

HOLOCAUST – UNCP PODCAST 20

Welcome to 30 Brave Minutes, a podcast of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina Pembroke. In 30 Brave Minutes we'll give you something interesting to think about. Our program is now available on PodBean and iTunes, making it easier to find us. The topic of for today is the Holocaust.

In this episode the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Jeff Frederick, is joined by Dr. Bruce Dehart from the department of history. Get ready for 30 Brave Minutes

FREDERICK: 73 years ago during April of 1945, the Second World War was wrapping up in Europe. The German War Machine, so swift and furious in the Fall of 1939 when steamrolling Blitzkrieg-style over Poland and then while continuing the onslaught the following year by gobbling up territory across central and western Europe, and then yet again the next year as they drove deep into eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, was by the Spring of 1945 a shell of its former self. Retreating, surrendering, laying down its arms, and some making the last stands of the Wehrmacht. As the Americans and Soviets moved in, any number of shocking images were seared into the consciences of individual soldiers: ordinary folk were coming face to face with the horror of concentration camps: centers of death for the millions of Jews, gypsies, Slavs, blacks, and gays who were humiliated, tortured, worked-to-death, and gassed in a process often referred to as the Final Solution.

"I was blessed to help free many oppressed people," American GI Leo Hymas said. "What tiny little bit I did to help overcome that terrible, awful wickedness, as difficult as it was, was the best thing I have ever done in my life." The inhumanity reached a scale seemingly beyond imagination. "I had seen men in my tanks burn to death. I had seen the medics come in with casualties. But killing in combat is part of war," Albin Irzyk, 98 remembered. Irzyk was a Major at the time and eventually retired as a Brigadier General. "To see this, and recognize humans did it to other humans . . . it was extermination. I saw what looked like bundles of ragged clothing . . . in an elliptical circle, but when I got closer, I saw it wasn't bundles. It was human beings." The recollections of soldiers like Hymas and Irzyk as well as reflections of survivors from the camps themselves can be found easily in newspaper articles, oral histories, monographs, museums and archives.

Compiling the cold, raw, facts of the Holocaust is not necessarily a difficult task. We have clear ideas about how many camps were created, when they began, and where they were located. Historians have estimates about how many so-called "untouchables" were transported, and, partially because of some detailed German record keeping, scholars have an idea about what happened in those camps. What we struggle with so many decades afterwards, is the pure barbarity, the hopeless and cruel inhumanity, the evil that could drive one group of people to do

things to their former neighbors and fellow citizens that defy description in any language one might care to use.

Scapegoating was part of the historical experience long before the rise of Adolph Hitler. It is equally true that dictators and cruelty are not unique to the 20th century and to Germany. Pogroms against Jews occurred before the Nazis and anti-Semitism remains long after General Alfred Jodl formally signed the unconditional surrender of the German army on May 7, 1945. 17 months after surrendering, Jodl was tried at Nuremberg with 23 others, convicted, and hung. He and other Nazi leaders were punished and their story came to a close. Yet for others, survivors, witnesses, the innocent, the bystanders, and the guilty, their journey to find peace and closure continued. And for us, yet the mystery remains of how and why all this came together to form what we recall and should never forget as the Holocaust.

Our guest for today is Dr. Bruce Dehart, Professor and Chair of the History Department, and a leading expert on the Holocaust. Welcome, Bruce.

DEHART: Thank you, Dr. Frederick. I must say what an honor it is to have been invited here today to talk about a subject in which I have been intellectually, academically, and emotionally invested for roughly thirty five years.

FREDERICK: Let's set the scene. Describe the post-World War One conditions in Germany and Hitler's rise to power. Why did the German people flock to him?

DEHART: In the immediate aftermath of its defeat in the Great War, Germany experienced roughly five years of internal turmoil. This turmoil was political, social, financial, and economic. It was a period that witnessed political assassinations, attempted coups by people on both the left and the right wing of the spectrum, rising dissatisfaction with the Weimar republic, which was the democratic government, established by the Germans in 1919. This initial period of strife really reached a climax in 1923 when Germany experienced what is commonly called the hyper-inflation. Contrary to what many people understand, the Weimar government made a conscious decision to destroy the country's economy to demonstrate to the victors of the First World War that Germany simply could not pay the reparations demanded of Germany in the Treaty of Versailles. The hyper-inflation really reached its climax in November of 1923, when one American dollar could have been exchanged for 4.2 trillion German Marks.

