detailed way, as you stated yourself this moment. In most cases I had no opportunity to enter into more details.

C.L.: Why? Because you had no time?

K. Because they did not ask me. How do you tell Eden, Roosevelt, Stimson (1),

Cordell HALL: "I want you to listen to me! I want to give you details!"

C.L.: For instance, with a man like Eden, did you have the opportunity to describe the death camp at Belzec and the story of the train with the quicklime?

K. No, none whatsoever.

C.L.: Impossible?

K. Impossible! I was counting every minute, and Dr Rettinger, sort of chief of staff for General Schikovsky, was with me. Again, I was briefed by him: "I don't know how much time Eden will give you. We had to work very hard for him to receive you altogether". So, essentials, essentials. I did state to Eden, "I was in the ghetto twice, I was in Belzec" in general terms horrible, total helplessness - "They are perishing, without outside help they will perish, all of them. This is what the Jewish leaders asked me to say, and this is my conviction".

Eden answers: "Mr Karski, do I understand you correctly? That your report on this matter you passed to the Polish Government?"

"Yes, Sir".

"I presume the Polish Government will inform His Majesty's Government on this subject. His Majesty's Government will take proper action". This was his answer.

C.L.: And Cordell <sup>HALL</sup> ~~HALL~~, Secretary of State of the United States?

K. Cordell <sup>HALL</sup> ~~HALL~~? Total lack of interest all together.

C.L.: How was this lack of interest shown?



K. My original statement, the same. Belzec, the ghetto, 2 or 3 minutes in the most general terms. The conversation was switched - again, Poland. "Does the Government control your underground, by the way, does the Government support? What do you expect from the American Government? You realise we have the problem with the Soviet Union. Are your leaders aware of the territorial questions?" How do you tell Cordell Hall, "Sir, stop! I want to talk!" You understand?

C.L.: And the delegate of the Pope, ~~Benignus~~ CICOGNIANI?

K. Benign. Archbishop. Very friendly, <sup>in June 28</sup> treating me...

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C.L.: And the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Giovanni ~~Benignus~~ CICOGNIANI?

K. Very Friendly, benign. He called me several times "My son", commending my activities. I reported to him again the Jewish part. He was very much interested in the Catholic Church, the Catholic faith of the Polish people under the present horrible circumstances. "Do they still follow the Holy Mother Church? The hierarchy is praying for us. You can be sure, my son, whatever you told me will be reported to proper ecclesiastical authorities. May God be with you."

C.L.: And the Jews? And the Jews?

K. No reaction.

C.L.: No reaction? And Spillman, Archbishop Spillman?

K. The same. Moonie, the same. Strich, the same. I want to say, again for the sake of the record, that I don't say it in criticism or condemnation of any one of them. They had their own problem - the Catholic Church operates in any circumstances - under slavery, under feudalism, under

Hitler, under Stalin - the Church has its own problems, the Church has to act, the Church has spiritual considerations.

C.L.: But there was really no special comment, or sign of let's say compassion about the Jews?

K. Here again I want to be precise. 35 years have passed. What was the particular comment of any one of them on the subject - did they answer "Horrible", did they answer. I don't remember. You understand my problem, I don't want to lie, you know, I don't want to be imprecise.

C.L.: Let's come to the influential American Jews, let's take Rabbi Stefan Weiss, President of the World Jewish Congress.

K. First as a personality: dignified, he looked like a philosopher, evidently aware of his importance. Very friendly, matter-of-fact. He impressed me, because he was asking me many questions, not so much on the ghetto or the Belzec camp, but questions pertaining to the health of the Jews in Poland.

C.L.: Were you able to describe to Weiss, for instance, the Belzec camp, the train?

K. Yes.

C.L.: How did he react?

K. Frankly, I don't remember. The way I see him in my memory, again this kind of man as I have him in my head, he was not emotional on this.

C.L.: You remember Zigelboim, but you cannot remember Weiss.

