United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Sol Sorrin
October 11, 1994
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Sol Sorrin, conducted by Joan Ringelheim on October 11, 1994 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

SAUL SORRIN
October 11, 1994

Abstract

Saul Sorrin, born on New York's Lower East Side in 1919, had a physical exemption from World War II military service, and worked instead in the Treasury Department's Procurement Division.

In early 1946, the fluent Yiddish-speaker began working as a supply officer for UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) in German DP camps, beginning with Neu Freimann where the health conditions were "desperate." When Eisenhower visited, the 25-year-old Sorrin told him, "General, the situation's tragic."

Soon Sorrin helped create health programs, feeding programs, and schools. "Right away, the Jews were energetic. They set up everything they needed…"

Sorrin became director of Neu Freimann in 1947, when it had 3,000-3,500 residents. Later he became director of Foehrenwald, one of the biggest DP camps in Germany, designed for about 3,000 people, but housing perhaps 4,000. He left Foehrenwald in 1950.

He discusses the many difficulties Jewish refugees faced in emigrating, including General Patton's declaration that to emigrate to the U.S. from the American zones of Germany and Austria, refugees had to prove that they had arrived before December 22, 1945; and the national origin quotas for Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians; in addition to the restrictive quotas for United States and Canada.

He divulges that in some cases, documents were destroyed and new ones were fabricated to surmount such barriers.

He says he still is troubled by some decisions he made, like not turning in a survivor who had bought a car illegally and crashed into people, possibly killing one. Sorrin helped the man escape to Palestine.

Sorrin did not intervene in the thriving black markets because he felt Jews' participation was justified as the only way to provide the means for their survival and support.

He calls the refugees "the phoenix rising out of the ashes of European Jewry. And they have gone on to produce great things, both here and in Israel."

Tape 1

01:00:11 Q: Saul, can you tell me your full name, where you were born and when?

A: My name is Saul, S-a-u-l, Sorrin, S-o-r-r-I-n. I was born in New York in 1919.

Q: What month?

A: July 6.

Q: 1919. Where in New York, in Manhattan?

A: Born in Manhattan, the Lower East Side of Manhattan. And we moved to the Bronx, up the socio-economic scale. And I went to school in the Bronx, DeWitt Clinton High School, and I went to City College.

Q: What did you study?

A: Anything which did not equip me to make a living. And then toward the end of the depression, I got out of school and I had to get a job. And the federal government was then in the process of expanding its operations that were -- Roosevelt was seeing, you know, trouble in Europe. And I got a job in the Treasury Department. This is a long time ago. I recall that I was in the Procurement Division, that is, they were buying paper and supplies and other materials to be used by the federal government and by the military. And it was an important job. I mean, we kept -- I remember going to the White House even, in about 1942 or something to talk to them about some paper they had ordered, etc. I did have a sense that I was doing something important, you know. But I was exempted from the military because I had some physical problem which I've never really gotten through. It's not life threatening, but it was enough to get me exempted. And then, you know, when the war was over

Q: Let me interrupt for a moment. What did you know about what was going on in Europe in terms of national security?

A: Not very much, really. We knew that the Jews were being mistreated and there were massacres. That information reached us through the mass media. And we knew it was a war for democracy to survive. And it had this Jewish component, which I felt very strongly about. And so at the end of the war -- and I don't remember the name of the people -- it was somebody who worked for a congressman in Washington who approached me and said, you know, UNRRA is looking for people to work in their program. UNRRA had two

programs after the war. They had a program for refugees, and they had a program for countries which had suffered at the hands of the Axis.

01:03:22 There the country programs were designed to ship goods, needed goods, to strengthen -- to begin the pouring of life blood into the economy. There was a big program in Poland. Some in Italy. None in Germany, and, of course, the very big one in the Far East, China. Which really attracted me, you know. I wanted to go someplace, and I asked for China. And then, one day, I was at the University of Maryland after I had been accepted -- and it was sort of touch and go, because of my health problems with the military, but I made it. And I was now at the University of Maryland getting briefed, educated on the whole program. And somebody from UNRRA headquarters came over to speak to us. And he said to me, "Why are you going to China?" I really didn't have a good reason, you know, except I wanted to see that part of the world. And he said, "You come from New York. Do you speak Yiddish?" and I said, "Yes, I do speak Yiddish." And he said, “You must go -- our people -- he was Jewish, too -- are in desperate trouble over there.” And they were, you know, after the war. And we need Yiddish speaking staff. And I want you to go." And I went. And I was trained for just about a month. We had seminars and all the rest, and I took off.

Q: What was the preparation like? What was the training like?

A: Well, first of all, they told us structurally what the program was about, who supplied what, and what was the chain of responsibility. In Germany, the principal responsibility for refugee programs lay with the military. And they were very unwilling participants in the program. They didn’t want -- "We're not welfare workers. And we’re not --” You know, some of the things which were being said. They had no taste for it. Refugees are a terrible pain in the behind in getting in the way of the movement of troops and materiel, and they just distract the military from its principal mission. And so now UNRRA was designated to work as the agency of the occupation forces in Germany, Italy, Austria, running these camps. Staffed UNRRA by international personnel, people -- United Nations agency, therefore, the people were drawn from Western powers, you know, France, the Benelux countries. We had a Swiss on my team, and Americans. And so we learned about that chain of command and some of the problems. By the way, they really didn't know too much about the problems. There was a great dissociation between what was happening in the field and what these people knew in the national headquarters. And that’s a constant difficulty.

01:06:26 And then we took off. And we -- I remember I went on the Gripsholm. I was put aboard with a group of UNRRA people. Gripsholm, which had been during the war, an exchange ship for diplomats. It is not the present-day

Gripsholm. There are new Gripsholms. And this Gripsholm was a real rat trap. During the war, it had exchanged diplomatic people, Japanese from the United States to Japan, etc., and reverse. And I spent ten seasick days on the Gripsholm. And I think we came into Cherbourg, and from Cherbourg by train to Paris. And there we stayed in Paris for two or three weeks getting more briefings. And then came the day they say, "You are off." And I was sent by train to Munich on the Orient-Express, but it was not that fabulous Orient-Express. And in Munich, I was immediately whisked as the supply officer for UNRRA team, I think it was 560 if I am not mistaken, outside of Munich. Shall I go on? There was a camp there which had just been established, I think in December of '45. I arrived about February, something like that. I don't remember. In the early part of the year. It was the winter.

Q: 1946?

A: '46. And a camp had been established by General McNarney, who was Eisenhower's successor as the SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allies Expeditionary Force) commander or something.

01:08:06 And they had evacuated a whole zedlum (ph) silek? of settlements of small bungalows, I think about 250 such houses, which had been sold by the Nazis, built by the Nazis, for German workers, defense industry workers and their families. Two or three, bed -- two bedrooms apiece, and downstairs was a kitchen. It was in the 1930s style. There was no gas in these stoves. For example, the stoves were fed with, and the heat was created by, use of firewood. But it was nice. I mean, until we began to stuff the people who were coming in, into these places. More than -- you would say in each house, if you had 250 houses, you had four or five people. That would have been maybe 1200 people, but we had as much as 3,000 at one time.

01:09:05 And it was beyond its capacity. When I arrived, and the Jews who came into that camp were infiltrees (infiltrators?). They were not, by and large, survivors of concentration camps. It is estimated, I have read estimates, figures -- accurate figures are very, very difficult to come by. There was so much disorganization. -- that there were no more than 35,000 Jewish concentration camp survivors in Germany and Austria. And this camp in Munich was very close to Dachau. And most, many of the survivors that we got were Dachau survivors. The Germans had tried to destroy -- there was a plan to march all of the *haftling*, the concentration camp people from Dachau to a quarry, a big quarry, down south near the Austrian border, which, I understand, had been prepared with explosives. And to march them into this quarry and then blow the whole thing up. But the 3rd Army was approaching and at a certain critical moment, the Germans decided they weren't going to risk the arrival of the Americans, and they simply dropped the whole project.