FREDERICK: So buying something as simple as a loaf of bread becomes unmanageable.

DEHART: Exactly. As 1923 unfolded, German workers were actually paid twice a day. They were paid at mid-day, and given an opportunity to go, to a bread shop for example, and buy bread. And then they were paid at the end of the day so they could go out again. I mean the currency depreciated on a minute by minute basis. I would also add that in November 1923 a

small regional political movement made its appearance on the German landscape, on a national scale. When a world war one veteran named Adolf Hitler and his followers and their right wing allies staged what is called the Beer Hall Putsch, which entailed an attempted seizure of power in the German state of Bavaria. Hitler's plan was to seize power in Bavaria and then use the state of Bavaria as a base of operations to seize power in Germany and remake Germany according to his already well-developed ideology. Unfortunately, for Hitler and his followers and their right wing allies, the Bavarian police and army refused to go along and so the Beer Hall Putsch exploded. Hitler, after being on the lam for roughly two weeks, was apprehended. He was incarcerated and in '24 he was brought to trial. He was lucky in that the judges, who conducted the trial were sympathetic to him, and they allowed him to use his trial to express his rather bazaar and disturbing views. Be that as it may, in the end he was convicted of attempting to overthrow a legitimate government and sentenced to five years' incarceration in Landsberg Prison. Well, he was released in December 1924, at which point he resumed control of the Nazi movement, as it was called, and began the push for power that would culminate at the end of January, 1933 in his being named Chancellor of the Weimar republic.

FREDERICK: Alright. So let's step back for a second. The failure of the Putsch, the incarceration, the trial... Is this when he writes Mein Kampf and begins to structure in a rather grotesque fashion some sense of what he would like to do if he was ever able to gain power?

DEHART: There are two results of the failure of the Putsch. First of all, Hitler became convinced that if the Nazi movement were to achieve power, it would have to do so democratically. Until November 1923, it seems to me that Hitler wanted to follow the Bolshevik example. You stage a coup d 'etat in a single city; you claim power; and then you extend that power to the rest of the country. Well, with the Bavarian police and army remaining loyal to the Bavarian government, Hitler concluded that if we are going to get the power we are going to have to turn our movement into a popularly supported nationwide movement, and we are going to have to use the Weimar constitution and the ballot box. Once we are elected to power in the Reichstag, then we can use that power to destroy the Weimar republic and replace it with a single-party dictatorship. And yes, it is during the nine month incarceration in Landsburg in 1923 that Hitler dictated Mein Kampf, his political autobiography, which was published, not in a single volume, as we can buy it today, but in two volumes in 1925 and 1926.

FREDERICK: So that becomes a bit of the play book in terms of his ideas for implementation. By 1933, the Nazis have risen to power and Hitler has gotten himself elected Chancellor. How does he begin to implement some of these ideas through Nuremberg Laws, and through a variety of other things which specifically start the process of targeting groups of people?

DEHART: Just one correction and this is a common misunderstanding. Hitler was not elected Chancellor. He was invited to become Chancellor by Germany's President Paul von Hindenburg. Again, that is a common mistake. Several months ago I saw an interview with a very prominent

historian of Germany and the Holocaust, Tim Snyder, who teaches up at Yale, and for some reason, he was on a panel and one of the other panelists talked about Hitler being elected Chancellor in '33. Schneider just sat there. So, Hitler was never truly elected to anything at all. He was selected to be Chancellor by Hindenburg primarily because of back channel maneuvers on the part of people, who wanted to put Hitler in power and use the popularity of the Nazi party for their own purposes. The primary conspirator in these events was a man named Franz von Papen, who after Hindenburg actually agreed to make Hitler chancellor, uttered the statement, "Now we have him pinned in." And in terms of your question about the Nuremberg laws, let me begin by pointing out that between when Hitler became chancellor on January 30, 1933 and the beginning of the Second World War on September 1, 1939 Hitler's government enacted more than 400 anti-Jewish laws. Now, the Nuremberg laws are probably, arguably, the most well-known for obvious reasons, but what you want to keep in mind is that during the pre-war years, the Nazi regime aimed to make life so difficult for Germany's Jews that they would immigrate. Hitler's goal, in terms of the so-called Jewish problem, and the solution to that problem in the pre-war years was to make Germany judenfrei - free of Jews, or judenrein - clean of Jews. This attempt to drive Germany's Jews out of the country needs to be understood in the context of Hitler's preparing Germany to wage and win a series of wars. Not a single war, but a series of wars, that would in the short term allow Germans to conquer what the Nazis called lebensraum, or living space, and in the long terms to achieve German global dominance. Hitler and his associates truly believed that Aryan Germans, those Germans who had managed to maintain the purity of their blood, were racially superior, and that as a result of this racial superiority, deserved to control the entire globe. So Hitler's aspirations were not continental, they were global. But again, the persecution of the Jews in the 1930s must be placed in the context of preparation for war. What people need to understand is that Hitler, like many Germans, had a very difficult time wrapping their brains around Germany's defeat in World War I, because when the fighting stopped the Allies occupied only a sliver of German territory and so Germans asked, "How could we have lost this war when the fighting never reached Germany, and when enemy armies are still on foreign soil?" The answer to that, provided in part by Germany's World War I military leadership, was the so-called 'stab-in-the-back myth'. The notion that the army had not been defeated militarily, but that it had been stabbed in the back by Jews and communists who had staged a revolution in the first days of November 1918. So Hitler and others were convinced that Jews had cost Germany victory in World War I. This would not happen when the Nazi regime launched its first war because there would be no Jews inside of Germany.