K. Yes. Zigelboim for obvious reasons. Rabbi Weiss asked me many questions, for instance, money. If the financial help goes through the Polish Government, is it effective? How do we do it? I had information on this subject, mainly: If there is an emergency, the delegate of the Polish Government has funds, in Warsaw, he has funds in dollars, in pounds, in the Polish currency, in the German currency. If there is an emergency and the Polish Government instructs the delegate of the Government in Poland to advance money

immediately, the delegate has possibilities to do it. But of course the delegate will expect that eventually this money, in such a currency, would be forwarded to him. He has his own budget. So Weiss was interested in..

I want to say something that pertains to Goldman.

C.L.: Ok, say it.

K. Goldman, for instance. First, personality. He looked like a businessman, or he acted like a businessman. I don't know what his profession was, but again, very much interested in those technical problems, without emphasising reprisals, bombing. In what way help could be given to the Jews, mostly financial, medicine, how do I see this problem? Food, currency and passports.

C.L.: What did they say about the requests from the Jewish leaders in Warsaw, I mean the retaliatory bombings of German towns, but with explanations, and the execution of war prisoners or German nationals? Did you mention this to them?

K. Oh, yes.

C.L.: And what did they answer?

K. Again, on particular points I would not remember. On the point of reprisals against German nationals ...

(cassette 14 B)

... against German nationals and against German war prisoners, there was not a single individual, Jewish or non-Jewish - "This cannot be done".

C.L.: But generally speaking, when the Jews in Warsaw said that their problem -  
not  
their destruction - could/be handled in a purely military manner, that one had to find something else, did these people - specifically British Jews - understand this or not?

... They did...

C.L. (?)..... rescue through victory?

K. No, they did understand this problem. They sympathised with the Polish Jews, something has to be done in this respect. They will do their best, ...

C.L.: Did you have the feeling that they understood the fantastic emergency, that every day was too late? Because this is what you were in charge to convey.

K. I think they did not. It was a serious problem, a tragic problem. "We are doing our best. So much can be done, the rest cannot be done. We are doing whatever we can in this problem." From the Jewish leaders I was rather getting this kind of reaction. Jewish leaders, most of them interested - how to do it? Goldmann, as I mentioned, was very interested in the question of passports.

C.L.: Do you recall your meeting with - this is a British one - Richard Lowe, who is now Lord Coleraine and was in April 1943(?) the British delegate to the Bermuda conference on the so-called refugee question?

K. He was Parliamentary undersecretary for the Foreign Office in 1943.

C.L.: Do you remember?

K. I think that he was more disinterested than others. In this particular part of my mission, but I do not remember any particular points. Somehow it stands in my mind. I may be unfair. You realise, I met dozens and dozens of people 35 years ago, and I know I should not...

C.L.: What is the meaning of Belzec in Washington?

Bobine-images n° 308b [qui est la suite de la bobine 308 chargée dans la 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra pour faire des plans de coupe]

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C.L.: I don't know how to put this question - what is the meaning of Belzec or

Treblinka seen from Washington? Or from New York? (I mean at the time) Or from London? Yourself, for instance; when you were reporting every day, like a machine, as you say, did you remember Belzec when you were in Washington?

K. Yes. Of course, not in the way I remember it now, as I mentioned. Now I am much weaker emotionally, so I break down, I avoid it. At that time, I was a machine. I was reporting.

C.L.: How do you judge the people who did not grasp the real meaning of what it was? Is it possible to grasp Belzec when one lives in Washington, a completely other world?

K. At that time, probably not. It might have been possible if every one of those individuals actually was there, because now, all of us - we are intelligent people. It was unprecedented. This kind of thing really never happened. For a normal human being, educated, having political responsibility, a leader, all of us - our brain, our concepts - can operate only within certain limits: what the environment, books, knowledge, puts into our brains. At a certain point, probably our brains are not able to grasp certain things.

C.L.: There were many horrors in this war, and there are many horrible things which happen since the war, up till now. Do you think something can today be compared to the destruction of the Jews?

K. No. I don't know of anything. Throughout human history I don't know of anything which could be compared. This is a problem now. Take the problem of the Second World War. Every nation suffered, and I don't hesitate to say that probably the Russians suffered the most - 20 million people destroyed. And then the Greeks come in line - I know about them - and then Serbs come in line, and then Poles.

