

Film to show new details of Jewish post-war revenge plot to poison German cities

UK's Channel 4 to air documentary featuring long-lost tapes describing how a Jewish group sought to exact revenge for the murder of 6 million

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A new documentary promises to release never-before seen evidence on the plot by a group of Holocaust survivors to poison hundreds of thousands of Germans in an act of revenge after World War II.

The film “Holocaust: The Revenge Plot” revolves around tapes of resistance fighter and later-poet Abba Kovner detailing his recollections of the plan, according to Britian’s Channel 4, which commissioned the documentary.

The tapes were recorded in 1985 as Kovner was dying from cancer and explore the 1946 plans to poison the water supplies in several German cities, and a second plot to kill thousands of SS officers being held in an American prisoner camp.

Kovner is said to reveal how his secret organization, codenamed Nakam (Hebrew for vengeance), infiltrated the waterworks of Hamburg, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, and Munich in order to poison the water supply with arsenic.

But there were deep reservations even among the Avengers that such an operation would kill innocent Germans and undermine international support for the establishment of Israel. Either way, when Kovner sailed for Europe with the poison, he drew suspicion from British authorities and was forced to toss it overboard before he was arrested.

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Channel 4 also said that the tapes indicate that “future presidents of Israel, Chaim Weizmann and Efraim Katzir, were claimed to have been involved in helping the Avengers acquire the poison.”

The film is directed by Israeli Avi Merkado and also features testimony from the last surviving members of the group, including Auschwitz survivor Yehuda Maimon, Simcha Rotem — the last survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising — and Hasia Warshawski, who would be giving a public testimony for the first time, Channel 4 said.

Despite a visceral desire for vengeance, most Holocaust survivors were too weary or devastated to seriously consider it, after their world was shattered and 6 million Jews killed during World War II.

For most, merely rebuilding their lives and starting new families was revenge enough against a Nazi regime that aimed to destroy them. For others, physical retribution ran counter to Jewish morals and traditions. For even more, the whole concept of reprisals seemed pointless given the sheer scope of the genocide.

But a group of some 50, most young men and women who had already fought in the resistance, could not let the crimes go unpunished and actively sought to exact at least a small measure of revenge.

The Nuremberg trials were prosecuting some top Nazis, but the Jewish people had no formal representative. There was a deep sense of justice denied, as the vast majority of Nazis immersed themselves back into a post-war Germany that was being rebuilt by the Americans' Marshall plan.

While there were some isolated acts of Jews harming individual Nazis after the war, Nakam sought a more comprehensive form of punishment.

Following that setback, attention shifted toward Plan B, a more limited operation that specifically targeted the worst Nazi perpetrators. Undercover members of Nakam found work at a bakery that supplied the Stalag 13 POW camp at Langwasser, near Nuremberg, and waited for their chance to strike estimated 50,000 SS men the Americans held there.



This photo taken during World War II shows a bakery in Nuremberg, Germany, which supplied bread to Stalag 13. (US Army Signal Corps via AP)

But this plan also mysteriously failed, even though [recently released details of the attempted killings](#) revealed that the Jewish cell used enough poison to kill tens of thousands of Germans.

Holocaust: The Revenge Plot will air on the UK's Channel 4 on January 27 to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

AP contributed to this report.

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