

Comparison of History and Fiction in Docudrama on Rescue of Danish Jews during the Holocaust

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Introduction

Numerous docudramas have been produced on historical events. In some cases, the contents closely resemble what actually occurred. In other cases, numerous fictional events are incorporated for dramatic effect.

One such docudrama was produced relating the escape of Danish Jews to Sweden during the period of the Holocaust. In this paper, a detailed analysis will be made on this film to investigate which scenes are in fact historical and which are fictional.

It must be stressed that this paper is not a comprehensive study of the rescue of Danish Jewry. Furthermore, historians discuss whether the Germans were aware of the Jews escaping to Sweden but in many cases closed their eyes to this fact, and this also includes Werner Best, the plenipotentiary appointed by Hitler to Denmark, who may have had political reasons to do so. All this is outside the scope of this paper.

Brief Historical background

One of the countries conquered by Nazi Germany during the early part of the Second World War was Denmark. For the first three years, Denmark was allowed to continue to run its own affairs and the Jews were not persecuted. All this changed in autumn 1943, when the Germans proclaimed martial law and plans were made to deport Denmark's Jews in a surprise attack on the Friday night of the first of October, a few hours after the termination of Rosh Hashanah. However, the information was leaked to the Jews, and by a spontaneous action of almost all the Danes, the Jews were hidden for a few days or weeks and then smuggled, in some sort of boat, to nearby Sweden.

Docudrama on this Rescue

A docudrama entitled "Miracle at Midnight" was produced by John Davis in 1998. His father-in-law was George Hubner, a non-Jew who had hidden a Jewish family in his house. For dramatic purposes the film was not entirely supported by historical facts. The film took eight years to produce and due to financial considerations and the fact that the topography of the Danish harbor had changed, the filmmakers went to Ireland in order to film. It was first shown on ABC television on Sunday 17 May 1998.¹

¹ New York Times: Cover Story 17 May 1998

In the “Film” sections of this paper, the approximate location in minutes for each scene is given.

The footnotes in the “History” sections, just give the surnames of the authors of the books and articles referred to in the text. For further information, one should go to the Bibliography at the end of this paper. There one can find in alphabetical order the full names of the authors, the titles of their works, the names of the publishers and the dates of publication.

The Koster family

Film: Throughout this film, the Koster family play a prominent part. Dr. Karl Koster is the chief surgeon at the Christiana Hospital in Copenhagen. Also appearing in this film is his wife Doris, his son Hendrik who was a student at the university and also an active member of the Danish resistance, and his daughter Else aged about twelve.

History: Dr. Karl Koster existed in real life and was the head surgeon of the Bispebjerg Hospital in Copenhagen.² The question to be asked is about the other members of his family who appeared in the film? Was the name of his wife Doris? Did he have a son who was a student at the university and a member of the Danish resistance? If he did have such a son, was his name Hendrik or was it some other name? Did he have a daughter aged about twelve named Else, or was it some other name? These questions were sent to the Bispebjerg Hospital, but unfortunately, they were unable to answer any of them.³

Illegal publications by the Danes

Film: Dr. Karl Koster’s son Hendrik, who was a student at the University, was, at first unknown to his father, an active member of the Danish resistance. One of his activities was distributing resistance literature. One day, on his way to university, his bag was searched although nothing incriminating was found. [2 minutes] He later told a fellow student resistance member: “I was searched this morning. He only spent a second going through my bag but had he looked through everything he would have found 20 of these anti-German leaflets in one of my books.” [5 minutes].

History: As the war progressed more and more “illegal newspapers” were produced which “swamped the country.”⁴ By 1943 the circulation had reached 2,600,00 (in a population of just 4 million). Most of them were mimeographed sheets.⁵ There were 552 underground newspapers.⁶ Even the students

² Werstein p.70

³ e-mails between the author of this paper and the Bispebjerg Hospital, 14 and 15 May 2018

⁴ Yahil p.228

themselves published illegal papers.⁷ The student Jørgen Kieler reports that his apartment was turned into a printing office during the spring of 1943 and it became the headquarters for a group of students who produced illegal papers and books.⁸ Herbert Pundik writes, that as a fifteen-year-old, he was involved in distributing illegal anti-Nazi newspapers (and he was told off by the Chief Rabbi of Copenhagen Max Friediger for doing so!)⁹ The first anti-German leaflet was distributed by students just a few hours after the Germans occupied Copenhagen.¹⁰

Youth in Danish Resistance

Film: Hendrik and a fellow student at the university, Jørgen Christiansen, took an active part in seizing German guns whilst they were being loaded into German trucks. They made a distraction by making a fire in the area and then brought their own truck in which to load the German guns. [6 minutes]

History: Students used various method to get the German guns.¹¹ The saboteurs tended to be quite young, often no more than seventeen years of age.¹² Most of the Danish youth eventually joined the resistance movement.¹³ Two students of medicine, Jørgen Kieler and his brother Flemming were among the founders of the resistance organization called “Holger Danske.”¹⁴ Jørgen Kieler explained how he began his sabotage work, namely, he and his friends got hold of some explosive material and made an attempt to blow up a railway bridge. Since they were completely unsuccessful they realized that they needed instruction on how to do so and accordingly they decided to continue their efforts.¹⁵

Attacks on German soldiers by Danes and treating them by Danish Doctors

Film: A Lieutenant Edgar Schmidt was shot during a resistance attempt to seize German weapons [10 minutes] and was brought into the Christiana Hospital where

5 Yahil pp.484-85 fn.19; see also Stone pp.165-67

6 Werner p.19

7 Goldberger p.143; Werstein p.24; Werner p.18

8 Goldberger p.143

9 Ibid. p.79

10 Werstein p.17; Werner pp.9-11

11 Werner p.20

12 Goldberger p.144 - includes a photograph of 3 such youngsters and Werner p.21 has a photograph of 7 of them

13 Werstein p.9

14 Pundik p.104

15 Goldberger pp.144-45

he was treated by Dr. Koster who said to him: “You are going to recover nicely Lieutenant but you’ll have to endure our hospitality for a few days. I want to make sure there’s no infection.” [8 minutes]

History: No record has been found of such an incident with a Lieutenant Schmidt or even of a soldier with a different name. Germans did not use the Bispebjerg hospital (the hospital of Dr. Koster) but preferred their own facilities,¹⁶ although it cannot be excluded that an injured German would be brought into this hospital. There were attacks on Germans and even the killing of them. In August 1943, in the town of Odense, a German officer was badly beaten up by an angry crowd.¹⁷ In the next month, on the evening of 7 September, a sergeant of the Cholm police battalion, which had come to Denmark that May at Best’s request, was murdered in the center of Copenhagen.¹⁸ A German sergeant was waylaid by husky Resistance youths who beat him senseless and took his papers, uniform and weapons.¹⁹

Danish hospitals treating members of the underground

Film: A member of the resistance, Jørgen Christiansen, who had been wounded by the Germans was brought to the hospital where he was treated by Dr. Koster. [9 minutes] When he returned home, Koster informed his wife of the incident telling her: “I treated him. Then I changed his name and altered the records.” [13 minutes]. Before Jørgen had fully recovered he discharged himself from the hospital and joined the other students in order to save the Jews. [25 minutes]

History: Even before the state of emergency had been declared by the Germans, the various hospitals treated wounded members of the underground.²⁰ Doctors put such patients in hospitals with false names.²¹ A student leader named Arne Sejr, whilst still recovering from a wound received in a sabotage action, was at that period leading his comrades into the action to help the Jews.²²

“Perforated Ulcer”

Film: Whilst treating the member of the resistance who had been wounded, one of the nurses pointed out to Dr. Koster: “Under the new rules we’re required to report him to the Germans. Do we have to Dr. Koster?” To this Dr. Koster

16 Werstein p.70

17 Yahil p.122; Pundik p.145

18 Yahil p.137

19 Werstein p.11

20 Yahil p.242

21 Lidegraad p.245

22 Werstein p.75

replied: “The Germans don’t have to hear about every perforated ulcer and we don’t have to give his real name.” [9 minutes]

History: Why did the film particularly use the example of “perforated ulcer”?! Possibly the reason is that in late 1942, a resistance fighter was shot by the Germans whilst trying to blow up a factory. He was brought to the hospital where Dr. Koster operated on him. He admitted him under a fictitious name, putting down on his medical chart that he was suffering from a “perforated ulcer.”²³

Martial Law

Film: During the summer of 1943 there had been an uprising by the Danes, with riots and strikes. As a result, Best went to Berlin. Following his return, on Monday 27 September 1943, Best informed Duckwitz that Hitler had shown faith in him by retaining him as the “head of the occupying forces.” He added that he was going to “make it clear to the Danes who’s in charge.” He then went on to say that he had “declared martial law” and listed measures he would take. [11 minutes] However, the film does not state when Best declared martial law.

History: During the summer of 1943 there was an increase in the actions of the Danish resistance. In August 1943, Hitler ordered Best to come to Berlin and there he told him that he did not like Best’s negative attitude towards the deporting of the Danish Jews and warned him that if conditions got worse Best would be demoted.²⁴ During August the strikes and protests increased and on 28th of that month the Danes were given an ultimatum by the Germans which they rejected.²⁵ Martial law was thus declared on 29 August 1943.²⁶ At that period Hitler demoted Best.²⁷ Just over a week later, Best sent a telegram to Berlin giving details of how he intended to implement the deportation of Jews. Hitler was so pleased that he restored Best to his original position.²⁸ Nothing has been traced of a visit by Best to meet with Hitler towards the end of September.

Curfew in Denmark

23 Flender pp.117-18

24 Ibid. p.39; Pundik writes that Best received a severe reprimand delivered by Ribbentrop in the name of Hitler (Goldberger p.79); also mentioned by Yahil p.124

25 Flender pp.40-41

26 Werner p.29, p.183; Pundik p.145; Lidegraad p.40; Werstein p.9

27 Flender p.41

28 Ibid. p.44

Film: One of Best's measures after declaring martial law was "imposing an earlier curfew." [11minutes] Any further details of the hours of the curfew (or the "earlier curfew") were not given in the film.