Left the Jews where they were standing and took off. And, Dachau had also what is described as "*aussencommandos*" that is, branches of Dachau where Jews were sent in various villages and towns in what's called Oberbayern, that is Southern Bavaria, to work as farmers on farmland under the supervision of the owners. Or in some cases, in factories, or some cases, directly in Dachau. But, so we had a lot of Jews scattered over the landscape between Munich and the Austrian border. Little towns like Mittenwalde, which is a famous violin town, had Jews working there in various jobs. And they suffered, you know, they were not fed well. They were beaten, whatever. But it was not an extermination center. So, those people came into Munich, a lot of them, and many of them, stayed in those towns. And we would reach out to them from our headquarters in Munich. Anyway, this camp was just recently set up, and most of the people who were infiltrees who came in from Poland, from eastern Europe. Jews who may have, who were mostly in the Soviet Union during the war.

01:12:00 And I think Jewish agencies, important Jewish agencies, like the JDC (Joint Distribution Committee) and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), and the Jewish Agency for Palestine became voluntary agencies under the supervision of UNRRA, who were to assign some of their people, welfare workers and others to our teams, to help the international personnel administer the camp and to provide services.

Q: Were there non-Jews when you arrived in these areas?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: In your camps?

A: Not in our camps. There were a tremendous number of Polish nationals, Ukrainian nationals, Balts, and other, Yugoslavs. And their place, origins in Germany are in a shadow. Nobody is quite sure what they came from, but we suspect that many of them came voluntarily. Many of the Ukrainians, for example, had fought in Vlasov's army, that is a Ukrainian army which had deserted Angren and totally deserted. The Russians threw off the uniforms and fought in SS uniforms against the Soviet Union, against Soviet military. But a lot of war criminals, we suspect, people who had some culpability, who were involved in concentration camps and extermination camps, who came, and many who were not. Many who were simple farm workers or whatever. There were many Russian -- former Russian POWs in there. And they had suffered, also, very badly at the hands of the Nazis. I attended a Dachau trial of SS who were accused of exterminating literally thousands of Russian prisoners of war in

Dachau, and in other places. Well, anyway, they all came. We're faced with the problem of integrating these people into a camp, setting up a camp. That was a big problem. We had emptied all these houses. The Germans had taken everything they could carry, I think, in the line of bedding and other personal supplies, but they had to leave their furniture. They were taken out, I think, in 24 hours in the winter. So it was a tough time for them. And we had a staff, we had to find people among the Jews to staff the camp. There were some school-age children brought in. We had to find doctors, nurses, cooks, stores, office people, who would distribute food and clothing, blankets. And we had to assign, we had to create a system of assigning a lot of people to rooms.

01:15:01 And nobody was satisfied because it was so packed and so jammed. We had really violated health standards and all of the rest to get them in, but the situation was desperate. Snow on the ground, and people starving, very hungry, but we got them all in. We staffed the camp. We had very devoted international personnel. We had a number of women who worked as welfare workers, Jewish women. We had a big problem with Jewish women because they became so emotional -- so emotionally involved with the problems in their interviews with Jews, what had happened to them, and where had they been, and what had happened, what they had seen -- that we were rotating people. Sometimes people couldn't stay more than a couple of months. It was a very, very difficult time emotionally for them.

Q: Were there men who were coming in doing the same thing?

A: Yeah, we had men, also, but I remember that the welfare workers were women. I told you, I recall one was Rose Wasserman, a wonderful lady who came from Cleveland. And she was with, I think, it’s Cuyahoga County Courts. She was the chief welfare officer in Cleveland. And she did a wonderful job with UNRRA -- UNRRA , yeah. And then we had to provide food. Now food, under an agreement made with the military, was a responsibility of the Germans to provide food, and also to provide money, marks, to pay workers. We had salaried workers. The problem with the marks was that they were worthless. I think, from a nominal value, I think of four to the dollar before the war. A few years later, they were selling for 400 a dollar, and they went up to 4000 a dollar. They were really worthless. But it was important to get them on the worker's list because you did get better -- more calories. We had a specific, specified calorie count that we fed the families. And so you got more calories. And then there were some other privileges for people who

were working. We had a limited number of jobs, you know, a place like Neu Freimann, with about 2,500 people. We maybe had 200 or 300, maybe 400 people. There were people who would load wood for firewood, cooks, stores of various sorts.

Q: Who got most of the jobs?

A: Jews in the camps. The people who applied for them. There were many Jews who didn't want to work.

Q: Also, I'm talking about -- were men primarily given the jobs? Older men, younger men –

A: Yeah no, yeah, well, the jobs went based on the gender attached to the job. That is, a *krankenschwester* was a *kranken* nurse, you know, was a woman. We had some nurses. You know, you'd never see a man who was a nurse.

01:18:07 All of the doctors were men, the dentists were men, one or two exceptions. And the women were clerks. They helped people fill out their DP documents. I will talk about those in a moment. And there were people who did various clerical tasks, and that was where women could produce, could contribute. We also had a *relegazerampt* we called it, a religious office, and some of these houses were reserved for synagogues in the camp. They're small houses, and so we had *Rusisha shul*, Russian shul, and a *Poylissha shul*, a Polish synagogue. There were two or three, four maybe different branches, and they were separate. And people knew where they wanted to go. We had to find rabbis, by the way. I had an American assistant who went around looking for people with beards, and they were designated rabbis. These Jews, by the way, the Hasidic Jewish community, and we had some that came, were clearly identifiable. We wondered, you know, how they'd made it through the war, but they were in the Soviet Union during the war. And then we began the distribution of food. We set up community kitchens. Now, these houses had stoves so that people could cook, take their food and cook as they pleased. And then we had a community kitchen where we had people come who were single, who had no family, to eat their three meals a day. We had to supply the military with a Table of Organization for the camp for the purpose of salaries. We had to justify all the salaries. And the religious *ampt* I remember, gave us a problem because they needed people to erect an *eruv* -- this wire around, you know about it, around the town during the Sabbath. I remember this colonel saying, "What is that? What kind of wire

around the town? What are you talking about?" Ultimately, when we built a *mikvah* in that camp. I remember I had to explain the meaning of a *mikvah* and why they had people who did certain personal -- I am not sure what happens in a *mikvah*, but they rendered personal service, clipping toenails. Someone was kidding me, he said, takes lint out of the navels, whatever. They were all paid for. And, then, we had some special food habits, you know, for the Hassidim needed kosher food. And we had a real problem with that.

01:21:01 I don't remember how we solved it. I think we went to a butcher, a German place where meat was slaughtered, and we had a -- what do you call the guy who does the slaughtering? I am forgetting my Yiddish, you know -- who slaughters the animals. And he was a *hasid*. And the meat was taken, carefully handled. Milk for lactating mothers, those women who were pregnant, the cows had to be milked under supervision by a rabbi. They assigned somebody to go and sit in the barn with the -- we had to provide transportation. It was a very complex thing. We had a lot of illness. We had a lot of people with tuberculosis. They were taken out, weaned out, and we sent them to -- we had a tuberculosis center in Bad Reichenhall, nearby. We had medical examinations. There was a big problem with bad teeth.

