



Phillip Rodney on Wolfgang Rimalower



Questions & Answers with Timestamps

1. In what ways did antisemitism affect Wolfgang's life?

03:34 Unable to go to university as they were closed to Jews, so he went into the family business instead – this wasn't what he wanted and the regret about his education and lack of choice about his career followed him for the rest of his life.

03:57 Underlying feelings of fear in his family and among the Jewish community.

04:12 His parents made the house safe with bars and heavy locks so they would have more time to call the police if the SS or Gestapo arrived.

05:05 He knew Jews were being deported from 1938, fears of his own deportation after a car accident, sent away by his parents and never saw them again.

06:06 Thrown off a train when he admitted he was Jewish as a visa was required for Jewish Germans in Switzerland (not required for non-Jews). He was jailed while an arrangement was negotiated with his aunt and he was able to stay for three months only.

07:14 Tried to live in Italy but was unable to stay there without friends or financial support.

08:26 He was unable to convince authorities to let him stay in Switzerland, they said things weren't as bad as Jews made them out to be. He went to numerous embassies and finally to the British embassy but as he had no relatives or friends in Britain, he was unable to stay. He finally got a visa after being turned away from several other countries

2. What was the effect of Wolfgang's experience on Phillip? How did it affect his life when growing up or as an adult?

15.30 Aware of tension between father and aunt, who had come on the Kindertransport. Wolfgang's younger sister Rita got a place on the Kindertransport and was taken in by a couple from Glasgow. Her relationship with her adoptive parents was very hard for Wolfgang to see, and it became a point of tension between Wolfgang and his sister, which was something that Philip also felt.

18:32 Aware of the distinctions between his parents' friends - refugees were more 'European', not so affluent, well read, political, maybe less religious, more formal. Words were pronounced differently.

19:52 Phillip felt caught between worlds, was aware of a black cloud of depression that affected his father.

11:28 Never felt comfortable with his surname Rodney and has almost nearly changed it back to Rimalower. He would like the surname Rimalower to appear on his gravestone as he feels that this identity was stolen from him.

12:59 Picked up a love of cars and vehicles from hearing his dad's stories about his jeep when in the army.

21.28 Feels that his father's experience has shaped him. He feels an insecurity, not complacent, fear of failure drives him. But feels there is a legacy of resilience passed down, not phased by challenge, has a sense of proportion when things go wrong, feels like an outsider but helps as he is not afraid to try new things and to not conform.

3. Discuss – why was it so hard for Wolfgang to escape? What could have made things easier?

Glossary

SS

The SS, short for *Schutzstaffel* (German for “Protection Squadron”), was originally formed as Adolf Hitler’s personal bodyguard unit. Over time, it grew into one of the most powerful and feared organizations in Nazi Germany. The SS was in charge of protecting Hitler, enforcing Nazi policies, and controlling German secret police and concentration camps. They played a central role in carrying out the Holocaust and other crimes during World War II. The SS acted above the law and was responsible for many acts of violence, discrimination, and terror in the Nazi state.

Gestapo

The German Secret State Police, which was under SS control. The Nazi regime relied on them to maintain and protect their power.

Tefillin

Black leather boxes containing Hebrew parchment scrolls with leather straps so the wearer can secure one to their head and one to their arm