History: Following the acts of sabotage by the Danish resistance in August 1943, the Germans gave an ultimatum to the Danes which included "curfew to be imposed as from 8.30 p.m." This was rejected by the Danes and as a result on 29 August 1943, the Germans declared a military state of emergency which included a curfew "at nightfall."²⁹ In his book Aage Bertelsen states that the curfew began each night at eight o'clock.³⁰ About 6 October the curfew on Copenhagen was lifted but was then reimposed.³¹

Rationing of food

Film: Another one of Best's measures was imposing "stricter rationing laws." [11 minutes] Despite this, when serving up the dinner, Doris Koster tells her husband: "Chicken. I managed to find a chicken." Dr. Koster replies: "I wish I were as well connected as you are." [12 minutes] It would seem that the source of the chicken was not "official"!

History: In the early days of the occupation, the Danes were made to introduce rationing.³² At the time of the planned deportation of the Jews, "there was rationing in Denmark and essential products could be obtained only with food coupons."³³ The underground supplied ration cards to families hiding Jews in order to be able to buy food to feed them.³⁴

Deporting the Jews

Film: At his meeting with Duckwitz on 27 September, Best informed him: "I've written a telegram to Herr Eichmann recommending that we begin deporting the Jews." In reply to Duckwitz' reservations on this, Best said: "Arresting the Jews is inevitable. I simply want the credit for it." [11 minutes]

History: It was on 8 September 1943, that Best sent a telegram to the German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop - not to Eichmann. In it he wrote: "... measures should now be taken towards a solution of the problem of the Jews ... I would then have to legislate by means of decree. In order to arrest and deport

29 Flender pp.40-42; Yahil p.125

30 Bertelsen p.31

31 Joesten, (VQR Winter 1944)

32 Yahil p.117

33 Ibid. p.241

34 Werner p.58

some 6,000 Jews (including women and children) at one sweep it is necessary to have the police force I requested [in a previous telegram]. Almost all of them should be put to work in greater Copenhagen where the majority of the local Jews live. Supplementary forces should be provided by the German military commander in Denmark for transportation. Ships must be considered a prime necessity and should be ordered in time.”³⁵

Listening to foreign news stations

Film: Hendrik had a radio in an upstairs room in the Koster family house and would listen to the BBC news. Dr. Koster entered this room whilst Hendrik was listening and tells him that one can hear the radio all the way downstairs. Hendrik replies: “Nobody can hear it on the street.” Koster answers: “If you listen to the English news you keep it down. You know having this radio upsets your mother?” [14 minutes]

History: The Germans forbade the inhabitants of countries under their occupation to listen the BBC and other foreign stations, although many did so secretly.³⁶ However, Carsten Holbraad,³⁷ Jeremy Bennett,³⁸ and two books in Danish³⁹ report that in Denmark it was legal to listen to the BBC, although many Danes thought that it was illegal.⁴⁰ This misconception was obviously so wide spread that Werstein wrote: “In farmhouses and attics, ordinary Danes listened to BBC on illegally owned shortwave receivers.”⁴¹ Christian Soe writes that German soldiers would regularly come to his mother’s house to listen to the BBC news.⁴² It should be noted that the Germans tried to jam the BBC broadcasts but the Danish resistance actions against the German jamming was very effective, especially in the latter part of the war.⁴³

Yellow Star

35 Telegram no. 1032 from Werner Best to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, 8 September 1943 - reproduced by Yahil pp.138-39; Flender p.44 and Kreth pp.24,144 fn.14 also mention this telegram but do not state the recipient.

36 Seul, p.106; Zerubavel p.39

37 Holbraad p.96

38 Bennett p.4

39 Christensen (no page numbers); Lund-Jensen p.471

40 Holbraad p.96; Christensen (no page numbers)

41 Werstein p.79 - Goldberger also writes that most Danes listened to the BBC but he does not state whether or not they thought if it was illegal. (Goldberger pp.204-05)

42 Werner p.17

43 Bennett pp.3, 4,182 fn.1

Film: When viewing films or photographs of Jews in countries under Nazi occupation, one immediately notices that they are all wearing a yellow star on their clothes. However, in this film, no yellow stars are shown.

History: This is not an error. The Jews of Denmark were never required to wear a yellow star. There is an account made popular in Leon Uris' book "Exodus" that following the order that the Jews must wear a yellow star, the king of Denmark, King Christian X, said he would wear the first yellow star and he would hope that every loyal Dane would do so. The next day all Denmark turned out with the yellow star and the Germans then cancelled the order.⁴⁴ However, this is pure fiction. The Nazis gave no such order in Denmark.⁴⁵ An Icelandic researcher found a possible source for this fiction. It stemmed from a British report in 1942 which predicted that should the Jews be forced to wear a yellow star the King of Denmark would wear one.⁴⁶ The source of the British report seems to be an article in the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency" of 4 September 1942.⁴⁷ However, in contrast, Irving Werstein writes that there was an abortive attempt to force Jews to wear a yellow star but soon after the order came out it was rescinded,⁴⁸ but he gives no source for this information.

Break-in at Jewish Community Center

Film: A very brief shot of a break in at the Jewish Community Center by two men in civilian clothes is shown. [16 minutes] At the engagement party of Rabbi Abrams' daughter, a group of the participants were informed: "You must not have heard what happened last night. The Jewish Community Center was broken into. Records were taken, lists of Jews ... names, addresses, thousands of them, friends' names, our names." [17 minutes] Ode Andersen, a former Minister of the Danish government then went to complain to Best about this break in and the theft of lists of addresses of Jews by the SS and the conclusions which could be drawn from this. Best answered: "That may have to do with the census one of our departments is compiling.... I'll have someone look into the matter." [18 minutes]

History: "The Danish Listening Post" writes: "As early as August 31, the registers of births, deaths and marriages in the Jewish community were seized."⁴⁹ Following this raid, the Director General of the Danish Foreign

44 Uris p.72

45 Vihjálmsón

46 Berlingske (Danish newspaper), 1July 2001

47 photocopy appears in Vihjálmsón p.106

48 Werstein p.66

49 Danish Listening Post, vol.1 no.36, 20 October 1943 p.3; Lidegraad p.57

Ministry, Nils Svenningsen, “visited Best that evening asked him about the incident ... and that the action had caused consternation among the Jews, who regarded it as the prelude to further measures against themselves.” He then added that Best denied knowing anything of all this and that he had not occupied himself at all with the Jewish problem.”⁵⁰ A further raid was made on the Community Center on 17 September in which lists of members were taken.⁵¹ Again, Svenningsen lodged a complaint but the Germans again furnished an evasive and “reassuring” answer.⁵² The break-in on that day had been done by the German security police dressed in civilian clothing.⁵³ Rabbi Marcus Melchior comments on this break-in: “They were supposed to be after membership lists with addresses. If that was the case, they must have been disappointed, since the board of the community had foreseen this situation and removed the lists to a safe place.” He then added that despite this, from other sources, the Germans were able to build up fairly complete lists.⁵⁴ In contrast, there is another opinion which states that there was dissatisfaction that the community leadership had not taken better care of these lists, thus enabling the Germans to get hold of them.⁵⁵ Further reference to the Germans obtaining the names of Jews were made in a lecture given by Bo Lidegaard, a Danish historian, diplomat and author: “The Gestapo had made a holdup in the Jewish community, had the lists of names, and estimated there would be between six and seven thousand Jews.”⁵⁶ Flender writes that after Svenningsen had left the German Embassy, Best confided to Duckwitz that the seizure of the records was in preparation for the arrests of the Jews.⁵⁷ In addition, during the early years of the German occupation of Denmark, the Nazis searched through the telephone books and directories compiling list of Jewish names.⁵⁸

Two transport ships

50 Yahil p.169 who obtained this information from the documents of the Nuremburg trials; Goldberger p.43

51 Lidegaard p.57

52 Danish Listening Post, op.cit. p.3; Yahil pp.169-70; Goldberger pp.44-45; Flender pp.47-48; Holbraad p.85

53 Werner p.32

54 Melchior pp.176-77; the hiding of these lists is also mentioned by Goldberger p.45

55 Foighel p.18

56 Bo Lidegaard, lecture at 41 minutes

57 Flender p.48

58 Lowffler p.48

Film: In order to find out when the arrest of Jews would begin, Duckwitz “innocently” told Best: “There are two transport ships ready to sail from Hamburg whenever you need them. Have you thought when you may begin the arrests?” Best then gave him the answer to the exact minute. [18 minutes]

History: It was shortly before midnight on 29 September 1943 that two transport vessels, one of them being the Wartheland dropped anchor in Copenhagen harbor.⁵⁹ The Wartheland could hold up to five thousand people.⁶⁰ Together these two ships were capable of holding the entire Jewish population of Denmark.

The time of starting arrests of Jews

Film: Duckwitz asks Best when he going to start doing the arrests, to which Best answers: “I’m rather pleased with myself. I had an inspiration. This Friday is Rosh Hashanah the Jewish New Year.” Duckwitz answers: “Ah, yes, of course. The Jews will be at home to celebrate.” Best then replies: “We’ll round them up in one mass operation,” to which Duckwitz says: “A surprise attack,” Best replies: “Exactly, October the first, midnight, at the stroke of midnight.”

[18 minutes] Later in the film, a clock shows midnight, a lorry draws up, numerous Germans alight and receive instructions: “Search every house, find every Jew.” [41minutes]

History: In 1943, Rosh Hashanah in fact, began on Wednesday night, 29 September.⁶¹ The planned arrests were actually a few hours after the termination of Rosh Hashanah, on the Sabbath eve. However, the time of the planned arrests of Jews was not at midnight but two hours earlier at 10 o’clock. (Maybe stating midnight in the film was more dramatic!) From the extant logs of the police that night one can see that the arrests began just after ten o’clock.⁶²

Duckwitz’ contact from the now resigned Danish Government

Film: On a number of occasions in this film, are shown meetings between Duckwitz and a man named Ode Andersen who had been a member of the resigned Danish government. [19 minutes] The meetings took place on a park bench with Duckwitz looking around to see he was not being watched. Duckwitz then went and informed Anderson: “It’s what you feared.” Although the film does not actually show Duckwitz telling Andersen the time of the arrests, it is obvious from the sequence of the film that he did so. [19 minutes] A meeting between Andersen, Koster and Rabbi Abrams then took place to plan a

59 Flender pp.63-64

60 Lidegaard pp.151,154; Spiegel

61 information from Hebrew date converter

62 Lidegaard p.148

strategy of what to do. [19 minutes] No other members of the resigned Danish government appear in the film.