Now, we issued DP cards, identity cards. So they had an identity card from the United Nations with a thumb print, no pictures, a finger print. There was also a DP card kept in our files. Now these people arrived mostly after December and when they arrived, they were not aware that the Truman Directive, signed in early December, I think, which allocated a large number of visa numbers. The military was very wary about infiltrees, about the increasing number of people coming from eastern Europe. And the British also understood that the larger the number of Jewish displaced persons in the American zones, that the greater the pressure would be on them in the United Nations and in other forums to relinquish the mandate in Palestine or part of the mandate for the Jews, or to admit more Jews into Palestine. Something they did not wish to do. So the Americans, who didn't want DPs generally, General Patton was in command in that area, and he was not terribly sympathetic to the Jews, tried to shut them off from coming by, declaring that in order to emigrate from the American zones of Germany and Austria to the United States, you had to show that you had arrived in the zone prior to December 22, 1945. And so, these people who came in January, they were not aware of this, you know. And they gave accurately that they had arrived in January or early February and that their place of birth was in Poland, a place not favored by the realities of the quota system, the

national origins quota system. They would have to sit in Europe for years before they got out. But they were being truthful, and they said who they were and when they came and all of the rest. Later on, they found to their unhappiness, that disqualified them. They said, "Had I known, I would have told them I came here earlier." We thought about it, by the way I've used the metaphor, you know, it was December 22 which they made the cutoff date, that on the 25th where Christmas was celebrated, there was no room in the inn, our inn, for Jews. And anyway, we got them all into the camp and we created our own health programs, under the supervision of international medical people, and our own feeding programs, our own schools. Right away, the Jews were energetic. They set up everything they needed, cultural programs, newspapers began to sprout. Now, prior to that time, there was a question early on at the end of the war, how would these people be housed, the refugees. They were, after all, multi-national – Poles and Ukrainians and Jews. And a Jew was nominally -- most of them were nominally Polish, Polish nationals. And so therefore, they would take a whole bunch of Poles, Polish speaking people, and put them, try to put them into one camp, into one area, under one administration. But, you know, the Jews did not consider themselves Polish anymore. They would not opt in a legal sense, for that identity. And so, they -- I am not quite sure how it happened -- but they all declared themselves, I think maybe for immigration purposes, as *staatenlos* that is, stateless, or as Jews. Now, there was a great deal of jockeying around over how the Jews would be housed, whether they would be housed among the people, as I say, of the countries in which they were born, which they didn't want. American-Jewish leaders were also, I think, playing a role in that thing. And they wanted all of the Jews together, which was a wise thing to happen. And ultimately, the military gave in. For them, you know, looking directly at it, or for the United Nations looking directly at it, these were Poles or Latvians or Lithuanians.

01:27:05 But, no, they did not consider themselves that. And so they all became of one national group. And in all of the DP camps in which Jews lived after the war, they lived together, surrounded by a fence, whose perimeter was often patrolled by Jewish police. We organized the police force. We had a police force in that camp alone of over 100 people. They were not armed police, but they were Jews who wore armbands declaring that they were policemen, and they patrolled the perimeters of the camp. Conditions were so bad in the camps. At this time, I was the supply officer for Neu Freimann camp and all of the small little camps I mentioned before, which had sprung loose from the Dachau

concentration camp. And also for all “free living” Jews in the city of Munich. In effect, I became ultimately sort of the mayor of the Jewish community of Munich. And they would come to our camp. They were Polish Jews, mostly. There were very few German Jews remaining in -- just a very few that I ran across, who would come to us for food, identity papers certifying that they were stateless, or that they had been persecutees, and therefore, entitled to certain privileges as to immigration, food, medical care, clothing, whatever. And as I say, conditions were so bad that in the United States, the White House was hearing about it. There was a lot of anguish, a lot of anger, and so Eisenhower was sent by Truman to Europe to investigate. There had been a report by the Harrison Committee which had stressed some of these inadequacies, but Eisenhower went over to look, he said, for himself. And what happened was, a week before he arrived in Munich, the director of our camps quit. He wanted to go home. I don't know what happened. Anyway, and so I was called by UNRRA saying would I make myself ready to receive the General and to brief him on whatever questions he wanted to be raised. And sure enough, two or three days before the arrival of the General, all of the security people, military security people, came and checked the whole road running down to the city of Munich out to this camp. For security purposes, they emptied buildings with windows overlooking the road, the whole business.

01:30:05

I was very impressed, of course. And on that day, we were laid on and out came the General, riding in -- it had to be either Goering or Hitler's car -- a great big Mercedes. And he was accompanied, of course, by six or eight general officers. You were going to ask something? McNarney was among them, Huebner. I remember those names. And they came into the camp and they spent -- I greeted them as he stepped out of the car. He spent about three or four hours, I guess, in the camp. And we talked about supplies. He went and looked at it. We talked about housing; he went and looked at the housing. He talked to the people. A great big sign had been hung by the Jews over the entry to the camp, "Welcome General Eisenhower." And I was impressed. He’s a very stern-looking guy, very impressive you know, with all of those stars. And some of his staff took notes on what I was saying. And I think it had an impact, my own contribution to that, because within a matter of maybe a month, things began to improve. We were getting things that we were not getting before. Of course, the White House had played its role, but Eisenhower coming over there was the basis for making whatever changes were necessary.

Q: How honestly could you talk to him? I mean, here you are, a 25-year-old young man?

A: Well, I could talk pretty honestly. I just told him, “General, the situation's tragic. We have people, you know, stuffed into a room together in such numbers -- the people are sick, their ability to resist disease is down. And so, we are going to have typhus. We are going to have this, and we’re going to have that. They are not getting adequate food.” And he listened carefully. I remember, though, some funny scenes. We took him into a school, a Yiddish school. And the guy who was the director of that school was a fellow who then went to Baltimore. His name was Spector. Mr. Spector was a teacher, and both he and his wife were dedicated. He and his wife were wonderfully dedicated people. They set up the school with teachers, and the children, they got paper and they got pencils. It was very difficult. I told you “IMCA” YMCA supplied us with writing pads for the Jewish children. And he had coached the children to sing “The Star Spangled Banner”, in just learning the lines. They didn't know what they were saying. And Eisenhower stood there, you know, his hat under his arm, and he listened as they sang. And when it was finished, I was stunned. I didn't tell Spector until much later. He said to me, "What are they singing?" He didn't recognize it at all. I wouldn't spoil what these children had done. There was also some confusion. He walked into a synagogue, I remember, and he took his hat off, you know. And McNarney leaned over him and says, "General, put your hat on. You're in a synagogue."

It was a pleasant visit. The Jews were extremely welcoming to him, applauded. He was the great hero who had liberated them. And it was a wonderful day. He is a stern-looking guy, you know. He has his dignity, very little joking around with him, my impression. I wouldn't want to cross him, based on what I saw. Anyway, the visit went well. And as a result, as a matter of fact, in about a couple of weeks, I was notified that I had been appointed director to replace the departed director. And, that situation went on for, I think, until 1947 when we learned that UNRRA was going to be terminated, go out of business. And that it was to be replaced by an agency known as the PCIRO, Preparatory Committee or Commission for the International Refugee Organization. And that a new *modus operandi* was to take place. That is, many of the international personnel on our team were to be terminated. And their responsibilities were to be turned over to indigenous staff-people, essentially, the Jews themselves, in the camps. And there would be no camp director for a given camp; he would be replaced by a camp chairman. And he had a sort of a

cabinet with him for food, and welfare and housing and security and whatever. And that the Jews were to pick their own people. And they did so with elections in the camps. And it was marvelously organized.

Q: Can we not get to 1947 first, can we stay …

A: Yeah.

Q: What happened to you when you became director? You became director of this camp --

A: Of this camp and --

Q: -- and the subsidiaries?

A: -- the subsidiaries and the Jews of Munich. That is, I was responsible for meeting their needs.

Q: How many people, then, are you responsible for?

A: I think at that point it got to be about 3,000, 3,500, something like that.

