



The Sobibór Uprising

(total running time: 28 minutes)

The Sobibór death camp was built in spring of 1942 near Sobibór, Poland. Established by the German SS, it was one of several death camps built to murder the Jewish population living in the districts of Warsaw, Cracow, Lublin, Lvov and Radom. The gas chambers at Sobibór operated between May 1942 and September 1943, killing approximately 250,000 Jews. On October 14, 1943, the camp's surviving inmates, led by Leon Feldhendler and Lieutenant Aleksander Pechersky, rebelled against the camp personnel. Some 300 prisoners escaped during the uprising, though only about 50 survived until end of the war.

In *The Sobibór Uprising* five survivors of the Sobibór death camp discuss their roles in the revolt.

First, Thomas Blatt (b. 1927 in Izbica, Lublin, Poland) describes being deported from Izbica to the Sobibór death camp by train, when young and old people disagreed over whether to resist.

Second, Esther Raab (b. 1922 in Chelm, Lublin, Poland) talks about her urge to run away from the camp as soon as she arrived.

Third, Chaim Engel (b. 1916 in Łódź, Russia [as of 1918, Poland]) describes the arrival of Lieutenant Aleksander Pechersky.

Next, Esther Raab describes Leon Feldhendler's arrival in the camp.

Regina Zielinski (b. 1925 in Siedliszcze, Poland) talks about the prisoners' escape preparations.

Esther Raab describes the plans that prisoners, including Feldhendler and Pechersky, made in preparation for the uprising.

Chaim Engel talks about the secrecy surrounding the plan for the uprising so that the SS guards would not find out about it.

Thomas Blatt describes the two-part plan for the uprising.

Kurt Thomas (b. 1914 in Brno, Austria-Hungary [as of 1993, Czech Republic]), expresses his belief that the uprising succeeded because the SS guards did not expect the prisoners to rebel.

Regina Zielinski describes gathering up her clothes and food the night before the uprising.

Thomas Blatt recounts his feelings of anxiety on the morning of the uprising.

Chaim Engel describes killing a camp guard to avenge his family members who had died.

Kurt Thomas tells how he killed a Ukrainian guard during the uprising.

Thomas Blatt describes the *Appell* (roll-call) during the uprising, when prisoners pretended that nothing was amiss so that the camp guards would not suspect that a rebellion was underway.

Regina Zielinski tells how camp guards shot at the prisoners as they tried to escape.

Esther Raab recounts being shot as she climbed over the camp fence.

Kurt Thomas talks about his feeling of freedom as he escaped toward the forest.

Finally, Regina Zielinski describes participating as a witness in the war crimes trial against Karl Frenzel, a commanding officer of the Sobibór death camp.