History: No-one with the name Ode Andersen has been traced. There was a man called Alsing Emmanuel Andersen, the former Danish Minister of Defense, who was then the acting chairman of the Danish Social Democratic Party.⁶³ However, it was not with him whom Duckwitz met, but with Hans Hedtoft, the former Prime Minister of Denmark, and furthermore the meetings took place not in the park but in the old Workers' Assembly House. The two had been in contact with each other throughout the occupation. At a meeting held on 28 September, Duckwitz told Hedtoft: "The disaster is here. Everything is planned in detail. Ships will anchor in the roads off Copenhagen. Those of your poor Jewish countrymen who get caught by the Gestapo will forcibly be brought on board the ships and transported to an unknown fate." In reply, all that Hedtoft could say was "Thanks for telling me." Duckwitz then disappeared.⁶⁴ Hedtoft then met alone with the head of the Jewish Community, Carl Bertel Henriques, and informed him what was planned,⁶⁵ who in turn passed on the message to Rabbi Melchior.⁶⁶ Rabbi Melchior was also informed of the intended roundup of Jews by Alsing Andersen's secretary.⁶⁷ No record has been found of a meeting between Hedtoft and Dr. Koster.

Rabbi warns congregation

Film: Thursday morning 30 September 1943, (the first day of Rosh Hashanah), 7 o'clock in the morning, in a scene of a full Synagogue. Rabbi Ben Abrams announces: "My friends, there will be no service this morning. I have urgent news. Late last night I received word of something we have feared but felt could never happen in our beloved Denmark. Tomorrow night at midnight the Germans will begin mass arrests of Jews. Anyone found at home on Rosh Hashanah will be taken." The congregation were stunned at this announcement, with one congregant standing up and saying: "It's not true. I don't believe it. It's not possible. They have left us alone for three years. Why would they begin rounding up Jews now?" Rabbi Abrams continued: "Believe me, you must not be at home Friday night. Ask your Christian friends to take you in. They will be generous. Tell everyone you know. Pass the word. If ever word needed to pass swiftly it is this word. Go now. Go and be safe my friends." [20 minutes]

63 Wikipedia – Alsing Andersen

64 Bertelsen p.17-18; Lidegraad pp.71-72; Werstein p.67; Goldberger p.82

65 Bertelsen p.18

66 Wikipedia – Rescue of the Danish Jews

67 Yahil p.207; Pundik p.151; Melchior p.179; Flender p.52

History: No Rabbi with the name Ben Abrams has been traced. However, such an announcement was indeed made in the Synagogue and the Rabbi doing so was Rabbi Marcus Melchior, the acting Chief Rabbi of Copenhagen at the time. The announcement was made on Wednesday morning 29 September, the day before Rosh Hashanah, (and not on 30 September, the first day of Rosh Hashanah, as stated in the film).⁶⁸ Different numbers of worshippers at that service have been given. One source states that since it was a weekday service there were only 20;⁶⁹ another source gives the number as about 80,⁷⁰ whilst Rabbi Marcus Melchior himself is quoted as saying “more than one hundred persons.”⁷¹ Rabbi Melchior comments that being the day before Rosh Hashanah there was a “special service” that morning⁷² – he probably meant the large number of Selichot [Penitential prayers] recited that morning. At what stage of the service did Rabbi Melchior make this announcement? He writes: “At a very solemn moment, I interrupted the service” to make the announcement.⁷³ Other sources suggest it was after the service and that Rabbi Melchior then added that the services on Rosh Hashanah were cancelled.⁷⁴ Unlike the film, no source states that the service was cancelled that morning. The arrest of Jews which had been planned for 1 October at midnight (actually 10 o’clock that evening) would have been on the evening of the Sabbath, a few hours after the termination of Rosh Hashanah, but still at a time when families are at home. His son Bent Melchior (who after his father’s death became Chief Rabbi of Denmark) said in the documentary: “My father interrupted the service went up and told the community the message that we had received.” The documentary then shows (in presumably in an archival clip) Rabbi Marcus Melchior saying (translated into English): “Leave your homes. Go to your Christian relatives and friends and make sure you can stay there for now, then we’ll wait and see. I should add that the vast majority of those present that morning actually understood that there was no hope left.”⁷⁵ However, there were many other Jews

68 Melchior p.179; Bent Melchior – Interview (B’nei Brith Europe, reproduced on Internet)

69 Yahil p.215

70 Werner p.43

71 Melchior p.179 – however, Yahil (p.483 fn.51) writes that Rabbi Melchior states there were 150

72 Melchior p.179

73 Ibid.

74 Werner p.41; Yahil pp.214-15

75 The Danish Solution, documentary at 17 minutes 30 seconds

who did not believe that there would be a roundup. “It can’t happen here in good old Denmark” they said. They had to be told several times before they drew the necessary conclusions.⁷⁶

Hiding the Rabbi and his family

Film: Dr. Koster suggested to his wife that they hide Rabbi Abrams and his family in their attic. However, his wife disagreed claiming that it could endanger their own family. [21 minutes] However, despite her objections, they were hidden in their attic. [29 minutes]

History: Rabbi Marcus Melchior and his family were not hidden in Dr. Koster’s house. They were first hidden in the house of Reverend Hans Kildeby in Orslev, which is fifty-five miles west of Copenhagen. The Reverend put three rooms at their disposal which was virtually his whole residence. Later, they stayed at Bishop Plum’s residence together with 150 other refugees.⁷⁷ The later location was confirmed by Rabbi Melchior’s son Bent in an interview, although he gave a figure of 60 rather than 150.⁷⁸ (This whole scene in the film of the Rabbi’s family hiding in the Koster residence is thus just drama. It is possible that other Jews were hidden in the Koster house, but nothing has been traced on this.)

Hospital where Jews hid

Film: Dr. Koster, the chief surgeon at the Christiana hospital in Copenhagen, calls together his staff on Thursday 30 September at 10 a.m. and says: “What can we do, how can we help? I propose we hide people, here in the hospital. It might only be for one night, two nights, until they can get up the coast and go to Sweden. I’m not going to pretend there isn’t danger in this We’d all be taking a big risk.... But if we work together I think we can do it.” In answer to the question why the hospital should do so, Koster answered: “We have the space we can use ambulances to move people and we are in the business of saving lives.” The head nurse replied: “The first thing I can do is have my staff to change the Jewish patients’ names to Christian ones.” Another nurse then commented: “We have empty beds and can admit the Jews as patients.” Another asked: “What about the psychiatric department?” and received the answer: “The Germans aren’t likely to look there. They’d be afraid they’d catch something.” Another suggestion was: “We can hide them in the morgue as well.” The head nurse then said: “Also in the nurses’ quarters. The nurses can

76 Yahil p.216 quoting evidence given to Yad Vashem (Yahil p.483 fn.52)

77 Melchior pp.181-82

78 BBC World Service interview on WITNESS, 8 October 2013 with Bent Melchior

double up” and then summarized the situation: “I think my staff will not only want to do this but would be ashamed not to.” [23 minutes]

History: No hospital in Copenhagen by the name of Christiana has been traced. (There is however in Copenhagen an area known as Freetown Christiana which was established in 1971 by a group of hippies who occupied some abandoned military barracks on the site and developed their own set of society rules, completely independent of the Danish government.) However, in real life there was a Dr. Karl Koster, who was the Director of the Bispebjerg Hospital which was built between 1907 and 1913. A paper on this hospital states: “Dr. Koster, who was in charge of Bispebjerg Hospital, was instrumental in arranging for hundreds of Jews to be hidden at the hospital before they made their escape to Sweden. The psychiatric building and the nurses' quarters were filled with refugees, who were all fed from the hospital kitchen. Virtually the entire medical staff at the hospital cooperated to save Jewish lives.”⁷⁹ The psychiatric building had the most room and was considered to be one of the least likely sections of the hospital to be searched by the Germans.⁸⁰ The head nurse, Signe Jansen, at this hospital played an important part in this rescue operation.⁸¹ She reported that the nurses were willing to give their rooms – a total of thirty nurses' rooms were made available for the Jews. In addition, in some cases the nurses doubled up or slept on couches or on the floor of their rooms.⁸² Several others added further details to this hiding of Jews in hospitals (Bispebjerg and/or other Copenhagen hospitals): Dr. Wendell A Howe writes: “Beds were quickly filled up with healthy Jews ‘rechristened’ with non-Jewish names in their charts. Out buildings were quickly filled up.”⁸³ Leo Goldberger, a Jew living in Copenhagen, remembers: “Doctors put patients they knew in hospitals, under false names and false diagnoses. German measles was one of them.”⁸⁴ Amelia Frye wrote: “At the hospital [name of hospital not specified], hundreds of Jews were hidden in the morgues and psychiatric wards.”⁸⁵ It should be mentioned that Bispebjerg hospital was an ideal place to hide Jews, since “the hospital has thousands of rooms, almost impossible to count. It also has dozens

79 Levy

80 Flender p.121

81 Werner p.49

82 Flender p.121

83 Howe

84 Stitzman; changing the names of Jewish “patients” is also mentioned in Lidegraad p.245 and by Loeffler p.54

85 Frye

of buildings connected by miles of underground tunnels. It is virtually impossible for anyone unfamiliar with the buildings and the tunnel system to find people who are hidden throughout the campus.”⁸⁶ Werstein added that this hospital “covered many wooded acres” and that the Germans preferred their own medical facilities and did not use this hospital.⁸⁷

Passing around the word of the planned arrests of Jews

Film: Hendrik who had heard his father talking about the planned roundup of Jews, met with his university friends and told them: “We have to get the word out. Skip your classes. This is more important than any class.” Other students in the group then added their own comments: “I’ll go to the dean, get names of Jewish students.” “My history professor is Jewish. He can tell the faculty.” “I pass by a Jewish butcher shop on the way to school. He’ll know of other Jewish businesses.” “Tell our parents. They all have Jewish friends.” Hendrik then said: “That’s the idea, all right? One person will know dozens, book sellers, shop keepers, policemen. The Danish police hate the Germans as much as we do.” [24 minutes]

History: The information regarding the proposed deportation of Jews was quickly passed around the Jews of Copenhagen.⁸⁸ On this, Herbert Pundik writes: “One of those present [in the Synagogue when Rabbi Melchior made his announcement] called my father who in turn called his old father and his brothers. In the course of a few hours almost all the Jews in Copenhagen had been notified of the German plans.”⁸⁹ Robert Pedersen, who was aged 17, recounted how he went from house to house in certain neighborhoods looking for name plates that indicated a Jewish family. He would ring the doorbell and persuade the people to pack up and go to the Bispegjerg hospital where Jews were assembling.⁹⁰ Jørgen Knudsen ripped out the pages of a public telephone directory, hid it under his coat, and used it to ascertain the addresses of Jews.⁹¹ Already by 24 September, Werner David Melchior, son of Rabbi Marcus Melchior, and a leader of the Zionist youth organization, warned his friends by telephone to prepare for a rescue to Sweden.⁹²

86 Levy

87 Werstein p.70

88 Flender p.63

89 Pundik p.12

90 Ibid. p.28

91 Flender pp.54-55

92 Goldenberg p.81

Ships to deport Jews

Film: Duckwitz informs Best: “Your ships on the way. They should be docking at 4.00, about two hours from now.” [26 minutes]

History: It was just before midnight on 29 September that ships, including the Wartheland, arrived in Copenhagen harbor.⁹³ (It is likely that these were the ships referred to by Duckwitz in the film.)