01:36:02 And what I would do is move around through the various installations under my supervision and meet with their chairman and find out what their problems were. Maybe once a week, I would be in this place, drive around. I would drive a car, go around and meet with them. But my office was in the Zedlum, (ph) in the Neu Freimann. I supervised all of the programs and saw how they went and people reported to me. And I reported to my superiors. Life was very, very difficult. People were trying to get out, and they soon found that the national origins quota defeated that. There was illegal immigration to Palestine. And by the way, I recall now that I had very good part of the people on the *Exodus* who came from the Neu Freimann camp and from nearby camps. You know, the *Exodus* was caught and returned to Ger -- Bremerhaven and the Jews were forced off, you know, by British, I think it was British soldiers, with the water hoses. I got, and I lost -- a lot of things happened to me -- a little book written by children who had been on the *Exodus* and describing their experiences. And they dedicated it to me, to *undzer khaver* director. I don't know what happened to it. There are things I have lost I regret so. I don't know what happened. And we had to receive other people all the time. There was constant tension. The camps had been closed to infiltrees, and we were taking them in. One of the ways we were

able to take them in was when a group of people went illegally to Palestine, their DP cards were left behind. When you leave the camp, you are supposed to turn them in or to do something. They were turned over to the camp committee, who used them for the purpose of supplying other infiltrees coming to the camp. The UNRRA people told me that apparently we have a very low death rate in our camps because the population remained fairly static. Actually, they were leaving, but they were being exchanged with other people. And then other ways had to be found to avoid the restrictive immigration policies of the United States and also of the Canadians. And the documentation, which was on file in our offices, on each of the Jews, prevented them if they had to get their DP records to present to the consul generals. (?)

01:39:08 They would reveal that they had arrived in the zone after December ‘45, or that they were born in Poland or in Latvia or Lithuania, and therefore they had to wait for a long time for their quota numbers. Some people had a lot of scars on their lungs, lesions which were healed, but it was not known exactly when the tuberculosis had been active, and they were prevented. So, if you presented an accurate x-ray, you could be out of luck. It was a desperate struggle because everything militated against them -- people who had suffered so. I remember this was said to me, very often, I am going to say it in Yiddish, “*Mir haben gemeynt az zey velen uns trogen oyf de pletzes*.” We thought that when we got out that we would be carried around on the shoulders of the Allies, of the United States, that we would be heroes for having made it through this terrible experience. Instead, they’re finding all kinds of ways to keep us out. It was a terrible disillusion. And while there was a division in the Jewish community of survivors about where they would go, some said they would go nowhere but to Palestine. And of course, they knew what was in Palestine. It was illegal, first of all. If you managed to get in, you would be housed in a tent city on some mud flat someplace. No jobs. It was a terrible scene. Nevertheless, they wished to go there. But others wished to go to the United States. They had family in the United States. People who would make space for them and had jobs for them. And they saw their future there. So there was a constant tension within the DP, Jewish DP community on that score. They tried to invest the Jews with the kind of Zionist patriotism, but they were all patriotic about the establishment of the state. But many of them wished to go to the United States. A commission was sent over by the United Nations. And they came to our camp to talk to Jews about where they wished to go. The committee was made up of five diplomats, one of whom was from

India before it was divided. I am trying to remember which country became a Muslim country, maybe Pakistan. And he was very hostile. And he tried to probe, you know, "Where do wish to go?" And they picked some people at random from in the camp to come before them. There was a big audience in the room listening to this procedure. And I was the interpreter. And the first guy they picked to be examined was the brother of a business associate of my own father, who asked me to get him out. He had arrived with his wife and two children. They had been in the Soviet Union, and he was desperate to get to the United States.

01:42:16 I didn't know what would happen, but they took care of it themselves. That is, the guy asked, after checking his personal history, said to him, "Now, where do you wish to go?" And he proudly spoke up, "*Vu alle yiddin forn*" he said "Where all Jews wish to go, to Eretz Yisrael." And a great cheer broke out. Now, he left a week later for the United States, so there was a solidarity in support of the claim of Jews for Palestine, for Eretz Yisrael, and for the right of Jews to be allowed to emigrate there. There was 100 percent solidarity, but a lot of people had made decisions about their lives, about where they wished to go. But --

Q: Was there pressure on these people to not go to the United States, not only to not say it --

A: Well, there was some pressure. Yeah, the Jewish Agency was working in the camps, and they did a valuable job. And the whole leadership of the Jewish community was Zionist in its orientation. So that when, for example, camp administrations were made up, as I've indicated, they were elected on Zionist lists. *Liste eyns*, or *tsvey* – list one, two. And on that basis, these represented various Zionist political parties. There was a strong, and I think the Jewish Agency and the leaders, Ben Gurion and the rest understood, the value of the DP, Jewish DP community and the experience which the Jews had had -- if you want to call it a value. But they understood the meaning of it, for bringing pressure against the British and the United States to partition Palestine or to create a Jewish entity, and to allow the Jews to leave. And for the United Nations, by the way, ultimately when they did go legally, the UN paid all fares for transportation costs for Jewish refugees travelling to whatever destination they were going to. So there was a unity within the Jewish community. And they would never allow it to be understood outside of our community. There was a unity that Israel or the Jewish state would have to be created. It would have to be supported. And those Jews, and there were many

who wished to go to Palestine, and no place else, would be permitted to go.

01:45:03 And there were efforts made. You know there was by the way, also a mobilization effort on the part of the Zionist community, that is, to mobilize Jews, young men and women to serve in the Haganah. They were trained in our camps. They would be marching around and training with broomsticks as bayonets, rifles. So they were preparing themselves. But as I say, you had this tension in the community which is, I think, something which happens today, again, you have in the Soviet Union some of the same things, that is, Israel accuses HIAS, Jewish agencies, of talking Jews into not going to Israel, which is absolutely untrue. Jews know where they wish to go. And my own feeling is they should go where they wish to go, where they will be happy. So we had that immigration. Then we had the illegal immigration. I was, I think, the only Jewish camp director I know of in Munich. There was one or two before me in these camps, but they had left. So a lot of efforts by the Jewish Agency or by the JDC centered on me. They knew they could come to me and they could speak frankly, and that I was part of the whole apparatus. So I remember supplying blankets and gasoline and other things, illegally -- to people on the move illegally, to France or to Italy. Mostly I knew about France, to go to Marseille for immigration. I think the *Exodus* people took that route, they went to Marseille. And I was asked by them, by the Sochnut or by the Brichah to accompany a transport of, I don't remember, maybe 500 Jews who had been gathered up to go to Marseille and to board boats there, and to go to Palestine. And so I sat there in the uniform in the lead car. And I had some phony document saying that these people are authorized to travel, in transit, through France, to Marseille on their way, I think, to Uruguay or Peru, one of those South American countries. And I carried a group visa with me. It was done also on onion skin paper, which had names listed and birth dates and they absolutely did not conform to the birth dates or to the people in this transport.

01:48:00 And we drove through the French zone, me in the front, and we got to Mulhouse -- Muehlhausen, that’s in Alsace. And we presented this transit visa. Well, first of all, the visa from the Uruguayans or one of those Latin American -- they were all fraudulent, provided by some consul, vice consul in Paris, maybe. And he had been paid something to do that, I think. And we presented the visas and the transit letter to the French gendarmes at the border. In the meantime, two of these guys working from Palestine Brichah, I could see them going around the back of the booth, with two big cartons, and I knew there were

cigarettes in those cartons. The French, also, were badly in need of cigarettes, and deposited it there. And then, we were saluted through, and we came into Mulhouse, and we went to the town square, and by God, I was stunned. There was the mayor of Mulhouse, all dressed up with his red sash across his chest, and women, volunteers, greeted us and provided hot coffee, cocoa or something, and some bread. Some other food for the people to eat. We were treated to a speech by the mayor. Wishing us, wishing our people, a good life in Uruguay or Paraguay or whatever. It was a very nice ceremony. And I got back in my car, drove back over the border to Munich. It's a very -- I did that twice, but only once did the Muehlhausen mayor come out for me.

Q: Did you have any hesitancy doing this? You were after all…..

A: No. I - I did have -- first of all, I am trying to remember whether there were some restrictions on my movement into the French zone. I was crossing a zone line. But I remember that if – if -- somebody had picked this up, they would ask me where did they get the gasoline and the blankets which were military. The trucks were military. They were UNRRA trucks. They had it on the front. So there was a risk. They were my trucks in my motor pool. Yes, there was a risk. I could have
-- I don't know what would have happened. I imagine, based on some other things I have seen over there, they would have cut me. I would have been dismissed from UNRRA, and they would have sent me immediately home. I don't know whether there would have been any criminal charges, because the military is very leery about getting themselves involved. It's a public relations problem. So, it would have been tough on me. I would have been shipped back home, and in some disgrace, not with Jews, I guess. So there was some risk. But it's one of my fondest memories.