FREDERICK: So, all of this context leads to this push to force Jews to emigrate and there are a variety of state acts, led by Hitler and his new regime to push that.

DEHART: Yes.

FREDERICK: They succeed to insufficient expectations and so the Nazi state moves still pre-war to engaging in state-sponsored violence to exacerbate these outcomes.

DEHART: Yes.

FREDERICK: What are some examples of that?

DEHART: Well, the one true example of a state-sponsored violence and terror occurred on the night of November 9 and 10, 1938. Here I am making reference to Reichskristallnacht, the night of the broken glass, or Kristallnacht. What happens on the night of 9 and 10, November is that members of the Nazi SA, the Sturmabteilung, one of those elite Nazi formations, will terrorize Jewish communities across Germany. They will ransack and destroy Jewish businesses. They will ransack and destroy Jewish synagogues. They will physically assault German Jews. It is estimated that on that particular night 91 German Jews died, but what is more telling is that more than thirty thousand German male Jews were arrested and incarcerated in three concentration camps that had been established since 1933. These thirty thousand plus male Jews who were incarcerated were told that they would be released once they could demonstrate that once released, they, and members of their families would immigrate. Reichskristallnacht was launched primarily on the advice of Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister. Primarily because by the end of October '38 and the beginning of November '38, he had reached the conclusion that German Jews had not yet gotten the message. There were still too many of them in Germany, and now the time had come, as war was quickly approaching, and it will come in September of '39, it is really time to ratchet up the persecution and to make these people understand, they are not wanted and so they need to get out tomorrow and not next month. So, Reichskristallnacht has to be understood as that push by the regime to force those Jews who still remained to get out of the country before war.

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FREDERICK: In terms of the larger idea about extermination of Jews who are both within existing German territory and outside of German territory, but living in soon to be conquered areas, particularly in Eastern Europe, when does that planning begin and how does it roll from thought processes into actual construction and deportation?

DEHART: If you define the Holocaust or *The Final Solution*, which was the euphemism that the Nazi Regime used for the killing programs and systematic mass murder which aimed to destroy

the Jewish community of the globe, I would argue. If you define the Holocaust very narrowly, it starts on June 22, 1941, when German military forces launch Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. Accompanying German military forces into the Soviet Union were four special task units called Einsatzgruppen. (They were) about three thousand men total, made up of individuals who came from the Gestapo and from the SS. These killing squads had been organized by Reinhard Heydrich, who by 1941 was, in my estimation, the third most powerful figure in the Third Reich. Hitler (was) the most powerful; Heinrich Himmler, who headed the entire German police, including the elite SS, being second and Heydrich, third. But, as the German armies drive deeper and deeper into the Soviet Union, these Einsatzgruppen, accompanied by ordered police units, accompanied by a few Waffen-SS units, will round up Soviet Jews. Initially male Jews of military age and exterminate them in mass shootings. As the fighting in the Soviet Union unfolds, as the Germans win more and more victories, the killing in the Soviet Union will become more extensive. By August, 1941, the orders have come from Berlin to the commanders of these Einsatzgruppen that they should add to the hit list women, children, old, and young.

FREDERICK: Let me jump in here...

DEHART: Yes, please.

FREDERICK: At this point in time, when these initial killings are rolling into action, what does the rest of the world know about this? What do the German people know about this?