German officer in charge of arrests of Jews

Film: Werner Best greets Major Langer: “Welcome to Copenhagen,” who then replies: “It is an honour to be part of such an important mission, General”. Best then tells Langer: “This is Herr Duckwitz, our naval coordinator.” Duckwitz says to Langer: “Reichs-Marshall Himmler has spoken very highly of you Major” to which Lange replies: “He is most kind.” Best then says to Langer: “Major, this operation is very dear to my heart. It must be flawless. It will do honor to all of us.” [26 minutes]

History: Although there were several officers called “Major Lange” (rather than Langer) involved with the Holocaust, none seem to have been involved with Denmark. A news report of the time states that the German officer sent to deal with the arrest of Jews was Captain Kurt Daluege who was chief of the national uniformed *Ordnungspolizei* (Order Police) of [Nazi Germany](#). He arrived in Copenhagen on 28 September.⁹⁴ On his arrival the “Jewish Telegraphic Agency” wrote: “With the arrival in Copenhagen of Gen. Kurt Daluege, new Nazi dictator for Denmark, it was predicted in the Swedish press today that the 6,000 Danish Jews will soon be deported to Poland as were the Jews of Norway. The Dagens Nyheter, a Swedish newspaper, referring to Daluege’s anti-Jewish record, writes [on 29 September] that the first act of the leader of the Nazi Elite Guard will be ‘to start the deportation of all Jews from Denmark in accordance with Hitler’s policy.’”⁹⁵ Indeed his “first action in Denmark was to decree the immediate deportation to Poland of all Jews, whether Danish citizens or not.”⁹⁶ Although the various newspapers of that period report on the arrival of Kurt Daluege to Denmark, almost all the history books on this period make no mention of him coming to Denmark! Even a 300-page biography of Daluege by Caron Cadle just refers a reference regarding Daluege and Denmark to a book by George Creel which was written in 1944. In his book Creel writes: “At this writing there is an unconfirmed report to the effect that he

93 Flender pp.63-64

94 Joesten (VQR Winter 1944); another report states that he was already there by 27 September (Lidegraad p.64)

95 JTA, vol.10. no.227, 29 September 1943, p.4

96 Joesten (VQR Winter 1944)

[Hanneken] has been superseded by Kurt Daluege, the ‘butcher’ of Czechoslovakia.”⁹⁷ Caron also possibly hints at something regarding Daluege’s location between 28 September and 7 October but does not mention Denmark.⁹⁸ Other names of Germans have been quoted by historians as being in Copenhagen at that time in order to plan the operation. They are Rolf Gunther (who was Eichmann’s deputy) together with two assistants.⁹⁹

School Class Room

Film: On (probably) Thursday, 28 September, a teacher enters her class and says: “Before we take our lunch break I would like David, Fran and Nathaniel to gather up your things. Your parents are here to take you home. You are not in trouble. There is a little emergency and you will be better off with your families. They will explain.” The other pupils in the class wondered why these pupils were told to go home and one said: “Don’t you see, they’re all Jews.” [26 minutes]

History: Herbert Pundik was a 16-year-old pupil at that period and in his book “In Denmark – It could not happen” he relates of a similar incident which occurred with him: “It was Wednesday morning, September 29, in 1943, at the Metropolitan School in North Copenhagen. We were having a French lesson. The headmaster entered the classroom, interrupting the lesson. He pointed to me and a couple of my classmates, ‘Come out into the hall,’ he said. He spoke in a kind voice, so apparently we were not in for a scolding. He then added, ‘if there are any others of you of Jewish descent, you had better come along... We have been warned that persecution of the Jews will soon begin... You better hurry home. The Germans may be here at any moment.’”¹⁰⁰ There are also several other similar incidents which are recorded. Nine-year-old Jette Borenhoff was informed by the Catholic nuns in the French school which she attended, and fourteen-year-old Anita Melchior was warned by her piano teacher who came to get her.¹⁰¹

Anti-Jewish comments by a few Danes

Film: After the Jewish children had been sent home from school for their safety, the girl sitting next to Else Koster said to her: “My father says its time the Germans did something about the [Jewish] problem ... they [Jewish pupils]

97 Creel p.36

98 Caron p.217

99 Yahil pp.166,172; Eichmann trial session 83, 30 June 1961

100 Pundik pp.11-12

101 Werner pp.50-51

shouldn't be in the same school with us. That's what my mother says." Else expressed her disgust with these comments. [27 minutes]

History: Although almost all the Danish population was against the Nazis, there were some Danish Nazis – about three to four thousand.¹⁰² Even though the numbers of the Danish Nazis were small, an escaping Jew had to be careful on which taxi he rode in, since there was at least one Danish Nazi taxi driver.¹⁰³ Despite the fact that there is a photograph of Best standing between two Danish Nazis,¹⁰⁴ and that at one period they brought out an anti-Semitic newspaper *Kamptegnet*,¹⁰⁵ the leader of the Danish Nazi party confessed to his German masters that he could not master enough followers to make any difference.¹⁰⁶ One can see this from the Danish general election results on 23 March 1943, when the Danish Nazi party made a very poor showing,¹⁰⁷ with only 3.3 percent of the people voting for it.¹⁰⁸ Even though their numbers were small, the Danish Nazis participated in the raid to deport the Jews.¹⁰⁹ (It would seem that the parents of this school girl followed the Nazi's opinion of the Jews.)

Jews arriving at the Hospital to hide

Film: During the hours following the decision of the Christiana hospital to hide Jews there, numerous Jews arrived at that hospital (as many as 40 at a time) and were put into beds in the wards. The film shows them arriving in ambulances. One of the nurses comments proudly: "I don't know what's in the air but in the past 24 hours there have been an awful lot of people needing our attention." [27 minutes]

History: It is estimated that during this operation about 2,000 Jews passed through the Bispebjerg hospital.¹¹⁰ For transporting the Jews, ambulances were utilized.¹¹¹

Places to hide Jews

102 Goldberger p.203

103 Foighel p.30

104 Goldberger p.47

105 Ibid. p.30

106 Werstein p.10

107 Goldberger p.145

108 Werner p.22

109 Lidegraad p.294; Werstein p.69; Holbraad p.86; Spiegel

110 Yahil p.244

111 Flender p.122; Lidegraad p.247

Film: Places had to be found to hide the Jews. Hendrik was actively involved in this mission and handing an address to a woman said: “It’s a big house just outside the city. You’ll be safe there. It’s 27 Istedgade at Vesterbro, all right? It’s the home of a friend’s parent. He’s already got three families. He won’t mind another, okay? Good luck.” [28 minutes]

History: A major venue to hide Jews was the local hospitals. Other venues were schools, sanatoriums and institutions.¹¹² There were also numerous Danes who hid Jews in their houses, in some cases the houses being filled to over full capacity. For example, Mrs. Ellen Nielson had over thirty Jews squeezed into her small house.¹¹³ Istedgade is a street located in the Copenhagen district of Vesterbro. During the German occupation the local residents of this street were united under the slogan “Istedgade will never surrender.”¹¹⁴ The ground floor of 27 Istedgade was once an old butchery and is today a restaurant.¹¹⁵ – above that restaurant are (at least today) several floors of tenement style blocks.¹¹⁶ However, it does not seem to be outside the city but is west of the Copenhagen Central Station.¹¹⁷

Fear of discovery of Jews hiding in hospitals

Film: Numerous Jews were hidden in the Christiana Hospital, following the proposal by Dr. Koster. Also at that hospital at the time was the German Lieutenant Schmidt, who had been wounded in a Danish resistance attack. Suddenly the word was passed around that Werner Best accompanied by another German officer had arrived at the hospital to visit Schmidt. Jews who had just arrived to hide at the hospital were immediately put into beds as “patients.” At the same time, a further group of Jews had arrived and were immediately directed from the hospital entrance to the hospital chapel where a service was in progress. To divert the attention from Best discovering them, Koster escorted Best on a tour of the hospital. [31 minutes]

History: Details of the above as shown in the film, have not been traced. However, there were similar type incidents. The book “A Conspiracy of Decency” by Emmy Werner describes such incidents: “One evening Bispebjerg [Hospital] was surrounded by soldiers. On that night, 200 Jews were hidden in the hospital – many of them in the nurses’ quarters. It was feared that the Germans would begin their search early the next day. Promptly, at nine o’clock

112 Yahil p.241; Werner pp.48; Flender p.73

113 Werner p.57

114 Wikipedia - Istedgade

115 All Organic Pizza & Cocktail Hangout - Internet

116 Google maps

117 Wikipedia – Istedgade

in the morning a funeral procession rolled out of the chapel. In the rented cars, which the Germans did not check, were two hundred Jews on the way to Sweden.”¹¹⁸ The same book also reports on a similar incident which occurred on the next day at the Blegdams Hospital: “From the hospital entrance they were directed to the chapel from which yet another ‘funeral procession’ left shortly thereafter.”¹¹⁹

German armed combatants ordered to make arrests

Film: Best briefed a long row of soldiers (or police) who it was intended would make the arrests of Jews. He tells them to make the arrests “quickly and cleanly” but “take the Jews alive.” He then quotes Hitler’s credo: “Thy honor is thy loyalty.” [36 minutes] There is nothing in the film of armed combatants arriving in Denmark for this purpose.