01:51:17 Q: What made you do it?

A: Well, I was Jewish, and my sense of solidarity with my people, with the people, you know, around me. I was profoundly sympathetic. Then, well, there was also the question of how do you get around the Americans. Now, Jews would apply for immigration to the United States, and when they would come in there, with their documentation, there was a consul general in Munich, with their DP cards and their records. It would show they had arrived after December 22nd of '45, and they were automatically eliminated. I am a little unclear about the immigration laws at the time. Eventually, a new law was passed in '48, I guess, also very controversial, and very stacked against Jewish

DPs and the countries where they came from. But it still remained that they had to be in the zone before December 22, 1945 in order to be eligible. So what would happen was, Jews would come in and say, in effect, to one of my staff people, “I came here after, and Poland is no good for me. Here I have this paper saying that I was born in Dresden or Breslau.” German cities were favored, because during the four, five years of the war, Germans were prohibited from emigrating to the United States, or after, as ex-enemy nationals. And so all of these unused numbers -- and Germans had a very big quota for the United States under that national origins quota. These numbers -- Germans who could not use these quota numbers had to stay, and the numbers were saved up and they were turned over to the DPs by the Truman Directive to be used. All of these used up numbers going back to 1939, or thereabouts. So that relieved some of the problems. But the point was, they still operated under the national origins quota, very restrictive. And under the requirement that they be in a zone December 22nd of 1945. So what happened was such people, if they came and asked for help -- I am going to be very candid here -- we would take out their documents and tear up the document. Nobody knew the difference.

01:54:07 I was in control of these things. And put a new DP card in the file. And I remember in one office, we had a guy who was an expert at aging these documents. Of course, they had to be about two or three years old, you know, so if you saw a fresh, the paper was lousy, if you saw a fresh white paper, you knew it was fresh. So we had them stacked on radiators to age them a little bit. And then they would bring these papers in, and it didn't take long before the consul generals, they are pretty bright people, understood that there was something not kosher about these. A lot of people came in, declared they were born in Germany, but had no German accent. You know, they spoke strong Yiddish, and there was some cockamamie story made up to cover that. And then they were asked finally to find some document that you told somebody, and it was true, if you were in a concentration camp, and you didn't keep your birth certificate in Auschwitz or Buchenwald or whatever. They would say write away to the city in which you were born. And many of them said they were born in German cities, East Germany where it could not be checked. Russians were occupying East Germany. And well, first, they would say “Look, I didn't have any papers. And I have written, here is a copy of a registered letter which I sent to some East German city.” There were all sorts of means to get out, to get around these restrictive laws or regulations. The German quota was an important one. Sometimes they would go up to some small town someplace,

where it was learned there were some birth certificates or birth documents for people who had died already. And they would get these, maybe having to bribe an official. But it was a survival struggle. And we countenanced it all. Some years ago, I met a guy had been the U.S. Ambassador to Cairo in the State Department. He came to Milwaukee to make a speech, and I sat next to him at a lunch. I recognized his name, and when his bio was read, I remembered he was vice consul in Munich, way back when I was there. I told him, "I don't know whether you remember me, but I used to come in and plead the case that the people were unjustly denied. I would come down to see them." And he said he remembered me. He said, “I know that you had” -- what he called “a document factory” out there, near one of these camps nearby.’ I said, "We probably did." I mean, they were good people, but they were operating according to the regulations. By the way, when I spoke to him, he was an Assistant Secretary of State, yeah, Assistant Secretary of State. Very well known man. I don't recall his name.

Tape 2

02:00:13 Well, we went through a very difficult year 1946 and to 1947, when UNRRA decided to go out of business, and be replaced by the IRO (International Refugee Organization). At the same time, the decision was made to evacuate Neu Freimann, and that became one of the most difficult parts of my whole year, my whole stay in this job. Neu Freimann was considered a privileged camp because it was right on the border of Munich, and therefore, easily accessible to Jewish agencies which had to visit, dealing with various problems, a lot with immigration. We had the USNA, the United Service for New Americans, which, I think, was like a JDC operation, which processed applications. We did, too, but they did, I think, a lot of the processing of applications to the United States. The HIAS was there. There was the Jewish Agency, JAFP, Jewish Agency for Palestine, with Chaim Hoffman as its director.

And there was an extensive black market in the city. I want to speak about the black market because that played a very important role, not only in assuring the Jews a way of sustaining themselves -- not only Jews, but anybody. I mean, it was open to all. The black market was not a Jewish making, it was a creation of the German merchants who were backed up with merchandise, which they were beginning to produce. And they could not sell and make anything unless they sold it on the black market, because the controlled price in German marks, what you would get would be zero. I could get four opera seats for two cigarettes. Opera seats had a nominal value of, let's say, 20 marks apiece. So the black market was really a creation of the economic system. That has to be understood. And Jews could not live on the 2,000 calories a person, especially what those calories were made of. They were made of potatoes and starchy *haferflocken*, which was a German term for a wheat, a cereal of some sort, dried eggs, dried skim milk. Jews could not eat dried eggs. That stuff used to lie and rot in warehouses. One day we discovered, by the way, that a couple of tons of dried skim milk had disappeared from one of the camps. It didn't bother us a bit -- except we wanted to know what happened to it -- because the Jews did not enjoy, or take, or drink dried skimmed milk. But what happened was, about two or three weeks or thereabouts later, we saw wandering around the camps Jews carrying a box slung over shoulder shouting "*Lody! Lody*!" *Lody* is ice cream in Polish. They had used this milk to manufacture ice cream pops, or something, and they were selling them on the streets. I recall that. That's very funny, the creativity of our folk. But, as I say, the packages which came from the JDC, the Jewish relief agencies, were the real *waluta*, the real currency, of the DP camps. The cigarettes in them, which sold for, I think, a dollar a package -- I mean, in the United States were 15 cents or something, or maybe more. I mean, $10 a carton, I think.

02:04:09 Coffee, marmalade, jam, fat in cans, other things which were priceless. They became the basis upon which many Jews -- they could trade them for meat, for bread, for other things to sustain their family. And so going into Munich became very important. People had access either by the few buses which were running, or by trucks which they could hitch a ride on to go and do their business. There was a famous street in Munich. I want to mention it, called Mohl Strasse, M-o-h-l. I've been back there, by the way. I once went back some years later to buy some Meissen Rosenthal china for my mother-in-law. But it was a great center of black market currency dealings. Jews were carrying currency during the war. Those who were not in concentrations camps, those who were in hiding, sewed into the linings of their clothing. They were carrying many things in order to enable themselves to live, if they ever made it through. And they went to exchange these dollars for various things, whatever, or to trade them up, in some way to change them. All currencies into national hard currencies were being traded there. Not German marks, but Swiss francs and British pounds and American dollars. And they were subject to raids all the time. The military would come pouncing down on them because the military declared its intention to protect the German economy or to rebuild the German economy, and these black market operations were, they felt, destructive of the economy. I think that's subject to some doubt, but that's what they said. But in any case, when the announcement was made that there would be an evacuation, there were great protests, and it took a long, long time for us to move these people out to other camps. Some attrition, some people went away to Palestine, others emigrated. Nevertheless, we were accused of using all of the terminology of the wartime period of deportations, of *Aus Zeslac* (?) or whatever they used. Just like, about the ghettos, Jews were being forced, against their will, out of these camps. Neu Freimann, as I say, was a favored camp in that setting. And ultimately, it was closed.

And I was then asked to take over Foehrenwald, which was one of the biggest DP camps in Germany at the time. I think, well, it was designed for about 3,000 people. There must have been more, I don't recall the figures, 4,000. And Foehrenwald was actually two or three installations. One was about 30 miles south of Munich toward the Austrian border where Innsbruck was situated.