DEHART: Okay. As of the summer and fall of 1941, the British know quite a bit about the killing. British code-breakers had broken the codes used by the Order Police, and so the British are reading German mail. So, by the fall of 1941, the Churchill government is well aware that the Germans are engaged in mass shootings in the Soviet Union, and the vast majority of the victims of these shootings are Jews. What is so interesting is that the Churchill government took no action and made no effort to share this information, even with the United States. Now, some would say, why would the Churchill government have shared information with the United States before the United States is actively involved in the conflict? Well, since 1940, Franklin Roosevelt, the American president had practiced a neutrality that certainly favored the British. By that particular time he had arranged the very controversial destroyers. For example, he had carried out the controversial destroyers-for-bases deal, he had implemented Lend-Lease, and you have American surface vessels out in the Atlantic chasing down German U-boats and alerting British convoys of the presence of German U-boats, but Churchill doesn't say anything about it. But it's very clear that the British know that there are mass shootings of Soviet Jews. Obviously, people in the Soviet Union know about this. The Stalin government knew about it, but the Stalin government is never really concerned with the victimization of Soviet Jews, or for that matter, with the victimization of ...

FREDERICK: of anybody.

DEHART: There you go. And so, there is limited knowledge as of 1941. As for the German people, I would point out to you that once the war ended, Germans essentially, to a man or to a woman, as the case may have been, denied any knowledge whatsoever. The common expression was, "about this we knew nothing..." Well, that is not entirely the case because people on the Home front were receiving letters from soldiers on the Eastern front, reporting what was transpiring. And this is another point...contrary to popular belief, contrary to myth at the end of the war, the German army did not fight a conventional, clean war on the Eastern front. The German army was intimately involved in the atrocities and the war crimes and the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Einsatzgruppen, the Order police, and the Waffen-SS. In fact, we know that German army units provided logistical support to the death squads. Not only provided logistical support, but engaged in mass shootings when there were not enough security police to do the job...

FREDERICK: ...which makes all of this an all-encompassing cultural, economic, political, and military program, reaching into all sectors of German life.

DEHART: Well said. And so, people on the home front... mothers, fathers, wives, children, cousins, friends, acquaintances were slowly learning from letters what was transpiring on the Eastern Front in the summer and fall of '41 and the winter of '41 and '42. Moreover, against express orders soldiers and others on the Eastern Front sent pictures of their handiwork home, because the evidence suggests they believed in what they were doing and they were proud of what they were doing. So there is substantial evidence to suggest that the ordinary German citizen had at least some knowledge of the mass shootings of Soviet Jews from the very beginning.

FREDERICK: And when the more holistic attempt to finish the job comes with the construction of facilities designed to do this, are any of these designed to provide work for the war effort? Or, to what extent are they designed to do multiple purposes? And then, when does the process lead to "we're in the business of exterminating these lives completely?"

DEHART: That is a wonderful question. The first of the so-called Vernichtungslager, death camps, or camps of annihilation, if you want the literal translation, opened in German-annexed Poland, in the village of Chelmno, in December of 1941. It had one purpose and one purpose alone, to exterminate Jews. Unlike the other Vernichtungslager, and there were five of them located on German territories, the camp at Chelmno did not make use of stationary gas chambers. The victims there were murdered by gas vans and cargo trucks. What happened was that the victims who were deported to Chelmno were forced to undress and to surrender whatever possessions they brought with them. They were then driven into the back of a cargo truck, like a Ryder truck. The doors were closed and tubing was run from the exhaust pipe, under

the cargo hold. There was a hole drilled into the floor that the end of that hose was sealed (into). The driver would turn on that engine and let it run for ten or fifteen minutes and you would have fifty or seventy-five dead people. The driver would then convey those dead bodies to a place where they were buried in a remote location. So there were also not crematoria at Chelmno. In 1942 the Germans will open five additional Vernichtungslager: Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and last, but certainly not least, the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau. Again, all of these camps were located on territory that prior to the beginning of the war, had made up part of independent Poland. Four of these six camps were created for the exclusive purpose of murdering human beings. Two of them were combination camps. Majdanek killed Jews, but it also served as a labor camp, and so some of those deported to Majdanek were initially spared so that they could do heavy labor to benefit the German war machine. Auschwitz was also a combination camp. It actually began as a typical German concentration camp to incarcerate political prisoners. Subsequently, it became a prisoner of war camp to incarcerate prisoners of war, but over the course of time the German leadership decided to expand Auschwitz from the village of Auschwitz to the village of Birkenau, and Birkenau became a killing center. Later on, a third camp, Monowitz, was added to the complex. Monowitz became a labor camp, and so with the deportations that start to Auschwitz in early 1942 from across Europe, a certain percentage of every transport was spared temporarily, and those who were spared were then forced to do heavy labor, in some instances, for German corporations who set up shop near Auschwitz. But the vast majority of deportees to Auschwitz were killed immediately after their arrival.