History: The Germans who would be involved in the deportation of the Jews

arrived en masse in Copenhagen some time prior to 25 September.¹²⁰ Prior to 28 September, the German security police, who were under the direct command of Himmler had been briefed regarding carrying through the

action.¹²¹ It is the norm for police or soldiers to have a briefing before going on a mission. Hitler made the statement “Meine Ehre heißt Treue” (My honor is called loyalty) following the Stennes Revolt in early April

1931.¹²²

Shirt and Tie worn by the Rabbi

Film: The ties worn by the men in the film are of the regular style. However, the tie worn by Rabbi Abrams was on a wing tip shirt. The tie was thus visible around the Rabbi’s neck. [38 minutes]

History: There is a photograph of Rabbi Marcus Melchior riding a bicycle and wearing a wing tip shirt with a tie.¹²³

Friday 1 October sundown

118 Werner. p.49

119 Ibid. p.50

120 Ibid. p.34; Foighel p.41

121 Werner p.39

122 Wikipedia - Meine Ehre heißt Treue

123 Werner p.42

Film: The caption on the film states: “Friday October 1 sundown Rosh Hashanah.” The family of Rabbi Abrams are hiding in the house of the Koster family. The wife of Rabbi Abrams lights the candles. Elsie Koster serves them fruit to dip in honey and asks whether it is correct, saying she has learned it in school. In turn Rabbi Abrams says he has studied the Christian religion and quotes: “I was hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in.” He then recited a prayer in English based on Rosh Hashanah prayers and also the blessing “Shehecheyanu” [38 minutes]

History: Rosh Hashanah in 1943 began on Wednesday night 29 September.¹²⁴ Friday night was at the termination of Rosh Hashanah and the beginning of the Sabbath. Candles are lit both just before the start of the Sabbath and Festivals. The blessing Shehecheyanu and the dipping of apple in honey is done on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. The quote by Rabbi Abrams is from the New Testament.¹²⁵ (As was stated above, Rabbi Melchior and his family were not in the Koster house at that period, or possibly not at any time.)

Entering Jewish apartments on the night of the roundup

Film: Major Langer instructs the soldiers: “Search every house. Find every Jew.” Scenes are then shown of the soldiers forcibly breaking into Jewish apartments and finding them empty. [41 minutes]

History: The evidence given by Karl Heinz Hoffman, (who headed the Gestapo in Denmark) at the Nuremburg trials stated that the German police were forbidden to open the apartment of Jews by force since a violent entry would disgrace the Germans in the eyes of the Danes.¹²⁶ Earlin Foss, a member of the resistance writes that there were some police who just rang the doorbell and when there was no answer went away.¹²⁷ However, despite the ruling not to use force to enter apartments, the Germans often bashed down doors or broke the lock, in their search for Jews.¹²⁸

Jews resisting arrest

Film: During their search the Germans enter an apartment and see a Jew sitting there. The German says: “Old man, you are coming with us.” The Jew takes out a gun and replies: “No my friend you are coming with me” and he then shoots at

124 information from Hebrew Date Converter

125 Matthew 25:35

126 Yahil p.172, p.472 n.75; Eichmann trial session 36, 11 May 1961, and session 83, 30 June 1961

127 Pundik p16; similar comments by Flender pp.71-72 and Yahil p.184

128 Yahil p.184; Pundik p.16

the German. It seems from the film that the Germans shoot back at this man. [43 minutes]

History: In his book, Foighel reproduces a photograph (which is not to clear) and writes in the caption: “The hunt for Jews was quite dramatic. In this case, a Jew who resisted was shot in an apartment and is being taken away in an ambulance.”¹²⁹

Two hundred and two Danish Jews

Film: On the night scheduled for the arrest of Jews, Langer enters Best’s office and says: “I have the first reports back from the squads, sir” to which Best asks: “How many have been arrested? It’s been three hours. There must be thousands.” Langer answers: “Two hundred and two” to which Best asks: “Is this a joke?” to which Langer adds: “Of those 18 were suicides, 39 were bedridden.” [43 minutes]

History: The number “202” is given in a report written by Best after the implementation of the operation (and produced at the Eichmann trial): “In the Greater Copenhagen area 202 Jews were seized.”¹³⁰ This number is also mentioned in a slightly different context: “The next day, the German steamship Wartheland leaves with 202 Jews. The night of the round ups produced less than 5 per cent of the planned catch.”¹³¹ Bo Lidegraad also gives a similar figure: “The harvest of the action of the night was a little more than 200 people and the [German] ship was departing from Copenhagen harbor with 207 people of Jewish origin.”¹³² A slightly higher number is given in a telegram¹³³ sent to Best on 4 October 1943 from the German Foreign Ministry and signed by Andor Hencke: “Reichssicherheitshauptamt [Reich Main Security Office] announced that the Jewish action led to the seizure of 284 persons in all.”¹³⁴ The further 82 Jews were those who were found in Jutland and in Funen.¹³⁵ Later a further 197 Jews were arrested whilst trying to escape.¹³⁶ The figure 202 stated in the film included 18 suicides. These were obviously not amongst the 202 on the ship, although it is likely that the bedridden were taken to the ship.¹³⁷

129 Foighel p. 37

130 Eichmann trial, session 36, 11 May 1961

131 The Danish Solution, documentary at 24 minutes

132 Bo Lindegraad lecture at 41 minutes, this figure is also given in his book p.154

133 exhibit no T/583 in Eichmann trial

134 quoted by Yahil p.477 fn.117

135 Holbraad p.86; Lidegraad p.155

136 Holbraad p.86

137 possibly hinted at in Lidegaard p.155

Best's telegram to Berlin

Film: Best was so confident of success that at the beginning of the night of the planned arrests of Jews he said: "I have already sent a telegram to Hitler reporting on our complete success." [44 minutes]

History: In this telegram Best wrote: "It was my duty to clean Denmark from her Jews, and this is achieved, Denmark is 'Judenrein' - clean of Jews and completely purged." Needless to add this was sent prematurely!¹³⁸

Suicides by the Danish Jews

Film: Major Langer reporting on the number of Jews arrested on the night of October 1, informs Best they found "18 suicides" [44 minutes] A few days earlier, Elsie Koster and her daughter go to Isaac Levy's shop to collect a repaired garment and they find a note: "Is no longer my world, Shalom. Isaac Levy" and they then find he had committed suicide. [37 minutes]

History: There were indeed some cases of Danish Jews who committed suicide at that period.¹³⁹ Samuel Abrahamsen writes: "Some [Jews] committed suicide rather than face deportation and death."¹⁴⁰ In a similar vein, Aage Bertelsen reports: "Several people committed suicide. We heard of fathers who killed their families and themselves to avoid a fate which they feared more than death."¹⁴¹ In his evidence to Yad Vashem, Karl Lachmann, the vice president of the Copenhagen Jewish community, said that some Jews had bought poison with the view to avoid capture when the time came.¹⁴²

Helpless people rounded up

Film: Major Langer reported to Best that the 202 Jews rounded up included 39 bedridden. [44 minutes]

History: In an old age home situated next to a synagogue, thirty of the old people in the home were trapped.¹⁴³ Rabbi Melchior writes: "[There were Jews who] were too old or too weak to be physically or mentally fit to take flight."¹⁴⁴

Searching for hidden Jews

138 Flender p.64

139 Flender pp.66-67; Lidegaard pp.150, 214-15, 238

140 Goldberger p.8

141 Bertelsen p.13

142 Yahil pp.203, 481 fn.20

143 Ibid. p.213

144 Melchior p.180

Film: After finding no Jews at home on the night of Rosh Hashanah, Best in a fury screamed that one must search the houses, set up roadblocks, blockade the harbor, break down the doors of the churches, (etc.) [44 minutes]

History: The Germans indeed made these various searches looking for the Jews. Aage Bertelsen writes that on the evening of Sunday 3 October he received a telephone call that the Germans were searching houses on the coast.¹⁴⁵ It was reported that the Nazis were stopping some cars on the main road to Copenhagen.¹⁴⁶ On at least one occasion the Germans arrived at a fishing port and arrested Jews.¹⁴⁷ German harbor police would go on to boats to check papers before sailing.¹⁴⁸ One of the places the Gestapo searched was the church at Gilleleje. They thundered at the door and demanded it be opened. It was finally opened and the Gestapo stormed in and broke into the high loft when Jews were hiding and dragged the Jews out.¹⁴⁹

Searching non-Jewish houses for hidden Jews

Film: After Best shouted out his orders, the Germans began a search of the homes of the non-Jews. One of the houses they went to was that of the Koster family. They made a search of the house and reached the linen closet in the attic where Rabbi Abrams and his family were hiding. They were just about to discover them, when at the precise second Lieutenant Schmidt, who had been operated upon by Dr. Koster following his injury by a Danish resistance member, arrived and he vouched for Dr. Koster, resulting in the search being stopped. [45 minutes]

History: A similar but not identical incident occurred with a woman named Grethe who had a hotel in which Jews were hidden. One day the Germans came to search for Jews. They searched through the building until they reached the top floor, where the staff lived: “Grethe was ordered to summon all the servants. There was only one missing, a maid, who had gone up to town ... She [Grethe] placed herself in the narrow corridor in front of the door to the maid’s room, and she made her slender body as broad as possible, spreading out both her arms and shouting, ‘The German police suspect us of hiding Jews. Open your doors.’ The doors flew open, and the Germans teemed in on both sides of Grethe and found nothing. There was nothing strange about that: the eight Jews

145 Bertelsen p.47

146 Hæstrup p.201

147 Yahil p.269

148 Bertelsen p.151

149 Lidgaard pp.287-88

were in the maid's room behind the door which Grethe covered with her body.”¹⁵⁰

Additional German forces requested

Film: Following the disappearance of the Jews, Best was fuming at this and was determined to find methods to prevent the Jews from escaping to Sweden. Duckwitz informs him: “As you requested, I’ve asked, for five more E-boats to patrol The Sound but unfortunately they might not be here for a few more days.” Best then screamed out: “I want them by tomorrow. The resistance must not succeed.” [50 minutes]

History: Nothing has been found paralleling this scene on the film, although there were a number of cases of police and other security forces arriving to carry out the deporting of Jews, but all this was before the Jews disappeared.