02:07:30 There was Foehrenwald itself, which had been a work camp for German labor. And then there was a place called Geretsried, a small camp which housed about 1,000 people. It became, ultimately, by the way, I believe the first legal exit point for immigration to Israel when it became legal. People were processed there for health, their teeth, and the rest, for our paperwork. And they would move from Geretsried, whose name was changed to Camp

Negev, because it looked like it was in the Negev, a really forsaken area in the woods someplace. That's where a lot of military training took place. We were, by the way, being watched by air, by airplane by the intelligence people trying to find evidence that military training was going on in these camps, and it was. And then there was a children's center nearby which brought children, picked up in various ways by *khappers*, grabbers, who went around Czechoslovakia and Poland finding Jewish children that they had heard about. I am sure that in some cases in their haste to get out, there were some non-Jewish orphans among them, who are now living someplace in Israel. But finally, we closed it down, and we moved all of our operations to Foehrenwald and to other places.

The great movement of Jews I forgot to mention. You know, after the war, through maybe about March of '46, there was movement of Jews, but it was on a small, relatively small scale, infiltration. But as you know, I don't remember the precise month, maybe May, I think, or thereabouts in 1946, a *pogrom* took place in Kielce, where there was a trumped-up charge that Jews were baking the blood of a Polish kid who had disappeared into the matzahs, which were being consumed for Passover. I think that was it. Ultimately, the Polish government -- this is not known -- punished very severely those people responsible for this. There were 46 Jews killed. Right wing anti-Semitic movements in Poland were accused of having fomented this thing, and there may be something to that. But the Kielce program came like an enormous shock over the whole of the Eastern European community, such as it was at the time after the war, especially in Poland. And then we, in the west, in Germany and in Austria, mostly in Germany, experienced a strong wave, I don't know how many thousands. They say, I have heard 80,000 or so people came, all of a sudden, into West Germany into camps which had been declared closed by the military.

02:10:46 And we had to accommodate them in some way. And it was done contrary to regulations and the rest of it. And I received, I remember, trainloads of people -- no, no. In Munich, we got a lot of these people at Neu Freimann, then in Foehrenwald. And then there was a constant movement of Jews. I think the next relatively major movement was as a result of the Berlin airlift. That was in 1947, I think. (Berlin Airlift was June 24, 1948-May 12, 1949). We got Jews, they had cleared the DP camps, Jewish DP camps in Berlin. And each time that happened, it was a tremendous amount of effort, how to fit them in. We would have to put them in among others and maybe among other families. A terrible crisis was precipitated anytime that happened.

I have to speak about this children's center which we had. I remember the man's name was Merrin (ph). I have a picture of that Jewish center. And he wrote me a message on the back of the picture when I left, I guess. It was a

beautiful place, an installation. I am not sure what it was for before, but we kept kids in there. And the Brichah would bring in a load of kids, children maybe six, eight years old, something like that, who had been concealed. I don't know where they had been, but they would bring them in. And maybe 30 or 40 at a time would come. And then, a quarrel broke out within the Jewish community between the Jewish Agency, I guess, and the various elements in the Jewish Agency and the central committee. They were all going to Palestine, these kids, it was decided. But what was very important, under whose auspices? And so a rotating system was set up.

02:13:00 This is very funny. I think I am remembering it carefully. We agreed to it. We just wanted to get the kids out. They would stay in this place, this group, let's say 20 or 30 kids, would stay for a month or six weeks. And during that six weeks, the camp would be run by, let us say, the Mapai socialist party, Ben-Gurion's party, or Mapam, the more leftist. And they were being taught and trained according to the philosophy of that branch of Zionism. And they were wonderful. I mean, these kids absorbed it like water. And we had the right wingers, the '*revisionistim*' they were called, and they were singing revisionist songs and marching up and down in the military style of the revisionists. And that's the way we finally dealt with the problem, just rotating a whole group, a new group of people came in to take over the training of these children. They were wonderful-looking children, looking at some of them. Some of them spoke some Yiddish. I remember asking '*vu forst du?*' "Where are you going?" And this kid, '*for ken Eretz Yisrael*' He was from the right wing. "*Ich for hargenen ale,*" ("I am going there to kill Arabs,") he said. It was not funny to me. I said, "Is that what you're training these kids to do?" Anyway, so we had these three installations, and there were others in towns. Waltershausen, the city nearby, had some people. And constantly, again, circuit riding.

We also had people who were struck down. We had a lot of people with tuberculosis, and we would send them to Bad Reichenhall, where there was a big sanatorium. Later on, we even sent people to Sweden, I think, Malmo. There were a number of Jewish survivors recovering from tuberculosis, patients. Do you know about that? I had a number of people, one of my assistants, I sent a woman, a girl, from Hungary, to Malmo. And now I worked under IRO's auspices in Foehrenwald. Subsequently, they asked me also to give some attention to Feldafing. It was quite a ride, on the other side of the lake, there was a big installation. And I'd come in and meet with the people and talk about their problems, see what could be done. So that's -- yeah.

Q: When you went and visited the different camps, whether it was under UNRRA or, when it was IRO, did you meet with the people who were sort of

the camp functionaries?

A: Right.

Q: Or did you also go in the street and just meet with the people?

02:16:16A: Well, they knew. There would be an office that I had in each of these places or a room that I would sit in. So first, I would meet with the functionaries, that is, the man in charge of food, housing, immigration, various aspects -- health care. And discuss their problems, shortages, what they needed. A guy in charge of education would complain about the absence of school materials. Supply questions, and also internal problems, political problems. In the broad sense, political problems. Having problems putting people in there, they don't want to go there, and people are making trouble about this or that or whatever. So, I tried to handle all of that, write them down, and see what could be done. We had limited resources. I would do whatever I could. But then came a time for what we call '*bittes*', that is, requests or complaints. I would sit in an office. People would line up outside 20 or 30 or40, whatever. If it was a busy time, there would be more, and they were admitted one-by-one. And I would talk with them about what they needed. Very frequently, it had to do with immigration, that is, "*mir hut mir upgesugt*": "I was refused by the consul general" and "What do I do?" I would offer some advice. I can't tell you what I offered, but sometimes I offered, and this was pretty frequently the case, that they tear up their documents, get new documents, go to Stuttgart to the north, where there was a consul general and reapply all over again. And it worked.

Q: What other things did people come, when they came in?

A: Immigration, illness, "Can you find a relative of mine in the United States?" I am looking for somebody in Cleveland or Chicago," or whatever. Police, problems of the law. Jews frequently ran afoul of the laws, that is, they were caught. "My son has been arrested. He was carrying illegal currency or black market, other operation, caught selling cigarettes or whatever. And his trial will be so and so. And it will destroy us if he is convicted. He may not be able to get to the United States or to emigrate. Can you help me?" And I spent a lot of my time in the courts, in the summary courts, that is, the military summary courts in Munich where I had cultivated -- because I saw it as my responsibility -- cultivated acquaintances with the judges, who were American military officers. One was my neighbor, lived down the street from me in Munich. And we would have parties. He would come over, I would go to his place, to parties. It was a very good contact. Not that he would simply let people off when I asked, but he would understand better what their cases were, and very frequently gave them a very light sentence or let them off or

suspended a sentence, or did whatever. And that was a very, very significant part of my responsibility. I don't think it would have been the responsibility of another, somebody who was an UNRRA who didn't have the same sort of commitment that I had.

Q: Because you were Jewish?

A: Yes, because I felt a responsibility to these people. I grew very expert at explaining all of the problems faced by Jews after the war, what they had experienced during the war. We had a lot of pathologies, I say, people who were sick. And we tried in our own primitive ways to deal with them. I remember a very extreme case of a man who had survived by eating the flesh of his fellow *haftlinger* in the concentration camp, some bad place he had been. This was on his mind, his head -- every once in a while he had a breakdown, '*Ich hab gegesen*' because I ate, you know. He was in the camp. He'd come to see me. There was a lot.

