

ARISTIDES DE SOUSA MENDES

History— 100°
HD



WITH

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Directed by
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June 1940. The Germans have entered Paris. Jews are fleeing to the south in search of any escape route possible. One man defies the orders of his own government – and single-handedly saves more than 30,000 souls. For his selfless act of courage, he himself will lose everything and die in poverty.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes came from aristocratic origins and eventually became Portuguese consul in Bordeaux. His country is officially neutral, but explicit orders have arrived to refuse all Jewish visa requests. Sousa Mendes closets himself in his chambers where he undergoes a three-day crisis of conscience.

When he emerges his hair has turned completely white. He establishes a makeshift assembly line, frantically issuing visas on any scrap of paper available. On return to Lisbon, Sousa Mendes lives out his life in poverty and disgrace – his 14 children forced, one by one, to abandon the country. It will be more than 40 years before the Portuguese government posthumously recognizes this unsung hero.