Fishing boats

Film: Dr. Koster and Ode Andersen, meeting together realized that time was of the essence and they therefore needed to get the Jews to Sweden as fast as possible. Andersen then said: “You do know, the Germans have impounded all Danish vessels,” to which Koster replied: “Except fishing boats.” [50 minutes]

History: On 1 October, the Germans issued a regulation ordering all small boats and sports craft to be concentrated in specific anchorages. The official reason they gave was “in view of the approaching winter,” although the real reason was to prevent people fleeing from Denmark.¹⁵¹ A number of different boats were used to transport the Jews to Sweden: Trawlers, fishing boats, rowboats, and a motley flotilla of seaborne conveyances.¹⁵² Although most of the Jews escaped in fishing boats, there were also those who escaped in cargo boats, which had been chartered.¹⁵³ There were about 300 fishing boats involved in the operation and together they made about one thousand crossings.¹⁵⁴ The biggest crossings were made on a schooner and on one occasion there were 230 passengers on board.¹⁵⁵ It would seem that the regulations of the Germans regarding permissible boats was not observed.

150 Bertelsen pp.127-28

151 Yahil p.256

152 Werstein p.72

153 Yahil p.258

154 Werner p.61; Flender p.199 quotes a figure of “over a thousand” but includes boats other than fishing boats

155 Bertelsen p.113

Fishing ports

Film: Koster showed Andersen a map, hidden under a wall picture, of fishing ports saying: “If we can get people to these little fishing ports, maybe we can find fishermen to take them across The Sound.” Andersen then asked Koster how to get the Jews to the coast, since there are roadblocks everywhere. Koster replied “ambulances.” [50 minutes] This map was later discovered by Langer whilst searching Dr. Koster’s office, and taken, presumably to know the locations from where Jews will be escaping. [71 minutes]

History: There were more than fifty embarkation points for the escaping Jews along the coast of Zealand, Møen, Falster from Gilleleje in the north to Hæsnes in the south.¹⁵⁶ Pundik writes how Jews who had been hiding in hospitals were taken by ambulances belonging to the Falck Rescue Corps from the hospitals to embarkation points along the coast from Gilleleje to Holbæk.¹⁵⁷ However, the map he reproduces has only 26 embarkation points.¹⁵⁸

Warehouses on coast

Film: During a meeting of the student helpers, Jørgen comes in and says: “I found a warehouse where we can take people.” [51 minutes]

History: Twenty-two-year-old Henny Sinding Sundo recalls: “My task was every evening to look for Jews [that had been hidden by friends and neighbours], to assemble them in groups of twenty or twenty-five, and to guide them to the warehouse, where we hid them.”¹⁵⁹

Rationed Gasoline

Film: One of the students helping with the rescue says: “Conroy’s got petrol ration cards.” [51 minutes]

History: Pundik refers to rationing of petrol: “Private car owners spent their last drop of rationed gasoline patrolling the hinterland of the coastal area to pick up frightened Jews who had nowhere to go.”¹⁶⁰

Hiding in woods

156 Werner p.61

157 Pundik p.26

158 Ibid. p.126 - however on p.41 he gives the number as 27

159 Werner p.67; warehouses are also mentioned by Loeffler p.56

160 Goldberger p.86

Film: Some Jews had run into the woods to hide. Hendrik and his young friends went there to find these Jews, warning them that the Germans were looking for them, and directed them to a truck waiting to take them to the coast. [51 minutes]

History: A number of Jews had run to the woods to hide and there was some difficulty to locate them. To accomplish this, about 200 members of the “Academic Rifle and Sports Club” (Akademisk Skytteforenings Terrainsportsafdeling) were recruited. Most of its members were students and young people. It seems that when the Jews were located they were taken to the hospital from where their escape to Sweden could be arranged.¹⁶¹ In addition, students established a group called “The Student Intelligence Service” (Studenternes Efterretningstjeneste) who set up an escape route and were extremely active in all rescue work.¹⁶² There were also four girls (in their early twenties and a teenager) who would accompany the Jews, from amongst other locations, parks and woods.¹⁶³

Germans using dogs to locate hiding Jews

Film: Germans are shown using dogs when searching for Jews in hiding. [52 minutes]

History: Pundik writes: “The German patrols had been intensified. They were bringing dogs.”¹⁶⁴ They also used dogs to try and locate Jews hidden on boats.¹⁶⁵

Jews travelling in the hold of ships

Film: In a conversation between Dr. Koster and the fisherman Stig Flender regarding the number of Jews who could go on the boat, Stig replied: “Twenty will be a tight squeeze. I can’t have anybody on deck.” [55 minutes] The reason was that should any Germans see the boat they would see the Jews. They therefore had to hide in the hold of the ship. A scene showing Jews going into the hold of a boat is shown. [72 minutes]

History: In order to be hidden from the Germans, the Jews had to travel in the hold of the boats.¹⁶⁶ The holds of a fishing boat could hold just under 20 people, whereas that of a cargo boat could conceal hundreds.¹⁶⁷ Sam Besekow and his

161 Yahil p.243; Pundik p.40; Loeffler p.54

162 Yahil p.247

163 Pundik p.104

164 Goldberger p.89

165 Loeffler p.73; Frye

166 Pundik pp.111-12 includes a photograph

167 Yahil pp.258-59 also includes a photograph of Jews coming out of hold (Yahil between pp. 268-69)

wife were first hidden in a herring case thoughtfully provided with breathing holes before being transferred to the hold of the boat.¹⁶⁸ Leo Goldberger reports that he and others on their boat were directed to the cargo area and were then covered with “smelly canvases.”¹⁶⁹ In some cases the Jews were hidden in huge boxes and cases which were loaded onto the ship as material destined for Sweden.¹⁷⁰ It is reported that two women were crammed in a box which was nailed down and then put in the hold.¹⁷¹

German patrol boats

Film: Dr. Koster, who had gone to the coast, asked the fisherman Stig: “What about German patrol boats?” Stig replied: “Ah, they go pretty much to schedule. The trick for us is to make the run as soon as they go by. [55 minutes]

History: Although there were some German patrol boats active during the period of the transfer of Jews to Sweden,¹⁷² there were fewer than usual as can be seen in the memoirs of Duckwitz. He writes of the courageous action of the German commander of the port of Copenhagen who saw to it that the coastal patrol vessels of the German fleet were in need of repairs precisely at that time and were therefore unable to be put to sea.¹⁷³ Even if a German patrol boat discovered Jews on a boat, they would not always take action. Urick Plesner, a Danish Jew, wrote about an incident when a German patrol boat spotted a fishing vessel. The German captain asked the fisherman what the ship was carrying and received the answer “fish.” The German captain got on the fishing boat and demanded that the hold be opened and he saw Jews there. The captain then said in a loud voice that all his crew could hear “Ah fish!” and he returned to his boat and sailed into the night.¹⁷⁴ In another case, it was reported to a Major in the German army that some Jews were escaping in a trawler. The Major simply answered it is the job for the Gestapo to stop them. We’re soldiers not bloodhounds.”¹⁷⁵

Amount of payment to fishermen

168 Goldberger p.134

169 Ibid. pp.166-67

170 Flender p.203

171 Lidegraad p.208

172 Yahil pp.258-60 quoting from evidence at Yad Vashem (Yahil p.488 fn.95, 96)

173 Ibid. p. 267; Werner p.37

174 Werner p.82

175 Werstein pp.73-74

Film: Dr. Koster asked the fisherman Stig how much it will cost for the trip to Sweden. Stig answered: “Two thousand kroner a trip.” [Note that he did not say per person but per trip, indicating that the number of Jews on the fishing boat was irrelevant.] Koster was shocked by the high prize to which the fisherman explained: “If the men are caught they will lose their boats and maybe even their lives.” Dr. Koster replied: “We have thousands of people. Some of them don’t have any money at all.” [56 minutes]

History: One of the resistance members, Aage Bertelsen, wrote regarding the high price: “It was universally recognized among the helpers of the Jews that those who actually manned boats deserved good pay for their work. They risked considerably more than all the others. If they got caught they stood to lose their mean of subsistence, their boat or ship, to say nothing of being in direct danger of their lives.”¹⁷⁶ A similar justification was made by Rabbi Melchior.¹⁷⁷ The original price could range between 1,000 to 10,000 kroner per person but after some reorganization the figure fell to 500 kroner.¹⁷⁸ However, Lidegaard wrote that it is estimated that the average price per person was one thousand kroners.¹⁷⁹ There were some who exploited the situation but no-one who could not afford to pay was left behind. On the other hand, wealthy Jews paid between 4,000 to 5,000 kroner.¹⁸⁰

Germans at the coast

Film: At a meeting of the student helpers, on Sunday 3 October, one student asked: “How long before the Germans are on the coast.?” She was answered: “They’re there already. People were caught yesterday. [56 minutes]

History: On the evening of 5 October when the boats were about the sail, the Gestapo suddenly appeared and tens of Jews were arrested.¹⁸¹ (There is a discrepancy with the date given in the film, although a similar incident could also have occurred on an earlier date.)