One day Sam Haber, the director of the JDC came on a visit to a camp. And he drove up in a nice-looking station wagon. They have jeep-looking station wagons. And on the side it was written, American Joint Distribution Committee. And we were talking. Whenever I met him here in the states, he would remind me: I saw a man who had been in a *katzet* someplace come up behind him. The guy held up a lead pipe, and was going to smash Haber over the head. I jumped in front of the guy and grabbed his arm. He was shouting, '*ganovim*', calling everybody thieves. They are stealing. My family is sending me from America. I mean, we had really an impossible situation.

Q: What did you do with people who were really out of control?

A: We tried to hospitalize them.

Q: In psychiatric hospitals?

A: Yeah, wherever we could find it. They were in short supply. At the very end, as the camps began in 1950 to draw down and to a close, we were left with a group of people who were described as hard core, who would not move. Many of them would not, and some who could not. Many of these people were people with that kind of a problem, mental illness. And the Israelis were not too anxious to receive them. They had enough problems of their own. And so these people remained. I was shocked to learn from somebody somewhere that Foehrenwald, which I left in 1950 and I thought was well on its way to being closed, didn't close until 1957. The Germans were running the camps in the later years. Of course, there was a JDC in Germany, too, with some help. But these people were people, as I say, with criminal

records, with pathology of various sorts. It was a tragic sort of thing -- the refuse of our people there. But they fought us tooth and nail about the evacuation of the camps, premature evacuation, which meant that they could have been thrown onto the German economy, fend for themselves. And that's something they didn't want to do. Our people were shielded from the German economy, that is, German police, the German criminal justice system did not apply to them. They went to Jewish-run hospitals or United Nations hospitals of various sorts, and they were cared for. But ultimately, I remember walking in on people and saying '*far vos fohrt du nisht avec*'. We tried to convince them to go to Israel. It was not as great a problem as the United States was. And they felt guilt about sitting there. "*Mir zizten oyf undser primadanas,*" ("We are sitting on our suitcases here.") I said, "Don't sit on them. Pick them up and *und fohrt in Eretz Yisrael*."

02:23:37 The rabbis who worked for the JDC were enlisted in this effort of trying to talk Jews into going to Israel, getting out. It was inconceivable, I think, to many of them, and to me, that Jews would remain in Germany. That some would even make a life there, and as a matter of fact, many did. There were people -- I have gone back on a number of occasions to Germany, and have met and talked with, and have been entertained by Jews, Jewish businessmen, professionals, doctors. I think I told you that the head of the Munich *krankenhaus*, the hospital, was a survivor I knew very, very well. And by the way, he became ultimately the president of the Jewish communities of Neider Oberbayern, that is, Southern Bavaria. They had a confederation of small Jewish communities including Munich. And he became the president of that organization. So that's the way it was ultimately settled. I don't know whether any of the people are anywhere under UN care still, but I sort of doubt it. But it leaves a long and laborious problem where we were faced with all kinds of demonstrations and small riots and whatever. People didn't want to get out.

Q: Let's go back over some of the details -- the legal situation, the problems that people would get into trouble with the law or violate something. Can you tell us about the situation with the stolen car -- not stolen, but the car that was bought, on the – accident, and what you did.

A: There was a tendency -- I want to say as background, in the very beginning, when the Americans occupied Germany, they thought in the American way that all of the people living in Germany would be subject to German police and the German courts.

02:26:06 And if a DP was arrested for smuggling cigarettes or beating somebody, whatever, that he would be put into a jail, which was a German jail, and arrested by the German police, and tried under German law. Well, it was an abuse of that. There were a lot of hard feelings, as you can understand. And there was violence, and German police did some things which were vicious, and protests were raised by various people, including the American Jewish community. And then a decision was taken, it was a

very important decision, that no Jew could be arrested by German police. They had no power over Jews, except they could detain them until military police came by and got them. And if Jews were sentenced to jail, they were sentenced to jail in stockades, a military term for jail, where American soldiers were sentenced for various offenses. They did their time in stockades, and when they were tried, they were tried in a military court. We had two or three levels, it was a summary court. I mean, depending on the seriousness of the offense. And there would be a military prosecutor and a military judge sitting in judgment on them. And this protected them, insulated them. This was for criminal acts, of course, smuggling mostly, black market, whatever, but also occasionally, for some more serious offenses. But mostly, it was sort of a black market thing. I was constantly running down their pleas. You know, Joe or John, whatever the judge's name was, please think about this guy, what he had been through, and all of the rest. It very frequently worked. But then there were offenses of Jews, one Jew against another Jew, in the camps. Thefts took place. Fights took place over such thing as housing or some deal which they had made with each other and didn't work out. And there was an embarrassment, I think that's the best word I can think of, for the *goyim,* for the non-Jews, that these things were happening, that after the war, Jews were beating each other up or doing things to each other. And so these things we tried to settle internally in the camps. And a kind of primitive justice system was set up. And for want of a better one, I remember, I served for about a year in Neu Freimann, I think, yeah, as a judge. I would hold court as a guy sitting there, listening to the evidence, and deciding whether to dismiss the case or get together and settle the thing, or whether there was some penalty. I had no jail.

02:29:02 I had no way of doing that, but the penalty was deprivation of some privilege or something. But at least there would be a statement, a verdict, some finding. And we also had a problem, I think I mentioned this, occasionally when a *kapo* would be found, or a *ghettopolizei* who was accused of cooperating with the Germans in the ghettoes or in the concentration camps, resulting in the suffering of Jews maybe the death of Jews. After we pried him loose from an angry mob, all bloodied and I tell you, terrible, we would try to listen to what this man had to say for himself. And he would try to produce witnesses. Of course, there were accusers, people who found them in the camp, and came and told how he extracted money from them in a ghetto somewhere, and then sent their son off for deportation. But so often, we would find that where a group of people told stories on one side, another group of people who knew him from that town would line up and say he was wonderful. “He saved my life” or “He saved my father.” It was a very, very difficult area to try to be a judge. And, I was not trained to be a judge. I just used whatever common sense I had. People seemed to be satisfied with that. Now, what did we do with those Jews? We had no way of dealing with them. We were embarrassed to turn them over on a war crimes charge, can you imagine, to an American judge or American prosecutor who would have been unheard (?) of Jews, you know. And I am trying to remember -- I am not clear.

What we would sometimes do, we would call in the people who were from Palestine, working in the Brichah. And they were young, strong guys. I don't know what they did with them. We would give them to take them away. They must have questioned him, in the Sochnut offices. And some people told me they were drugged and taken away on illegal transports to Palestine where they were again tried. And if there were really serious offenses, I don't know what would happen. Shame played a big role in the punishment, that his name would be published in Israel. He is a man who, in this and this ghetto, Lodz or whatever, did the following. And so he would be sort of a marked man in Palestine. I think, my recollection is that this played a powerful part -- people didn't want that attached to them. It was almost as bad as, maybe, as a jail sentence. So that's the way these things were resolved.

02:32:03 Then there was the civil justice. There were questions of civil justice, where agreements had been breached, mainly in the area of black market, where a load of cigarettes or coffee or something had been paid for, and on the way to delivery, were stopped by military police and confiscated, the whole load, including the truck. And the driver was thrown into jail. So now the guy who supplied these cigarettes, for example, came to the guy he sold them to and said, "Give me my money." In the case where there was no prior payment, the guy had to get some money out of it or something. Then there would be an argument about who was responsible. In that case, these things were submitted to a *deen torah*, that is, a rabbinic court. And we had a rabbi, a number of rabbis in the camp, but there were a number of rabbis around who would hold court on this. And there was agreement that the verdicts they reached would be obeyed, would be complied with. So generally, that was the sort of justice system. We tried to avoid, and I tried to avoid, any reference to any access to the general criminal justice system which, for Jews, was by and large was the military authority.

Q: You told me about a situation in which a car was bought, and in an accident.