FREDERICK: For those that aren't killed immediately after their arrival, tell us a little bit about what daily life was like for them. Tell us a little bit about what daily life would have featured for the German soldiers and others who are cast with running these facilities.

DEHART: In terms of the daily existence of those who are spared, (it) really depends on a number of factors. For example, able bodied, young males were frequently spared, and they became members of what the Germans called the Sonderkommandos, or special commando. They were entrusted with important tasks in the killing process. So, after the gassings had taken place, members of the Sonderkommandos would go into the gas chambers and drag the bodies so that the bodies could then be deposited in the crematoria. Now, becoming a member of the Sonderkommando didn't guarantee a long life because typically the Sonderkommando were changed out after a certain period of time, meaning that they suffered extermination. Others who were able bodied ended up doing forced labor. You also have some females who are spared. Typically females were immediately sent to the gas chamber, and here I'm referring to Auschwitz primarily, because the vast majority of those deported to those camps at Belzec and Treblinka and Sobibor and Chelmno were murdered immediately, but women were spared and given certain tasks. There is a very famous memoir written by a Hungarian female Jew, whose entire family died at Auschwitz. She was spared, however, and because she had some medical training, she was employed doing medical work in the camp. So, it really depended on who you were. Obviously, if you were a deportee, and not a Jew, your day-to-day existence could be

radically different. Some of those who were deported were actually given responsible managerial positions and they became what were called Kapos. They were entrusted with the work detail. They wielded an enormous amount of power and frequently these Kapos, to keep their German masters content, would act even more brutally than the Germans. In terms of those who were entrusted with running the camps, what many people probably don't understand is that many of those who were entrusted with the operation of the camps were not Germans. They were auxiliaries, recruited from among Eastern European populations. Ukrainians, for example. White Russians, for example. Latvians, for example. Lithuanians, for example. The commanders of these camps actually lived lives of luxury. Many of them brought their wives and their families. They annexed, or appropriated, local estates and here I would make reference to the Spielberg film, Schindler's List. For those people who have seen it, you probably remember the Amon Goth character, who was entrusted with overseeing the labor camp at Plaszow. Well, when he shows up, he is given this enormous mansion, overseeing the camp. That is pretty accurate. These Germans who were running the camps as the commanders had it actually pretty good.

FREDERICK: They took all sorts of liberties with what might be available to them.

DEHART: That is exactly right.

FREDERICK: So, for those people who survived, against all odds, these experiences, take us into their lives a little bit. Thirty days after liberation, sixty days, ninety days, the next year. Tell us about how they are being nursed or helped back to a way to go on living.

DEHART: Well, the first thing that I would say is that the end of the war did not mean the end of the Holocaust for those Jews who survived. Many of those who've survived were incarcerated in those camps located in Western and Central Europe, liberated by the British and the Americans. Dachau, Bergen-Belsen. Many of those Jews had been transported from the death camps as it became apparent that the Soviets were going to overrun these death camps. A good example would be Elie Wiesel, author of Night. He and his father were incarcerated at Auschwitz and in January, 1945, shortly before the Red Army arrived, Wiesel, his father and tens of thousands of other surviving Jews were forced to go on death marches.

FREDERICK: So they were literally moved across the continent of Europe in order to make sure that they died.

DEHART: There are...who knows...to make them suffer a little bit more. But you have literally several hundred thousand Eastern European Jews, still alive, in Western Europe at the end of the war. These people wanted to return home. And I will use the surviving Polish Jews as the classic example. Those people returned home and what they quickly discovered is that nobody wanted them, because when they were deported, people took their property. There was a strong tradition of anti-Semitism in pre-war Poland anyway. It was religious anti-Semitism as opposed to racial