Raising money to pay fisherman

Film: A large amount of money had to be raised without any delay whatsoever to pay the fishermen. Dr. Koster was speaking to someone on the telephone: “Today the banks are closed, but tomorrow, first thing. We need it as fast as we can.” He then said to his wife: “It’s going to take a lot of money to get these

176 Bertelsen p.61

177 Melchior p.181

178 Yahil p.261; Werner pp.61-62

179 Lidegaard p.335

180 Goldberger p.101

181 Yahil p.269

people to Sweden,” to which she replied that her daughter “Else and I are going to the pastor. We will ask the pastor to take up a collection.” [58 minutes]

History: To transport over 7,000 Jews to Sweden required an astronomical amount of money and this was raised from numerous sources. Sometimes a rich Jew willingly helped others but usually it was the underground movement and other Danish rescue organizations which collected the money.¹⁸² The medical association co-operated and also made contact with an unofficial committee which included representatives of various social groups. In addition, contact was maintained with politicians and trade union leaders. The head of the Jewish community gave several hundred thousand kroner.¹⁸³ No-one was left behind because of lack of money.¹⁸⁴ Two young people, Elsebeth and Klaus Ronholt, who went from estate to estate managed to collect one million kroners in the course of a few days.¹⁸⁵ The vicar of Lyngby, Pastor Krohn, offered to raise a fund for this purpose.¹⁸⁶ Ebba Lund, aged twenty recalls how she and her sister Ulla, aged nineteen went begging for small and large amounts, but after a while people came to their house to donate money.¹⁸⁷

Hiding the money raised

Film: Whilst Doris Koster was waiting in a line to have her papers checked, a man came her and slipped something into her pocket saying: “I know what your husband is doing. He saved my life once. It is time to pay him back.” Doris deliberately dropped her handbag and whilst she was picking it up slipped this money into an especially large stocking she was wearing. [60 minutes]

History: A certain businessman (identified as A. A.) handed over to a woman collector 10,000 kroner as “conscience money” since he had not believed her stories about Germany. Very soon after he gave her a further 40-50,000 kroner.¹⁸⁸ Professor Richard Ege’s wife was walking down the road when a man stopped her and gave her 10,000 kroner and disappeared. A few minutes later another man did likewise. She then went behind a bicycle shed and hid the money in her stocking.¹⁸⁹

Searching Danes

182 Ibid. p.261

183 Ibid. p.262

184 Ibid. p.262; Loeffler p.71

185 Pundik pp.105-06; Goldberger p.146

186 Bertelsen p.64

187 Werner p.64

188 Yahil pp.261-262

189 Bertelsen pp.76-77

Film: In addition to having her papers checked the police searched Doris Koster's handbag. [61 minutes]

History: The "Danish Listening Post" reports that during the first days of October 1943 "people were searched in the streets, at the railway station ..." ¹⁹⁰ More specifically, from a report by a young Danish man named Svend Otto Nielsen, it can be seen that there were indeed spot searches in the street. He states that when he left the main railway station in Copenhagen one morning early in October 1943 he was searched by the Germans. ¹⁹¹

Bribing Germans in Denmark

Film: Hendrik was driving some Jews to the boats when he was stopped at a roadblock by two Germans. He was asked to show his papers and he inserted some money between the papers as a bribe. The German who inspected his papers, accepted the bribe and told him he could continue. However, the second German then told him to open the back of his lorry and when he saw the Jews there arrested Hendrik. [61 minutes]

History: There are a number of reported instances of the Germans in Denmark who were prepared to accept bribes. On this a student relates: "The medical association used to supply its agents with large sums of cash, so we could use it to give bribes if we were arrested. It was not usually difficult to bribe the German soldiers." ¹⁹² A case is reported where a glass of beer every morning was sufficient! ¹⁹³ In his book, Aage Bertelsen reports on a specific incident where a bribe was offered but rejected. However, this incident had a pleasant ending. The Germans had stopped a car driven by Bent Petersen and demanded that the people get out to be examined Petersen unsuccessfully objected and offered the Germans a 500 kroner note which was angrily rejected. He then pointed to some people at the back of the car saying: "Be human. We have children with us!" The Germans looked at them, slammed the door of the car and told them to drive on. ¹⁹⁴

Sweden agrees to admit Jews

Film: Ole Andersen informs Dr. Koster on 3 October: "The Swedes have made a decision. They will admit the Jews. All Danish Jews are welcome." Koster answered: "This is great news. I don't know how you did it." Andersen replies: "I had a friend (but doesn't give the name of the friend)." [63 minutes]

190 Danish Listening Post, op.cit. p.3

191 Lidegaard p.183

192 Yahil pp.266-67

193 Werner p.68

194 Bertelsen pp.145-46

History: One of those who had negotiated with Sweden to accept the Jews was the Jewish scientist Niels Bohr, who himself had escaped to Sweden in September 1943. In the course of his negotiations, Bohr met with members of the Swedish government and with the King of Sweden.¹⁹⁵ On 29 September, the Swedish Ambassador to Denmark, Gustav von Dardell informed the head of the Jewish community, Henriques, that Sweden would be open to all Jewish refugees.¹⁹⁶ On 2 October the Swedish radio announced that the Swedish government had decided to offer asylum to refugees from Denmark.¹⁹⁷ (It was thus well known by 3 October. It should then not have been a surprise to Koster!)

Danish police

Film: Hendrik was arrested when driving a van with Danish Jews hidden in it. He was taken to the Danish police station and whilst they were waiting for the Gestapo to take him in for questioning, Dr. Koster arrived and persuaded the Danish police to let him go which they did. They did not even take the money that Dr. Koster offered them to release him. [64 minutes]

History: A similar type incident is reported by Jette Hecht-Johansen, a resistance fighter. Three resistance fighters were taking six Jews in a taxi to the fishermen. On the way they were stopped by the Germans who discovered the Jews, arrested them and later handed them over to the Danish police who took them to their police station. There the Danish police said: “Now we let you out through the back door – and please see to it that you disappear, the sooner the better to Sweden.”¹⁹⁸ The following shows the same principle. Prior to 29 August 1943, the Danish police barely assisted the underground. After that date things changed and following 1 October they actively worked together with the underground in the rescue of Jews. Not only did they ignore the open activities at the fishing villages and turn a blind eye to the boats leaving the shore, but they even put their own patrol boats at the disposal of Jews fleeing to Sweden.¹⁹⁹

Resistance workers injured and killed by Germans

Film: Immediately after his release by the Danish police, the Gestapo arrived and in a gun battle Jørgen was killed and Hendrik injured. [65 minutes] Hendrick was taken to Koster’s house on the coast, given first aid [65 minutes] and then put on a fishing boat to Sweden. [69 minutes]

195 Goldberger p.10; Bohr’s meetings in Sweden are also mentioned by Yahil p.328, by Lidegaard p.168, and by Loeffler p.54

196 Goldberger p.49

197 Pundik p.23; Lidegaard p.168; Werner p.83

198 Goldberger pp.127-130

199 Yahil pp.248-49

History: There were numerous cases where resistance members were caught and killed or injured by the Germans.²⁰⁰

Hiding religious artifacts

Film: When deciding what things the Abrams family should leave behind, Rabbi Abrams says: “There’s just a few things it pains me to part with. This Bible is over a hundred years old. This menorah has been in my family for generations. It was my grandfathers.” Dr. Koster’s daughter offers to take them and hide them somewhere safe. [67 minutes] She takes them to the church where the pastor says: “You were right to bring it here. I’ll keep it safe until the Abrams return.” [68 minutes]

History: Although the hiding of personal religious artifacts has not been traced, a similar thing did occur. It was with the Sifrei Torah of Rabbi Melchior’s Synagogue, the Great Synagogue of Copenhagen which was situated in Krystalgrad Street. On this, a book edited by Kevin P. Spicer writes: “The pastor of Trinitatis Church in central Copenhagen ... received the Torah scrolls from the nearby synagogue in Krystalgade and hid them in a secret chamber in his church.”²⁰¹ Another source adds that the “secret chamber” was the catacombs of the church and that they were kept there until the end of the war.²⁰² According to Pundik’s book it was the priests at the Trinitatis Church who transported the Sifrei Torah to their Church,²⁰³ and Yahil writes that the hiding of the Sifrei Torah was “carried out under the supervision of the Copenhagen municipality.”²⁰⁴

Not using telephone

Film: Towards the end of the film, the Germans were after Dr. Koster and his family therefore needed to flee to Sweden. Dr. Koster and his wife spoke to each other by telephone to agree on a meeting place. Dr. Koster did not tell his wife the place directly but just gave a hint, namely “where we began our life together.” Obviously, they were concerned that their telephone was being tapped. [70 minutes]

History: When following the raid to capture the Jews by the Germans, and the Jews in the course of planning their escape to Sweden, they took the

200 Werstein pp.45, 56; Goldberger pp.144,146,147,150; Flender pp.117,125-26, 228-29, 231,233, 237; Lidegaard p.361; Bertelsen pp.129-30,157, 217-18

201 Spicer p.5

202 The Danish Solution, documentary at 18 minutes

203 Pundik pp.61, 62

204 Yahil p.288

precautionary measure of “not using the phone.”²⁰⁵ Robert Pedersen reports that he prevented someone from telephoning Rabbi Melchior to confirm the warning saying that his telephone “was probably bugged by the Germans.”²⁰⁶ Aage Bertelsen writes: “When we talked on the phone we always exercised a certain amount of caution because of possible wiretapping”; they used code words such as the names of well-known beers.²⁰⁷

Ensuring that children slept during boat journey

Film: Needless to say, absolute silence was required during the boat journey to Sweden. Young children could easily cry or make other noises and it was therefore necessary to make them sleep. In the film a baby about to be taken on the boat starts to cry. Dr. Koster who happened to be aside the boat gives the baby an injection saying: “It’s a mild sedative. It won’t harm her. She’ll just be quiet during the trip.” [72 minutes]

History: There are a number of recorded cases of children made to sleep before embarking on the boats, either by a doctor giving an injection, or giving the child some sleeping pills.²⁰⁸ One such doctor was Dr. Jørgen Gersfelt.²⁰⁹ There was a case which occurred in the house of Elise Schmidt Peterson who was hiding Jews: “At midnight a doctor arrived and told the refugees that their boat was ready. He gave each of the three children an injection that made them sleepy.”²¹⁰ Flender reports on an unknown doctor who was called in the middle of the night to give children an injection of a sedative with the doctor adding: “Maybe it’s a good idea to inject them again just before leaving for the boats.”²¹¹ Another recollection on this subject was given by Henny Sinding Sundo: “The Jews we brought passed the night in the warehouse granary, watching for favorable moments to cross the quay. In the warehouse we left them something to eat and drink, and also sleeping draughts to make the children sleep, as it was essential that no noise could be heard by the German soldiers patrolling outside.”²¹²

Dr. Koster helping Jews to board the fishing boats

205 Yahil p.182; Loeffler p.47

206 Pundik p.31

207 Bertelsen p.121; Flender p.146

208 Goldberger pp.164-65; Flender pp.153-54; Bertelsen p.124; Loeffler p.69

209 Goldberger p.86; Flender p.154

210 Werner p.58

211 Flender pp.106-08

212 Werner p.67

Film: There is a scene of Dr. Koster at the fishing port seeing the Jews into the fishing boats. [71 minutes]