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K. The question could be asked - and at various stages of this film this question emerged - is there any comparison between what happened to the European Jews during the Second World War, and any happening in past history? Whatever I know about history, it is totally unique. It was a problem in itself unprecedented historically. Humanity, one could say - healthy humanity, rational humanity which did not see it with their own eyes, were not actually there - they had no precedent to compare it with. As you know, I mentioned this 35 years ago. I have been conditioned by the American environment. Naturally in my mind I know it was true. I cannot handle it. That I saw, in this respect - Jewish extermination - is incomprehensible for me. I cannot handle it. I can handle perfectly well the Polish problem, I discuss it in my classes - Czech, Serb, Russian - I comprehend. I could speak about it calmly, rationally. History is cruel to many nations and many individuals. I run away. I try to eliminate what I saw as far as the Jews were concerned. Not only had history not seen such an event before, but nothing has happened since then which could be compared. Again, history is cruel. Nations fight, individuals hate, political considerations enter the picture, conquest, torture, prison, collective responsibility, wars, victorious wars, defeats in war, we see it now! We look around the world and we have it. Nothing can be compared with this. The problem is: this is unique, unprecedented, so who could (this is my speculation) comprehend? You would probably actually have to take Lord Selborne and place him in Belzec! Of course this is impossible - Lord Selbornes do not end their lives in Belzec, they end their lives in bed, regardless of whether war was won or lost.

This is this uniqueness, which I am sure even now humanity does not grasp. Nazi Germany and Hitler - total defeat. Hitler died like a rat, a self-inflicted death, naturally in despair, frustration. Humanity betrayed him, he lost, Germany lost the war. And now again you have a unique situation: he won a war. He won a war against the Jews. All his plans, all his policies were totally successful. He won. Even this is unprecedented.

Victory on such a scale, which means 5 to 6 million people of the same group - and this means all of them - destroyed. This is unprecedented, unique. It did not happen before, it did not happen since.

( plan de coupe muet numéroté Washington - 32 )

[ La fin de la bobine 318 a été chargée sur la 2<sup>ème</sup> caméra et correspond aux plans 33 et 34 plans de coupe, tandis que la 1<sup>ère</sup> caméra tourne avec la bobine 319 ]

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K. After a few months of my secret activities reporting on the situation in Poland, it became evident that I saw too many people. I became known. The decision was made - I am not going back to Poland during the war. From that moment I began my activities: I delivered over 200 lectures. Either I contributed to articles, or I wrote articles, or I inspired articles by more talented writers than I was...

C.L. This means you talked to everybody?

K. Yes. In the most important dailies of Great Britain and the United States. Eventually my book was published. My book became very popular, it became

'Book of the Month Club'. As a result of my lectures, activities and the book was all over the American press, the British press. Articles ~~appeared~~ <sup>emerged</sup>, Soviet Russia's official magazine published articles. Here you have mostly American, you have the same, naturally in France. Eventually my book was published in France, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland...

C.L.: Yes, but all this was after the war. What interests me is what was during the war.

K. So these were the articles, reviews, either of my various lectures, or on my book.

(shows the articles) ... Congressional Record... Time Magazine...

New York Herald Tribune... American Mercury (my visit to the Warsaw ghetto)...

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K. So here are the articles which were published in the most important papers: New Yorker, Harpers Bazaar, San Francisco Chronicle, Pittsburgh, Boston Massachusetts ('Poland Fights'), Congress Weekly, the American Mercury, Colliers, a feature magazine with some artists who tried to depict, evidently, Belzec camp on my report.

C.L.: It is well done, isn't it?

K. Yes, essentially it does give the spirit of it if not, naturally, details.

C.L.: They knew everything?

K. Public opinion knew at the time. Evidently the Governments knew. Evidently very important intellectuals knew. Many of them did try to do their best. With, however, the final result that Hitler won his war.

C.L.: In spite of this.

K. Yes. The Jews were left alone to perish.



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(Karski tourne les pages du livre sans commentaire)

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K. The public opinion, as well as the Governments, of the Allied nations cannot say that they did not know.

(fin)