anti-Semitism. In other words, the Poles, being devoutly Catholic, maintained that traditional hatred of Jews on religious grounds that had really arisen as the Christian Church had emerged. So the Poles made it very very clear to those Polish Jews who had survived, "We don't want you here." So where did they go? Many of them will trek back to central and Western Europe where they are going to be labeled as displaced persons and then they are incarcerated in DP camps. What was so tragic about this is that many of them ended up in camps where they had been incarcerated by the Germans, because the British and the Americans and the French used those camps as DP camps. Then, you get this bizarre, surreal situation where these liberated Jews looked at the next bunk and they found in those bunks the very same Germans who had persecuted them while the war was going on. Ultimately this is going to produce a response by the Truman administration. Truman gets reports of what is transpiring. He sends a man named Earl Harrison, who was the Dean of the Law School at University of Pennsylvania, on a fact-finding mission. Harrison comes back to Truman and he says, "This is incredible. These liberated Jews are in these DP camps, some are in camps that they had been in before they were liberated. They are side by side with people who had persecuted them. We have got to do something. Truman begins to push the British government to open up Palestine so these people can have a home. All of this will ultimately culminate in the establishment of the state of Israel...

FREDERICK AND DEHART (TOGETHER): ...in 1948.

DEHART: And sometimes people believe that the United States supports Israel because the United States felt guilty. That is not the case at all. American support for Israel was really a byproduct of the Truman Administration's recognition that the situation in which these liberated Jews in Western and Central Europe found themselves was completely unacceptable. For other survivors, especially those that make it to the United States, they quickly discover that Jews living in the United States, even their relatives, aren't interested in hearing their story. This is the past. Forget about it...and so they clam up.

FREDERICK: "Let's move on." Right?

DEHART: "Let's move on." It's over. And so you have survivors in the United States who literally for decades keep this bottled up. It has an adverse impact, not only on them, but it has an adverse impact on their children. In fact, according to Joan Ringlheim, who was for years and years the director of public history at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the children of survivors become more traumatized than the survivors themselves because they have to live with the trauma of their parents. Ultimately, however, thanks to the efforts of many, like people at the Holocaust Museum, survivors have come forward. They have opened up. They have recorded their experiences. But here I would point out that many survivors, while they are willing to tell their stories, will only tell parts of their stories. That is something that you need to keep in mind when you are listening to a survivor, or when you are reading a memoir, or when

you are reading an eye-witness account. What is really significant is not what is in the memoir, or the eye-witness account: what is truly significant is what is not there.

FREDERICK: Given the sense of so much evidence, so many images, so many first-hand accounts, so many artifacts, so many physical structures that remain, how are we to explain the presence of holocaust minimizers and holocaust deniers?

DEHART: I would argue, based on the evidence, that the vast majority of these people have an anti-Semitic racist agenda. One additional point, or maybe several additional points about Holocaust denial: Holocaust deniers don't deny that Jews died during the war. They deny three things. First, they deny that the Nazi regime had a plan to exterminate European Jews. They deny that the death camps, the gas chambers, were ever used to exterminate human beings, and they deny that six million Jews died. They estimate that maybe six hundred thousand Jews died, and here's the kicker: they make the argument that the death of those six hundred thousand Jews should be attributed, not to the Germans, but to the British and the Americans who had the audacity to conduct a strategic bombing campaign to destroy Germany's capacity to wage war. These deniers say that the Allies destroyed the German rail network, which prevented the Germans from getting sufficient food and sufficient clothing and sufficient medical supplies to the Jews located in what were simply concentration and rehabilitation camps. So the blame for Jewish deaths falls not on Hitler, not on the Nazi regime, not on Germany's allies, not on the collaborators, but on the British and the Americans.

FREDERICK: Well, you have spent decades researching and teaching and living this from the documents all the way out to the outside, let's wrap up by having me ask you the impossible question: For people who haven't had the benefit of a semester of work with you, or ongoing discourse with you, or spent more time examining the issue, what would be the legacy, the meaning that you would want people to walk away with, three quarters of a century after the war ended, of the Holocaust?

DEHART: In my estimation the Holocaust tells us much about human beings. The Holocaust demonstrated that people are capable of the greatest cruelty and violence. It demonstrated that people are capable of inexplicable indifference. It demonstrated that people, and here I refer to rescuers, are capable of the greatest heroism, and last, but certainly not least, it demonstrated that people are capable of the greatest resilience. Those are the four lessons that I have taken from thirty-five years of studying what Winston Churchill, in 1944 characterized, after he learned the details of Auschwitz for the first time, as probably the single greatest crime in the history of the world.

FREDERICK: What a pleasure to have spent this time talking with the great Bruce Dehart about a subject that he knows as much about as anybody you will ever meet. Thank you, Bruce. Tune in next time for another edition of Thirty Brave Minutes.

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