History: Flender writes: “On several occasions Dr. Koster accompanied the refugees to the docks.”²¹³

Insufficient room on a fishing boat for an entire family

Film: Rabbi Abrams, his wife, daughter and her fiancé arrive at the port to alight the fishing boat. Rabbi Abrams and his wife alight and just as his daughter and fiancé are about to go on, the boat the captain says that there was no more room. Rabbi Abrams and his wife suggest that their daughter and her fiancé travel in their place, but they reject the offer. At that moment the Germans arrive at the port and start shooting and so the captain says there is no alternative but for the daughter and her fiancé (and also others) to travel on this boat. [72 minutes]

History: A similar incident is reported by Hanne Kaufmann who was then sixteen years old. Hanne, her mother, her brother and her sister were hoping to go on a boat to Sweden on 5 October. However, they were told that there was only room for two passengers and not four. They had to make the decision of which two. However, a few days later they all managed to travel on a boat to Sweden.²¹⁴

Boat Crew Collaborating with Germans

Film: One of the fisherman, Arne, who should have been ready to sail immediately with a group of Jews says: “I'm having trouble with my engine....Keeps cutting out.” Stig answers: “Let me take a look. Hey! You cut the fuel line! You traitor! You sabotaged your own boat!” Arne is also shown on the quayside looking around, possibly in hopeful expectation, that the Germans will come to arrest the Jews. [73 minutes]

History: A case of a traitor Danish ship captain was described in great detail by Ralph Oppenheim in his book entitled “The Door of Death.”²¹⁵ His family was on a boat which had broken down. This captain took them on board his ship and immediately handed them over to the Germans.²¹⁶

Germans arriving at fishing port

Film: On the afternoon of Sunday 3 October, Germans suddenly arrive as Jews were about to board a fishing vessel. There was a shoot-out between the

213 Flender p.123

214 Werner pp.54-56

215 Oppenheim pp.16-43

216 this is also briefly described in: Yahil p.268; Pundik p.68; Flender pp. 209-10; Goldberger p.110; Lidegaard p.192

Germans and members of the resistance but meanwhile numerous Jews board the board and it sails off. [73 minutes]

History: An exact parallel to the above has not been found but there is slight similarity to the following incident. On the evening of 5 October a boat was about to depart with nineteen Jews when the Germans arrived and demanded it should stop or they would fire at it. However, the skipper started to move out of the quay and the Germans started to fire at it. When the bullets started hitting the boat, the skipper jumped out and the Jews then tried to gain control of the boat and go full speed ahead but without success. The Jews were arrested.²¹⁷

Only four hundred Jews caught by Germans

Film: Best screams out: “Four hundred. Four hundred Jews out of thousands. How did it go wrong?” To Duckwitz he then says but later apologizes: “Perhaps it was you who tipped off the Jews.” [75 minutes]

History: The Germans succeeded in catching 464 Jews whilst, 7,220 managed to reach Sweden.²¹⁸ Indeed, as described above, Duckwitz had tipped off the Jews.

Arrest of wife of person active in escape of Jews

Film: After suspecting Dr. Karl Koster’s connection with the escape of Danish Jews, the Germans told his wife Doris to tell Karl report to them for questioning. Immediately after that, Doris and her daughter Else were on their way to meet Karl in order to escape to Sweden, when they noticed they were being followed by car by the Germans. Doris, to put off the Germans, told Else to walk on ahead and Doris then deliberately passed the place where Karl was hiding. The Germans followed Doris and then whilst taking her in to their car said: “Mrs. Koster, come with me, we have some questions for you at Gestapo headquarters.” [80 minutes] Meanwhile, the rest of the family escaped to Sweden. Doris was detained by the Germans until just before Christmas and then released. She was only reunited with Karl two years later after the war. [87 minutes]

History: A very similar incident indeed occurred with the Koster family. Mrs. Koster related the details to the author Harold Flender.²¹⁹ One night two Germans showed up at the Koster apartment. They said to Mrs. Koster: “We would like to see your husband.” She answered that he was not in and did not know when he would be back. They said they would wait. Sometime later, two Jews came in to see Dr. Koster. Mrs. Koster said they were two medical students. The German thus surmised that Dr. Koster would soon return. A little later a medical student, Kato Bachmann, who worked with Koster in the rescue

217 Lidegraad pp.255-56

218 Goldberger p.95

219 Flender p.269 chap.9 fn.8

operation arrived. The Germans wanted to search his boots for illegal papers. Instead of taking them off, he leapt through the window. The Germans then shot at him killing him. At that moment Dr. Koster was almost at his home and on hearing the shots, telephoned his wife. She very cleverly pretended it was someone else and said: "Dr. Koster is not home. He won't be home until much later." He understood the message and went straight to hide in the home of his friend. When it was clear that he would not turn up, they arrested her and took her to Vestre prison. There they questioned her daily for three weeks but she gave them no information. She was then sent to a German prison camp but released two weeks later. Meanwhile Dr. Koster was smuggled into Sweden and then went on to London. He did not see his wife again for almost three years.²²⁰ This was not a unique incident and a very similar one occurred with the Bertelsen family.²²¹

Adolf Eichmann

Film: After the Jews of Denmark had escaped to Sweden, Major Langer enters General Werner Best's office and says: "The Fuhrer has sent Adolf Eichmann to see you." Best answers: "I'm honored," to which Lange replies: "I do not believe he has come to honor you, General." Best replies: "I promised to purge Denmark of Jews and it is purged. You can confirm this to him" to which Langer answers: "Herr Eichmann has not come to see me General. He is waiting and he is not a patient man." [85 minutes] The film does not show the meeting between Best and Eichmann.

History: On Saturday 2 October 1943, "Werner Best made his first report on the action to Berlin. The action Best reported had been a tremendous success Now from this day he could report that Denmark was free of its Jews."²²² Eichmann certainly arrived in Copenhagen after the failure to roundup the Danish Jews. However, there are different opinions as to the date Eichmann arrived and to what he did when he arrived. The earliest date is given by Flender and he states that he arrived on 3 October, which was just a couple of days after the failure, and in Copenhagen he berated Best.²²³ Another date quoted is 2 November;²²⁴ (this could have been a further visit). On this visit, Isi Foighel writes in his book: "We do not know for certain the real reason why this mass murderer [Eichmann] came to Copenhagen. Some believe that his job was to try

220 Flender pp.124-26; incident of Kato Bachmann also described in Goldberger p.147

221 Bertelsen pp.182,189,191-94, 216; Flender p.149

222 Bo Lindegraad lecture at 42 minutes

223 Flender p.64

224 Lidegraad p.343; Foighel p.47

to find out why the action against the Jews had been a fiasco, as seen from the Germans' point of view, and who was responsible? Others believe that he came to support [Werner] Best in the internal power struggle that had begun among the SS, the German foreign Ministry, and the Wehrmacht.”²²⁵ A report given on ABC news states: “Adolf Eichmann traveled to Copenhagen in November 1943 and expressed his satisfaction with the ‘Jewish Campaign.’”²²⁶ In contrast it can be seen from the proceedings of the Eichmann trial that the Head Office for Reich security was displeased with the meagre results of the anti-Jewish operation in Denmark and that “Eichmann was asking for the head of the saboteur who was responsible for the doors not being broken down.”²²⁷

Duckwitz – aftermath

Film: At the end of the film, Duckwitz met with Ole Andersen at their usual meeting site in the park. Anderson said to Duckwitz: “Today, one of the bravest men in Denmark is a German... and a member of the Nazi party. You risked your life by warning the Jews, and then again by persuading Sweden to take them. Why?” Duckwitz replied: “I came to this country as a young man, ambitious and a little homesick as young men are. The Danes welcomed me, and some of them were Jews. It’s easy to persecute the nameless and the faceless. But these people are not faceless to me. I could've walked away, but you know, a man must live with himself a long time, and if he can do something to ease a little the terrible ache in this world, he must. I love Denmark. It’s my home now, and when your home is on fire, you want to save it. That’s all it was. My home was on fire.” [85 minutes]

History: Duckwitz was quite early disenchanted with the Nazi party. He had worked in Demark from 1928 – 1933 and again from 1939 onwards as a shipping expert in the German embassy. He had good connections among Danish political leaders.²²⁸

Conclusion

Film: At the end of the film Dr. Koster summed up the escape and the aftermath: “In just a few weeks, over 7,000 Jews had been hidden and transported to Sweden. Only 464 were captured. The majority of those survived. When they returned to Denmark, all who had fled. found their homes and businesses had been watched by friends and neighbors, their pets cared for, their gardens tended. In every language and religion, to be humane is to love your neighbor. People have said the Danes showed enormous courage in their time.

225 Foighel p.47

226 Spiegel

227 Eichmann trial session 36 – 11 May 1961 and Exhibit T/583

228 Goldberger p.15

But I think we all felt we only did what was normal. In a time when the world was lost in madness, we were lucky to escape it.” [87 minutes]

History: The numbers, as stated in the film, of Jews transported to Sweden and those captured, are correct. Whilst the Jews were away from Denmark, their non-Jewish neighbors and friends, took care of the homes and belongings. One Jew remembers how when she returned her house was in perfect condition and all her belongings were in her closet.²²⁹ Another Jew found his house in a better state than he had left it. The house had also been painted and cleaned, and his clerks had continued to run his business taking only their normal salary.²³⁰ This was not an unusual case but a typical one. Neighbors also looked after the pets and plants of the Jews.²³¹ Furthermore, the Danish authorities directed the Copenhagen Social Services in cooperation with the police to ensure a degree of supervision of the Jewish apartments and possessions. When after the war the Jews returned they found in the vast majority of cases their homes taken care of and their valuables protected.²³² It is reported that whilst the Jews were away Danes lived in their apartments and this was done to ensure that if the apartments were left empty they might be broken into or vandalized, However, immediately the Jews returned after the war the Danes vacated these apartments.²³³

229 Werner pp150-51

230 Flender p.253; Yahil pp.240-41

231 Flender p.253

232 Lidegaard pp.171-72

233 Foighel p.55

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