A: Oh, yeah. Well, we had our attitudes. Speaking of "ours," I mean Jews in Germany immediately after the war, knowing of the unbelievable horror under which these people had suffered, we had the same hatred towards Germans that the Jewish DPs had. Not quite the same, but it was there. And very often, it skewed our sense of equity. So one night, I was asleep. It was about midnight, and suddenly in this *graphone* (ph), in this big house, somebody's banging at the front door downstairs. I heard the girl go down and open the door, ask him in. He said, "*Ikh muz mit dem director sprechen, redn, sprechen*," whatever. Speaking Yiddish. And I came down. There was this guy panting. I asked him what happened. He said he had bought a car illegally, and he was riding the car around, and he lost control of the car. And the car ran up on a loading platform for street cars, where there were a lot of people. There was massive use of street cars. No cars on the streets at all, hardly any. And he struck a number of people, but I don't know what he said. I think he may have killed a

woman. And he said to me – "I don't know whether I killed her. I don't know. *Ir muz mir rateven*," he said, "You have to save me!" Well, I didn't think very much about it. Here was a man, probably with a number on his arm or something. And I said, "Come inside and in the morning, I will take you to one of the camps, and we will see that you are placed on a transport bound for Palestine, illegal transport."

02:35:50 And we did that the next morning. About three or four days later, I was told he was gone. Now, whether he was picked up in Cyprus by the British on a ship, I don't know, but he was certainly not in Munich anymore. I have thought about that for many, many years. Was that a proper exercise of my values? I don't know. I am deeply troubled even to this very day. That is, I think we have to avoid situations where Jews, because of the sufferings they experienced, are exempt from the best human standards of mankind. And what I did to him was, I said to him, "You're exempt." And I think that was wrong. I have lived with that ever since. I was wrong. I wouldn't do it in the States. But it didn't take me 30 seconds to say come on in. And when I have discussed it with friends of mine who are survivors, and said "What would you do?" They say, "I would take him in." They would have condemned me had I handed him over.

Q: Tell me, in these court situations that you set up, inside the camp, were there ever abuses of children or violence against women?

A: No. I never heard of any of that. Or children. Now, it could be. I don't know. I just want to tell you, Henry Cohen is a friend of mine. I haven't seen him for many years. I gave a party for some military people in my house one day. And there were some military and UNRRA people. And here was a guy who I knew. I looked at him. I saw it was Henry Cohen's brother, Sidney Cohen, who was a physician.

02:38:06 I don't know where he is now. They were dear friends of ours. My mother and their mother would take us all to the mountains together. We used to go up. And I said, "My God, what are you doing here, Sidney?" He was stationed in a hospital nearby, and said, "But you know who else is here, Henry is here." I said, "You're kidding. Where is Henry?" Well, Henry was in Foehrenwald. He was in charge of Foehrenwald. Henry had been a soldier. And he had taken this job in Foehrenwald, and he stayed there for about six months, but he got fired. I am telling this on Henry. The reason he got fired is, he had courts in Foehrenwald. And some Jewish DP had done something wrong, and Henry locked him up in a jail, sentenced him to, I think, seven days in this little lock-up he had. Well, the UNRRA regulations precluded him from locking up people, holding people like that for more than, let's say, two days, or something, or a day. Just long enough, if the guy was dangerous, until somebody could come. But he decided he would impose the whole sentence so there would be no recourse to any military jails. And he held him for seven days. They came, and it got him into deep dutch, and ultimately, he left. He lives, now, I think, in New York. I used to see him. He went to England. He was an urban planner. And he eventually

became a professor of urban planning at The New School in New York. And he went to Coventry, I think, as a volunteer after the war, and helped to redesign the town of Coventry, which had been destroyed by the Nazis, including their cathedral, the famous cathedral in Coventry. But I remember that very well. Well, Henry and I had a wonderful time there together with his brother. We were deep, good friends. And I would drive the 40, 50 miles to Foehrenwald occasionally to see him and have dinner with him, or he would come to Munich. Ultimately, when he left, I was given control of his operations.

Q: You described lots of babies being born after -- was there a lot of freedom in terms of sexual relations?

A: Yeah, well, we had a problem with that, because when families came, and we had to house them in public, big spaces, the only walls we had for them were blankets strung on strings, on rope. And these people were conducting their family relations. And you could hear everything going on under the blankets. And I remember, I always have this impression about Bulgarians. There was one Bulgarian couple that arrived in that camp. And he was a magician. He claimed he was a circus performer. They looked a little bit freaky to me, and it was confirmed by their neighbors. They said ,"*Chaver* director, you'd never believe what is going on there sexually with his wife." I think there was some leather going on, something like that. They were embarrassed. "Get them out of here." And I had the welfare worker talk to them, move them someplace where they could be more private. But you had the shards of the Jewish community in these camps. In many cases, except whole families who came from the Soviet Union, you had single people drifting, they'd lost their families, lost their wives, lost their husbands, fathers, mothers, whatever. And so there was a tremendous drive to try to recreate the family. And so we had a tracing service, and people would apply.

02:41:59 Can you find so and so? But very few. There was some good, but most of these people were gone, had died in some way, had been killed in Auschwitz or Treblinka, whatever. And so there was a thrust to rebuild families. And people were getting married in great numbers. And they were having babies in about a year. We had small hospitals in Foehrenwald, and, I think, in Freimann there was a clinic. But we had to use the Munich municipal hospitals for the OB-GYN, and people having babies right in that setting. I used to say to myself, if I ever got married and had children, there was a question after what I had seen whether I would want to be Jewish or not, maybe go through the same kind of -- but they had some faith in their futures. And they didn't know where they were going, and they began to rebuild the families. And we had lots of babies. We had to clear, I remember, a clinic floor in the German hospital in Munich. Hospital space was very scarce, because the towns had been bombed. So there was the thrust to rebuild your family, to recreate. I mean, you had people -- a woman who had three kids, and a guy who had four kids -- everybody is gone, just the two of them. And now, they marry, and they begin the

process, building all over again.

Q: Was it generally -- did the people got married or --

A: They got married. Well, we had sex. There was a lot of romancing going on. It's best I didn't probe too deeply into that. That was their own business. But we knew what was going on, and we knew people wanted privacy. And we knew they were being married, and we knew they were producing babies. There's a scene, you have a picture showing women in the park, sort of a public area, with the baby carriages. There must have had hundreds of baby carriages. I don't know where they got all the baby carriages, but they had them.

Q: How were people adjusting when the children came? It also had to be a trauma in some ways.

A: They had lived, you know, for five years under these unbelievable circumstances. Some had lived in concentration camps. Some had lived in hiding or lived in Russia. And somehow or other, I don't know how they did it, they managed. You know that accounts for the enormous resourcefulness of Jews in Israel and the Jews that came to the United States. I know hundreds and hundreds of Jewish survivors in various parts of the country who have come here, and their history is an incredible one. They have built themselves up. They built businesses.

02:45:01 They engage themselves in the charitable undertakings of their communities. I find they are one of the most productive groups of people you could ever find. Russian Jews are doing a lot of that. In my experience, you see the same sort of impulse, the drive to survive and to prosper and to bring children forth and to see these children succeed -- it's just incredible. So that in Germany, the black market, if you had to feed your kids, I mean, that was the only way of doing it. It was nonsense to go tell them, "Look, you are destroying the German economy." That, I would not do.

Q: But when these babies were born, you did say, it was difficult. I would imagine the years of male and female, sometimes quite young, having lost their -- not the older folks …

A: It was very difficult, but we tried. The JDC did a great job in supplying the kinds of things -- diapers, and we got them milk you know, evaporated milk, to feed…

Q: Did you train the women to know what to do?

A: I think there were some training programs being done by the nurses and the medical people. Lactating mothers. We had orthodox people who came in. And they had to have -- well, we had to have special milk for all pregnant women.

Q: Because they couldn't nurse?

A: No, I am trying to remember why that was. But there was a big demand for milk for lactating mothers. But the orthodox had a special problem, it had to be kosher. We would have some farmers that we contracted with who milk cows, fresh milk for these families. And a rabbi, a hasid would sit in the barn to observe, look at the pails and look at the way the cows were being milked.

Q: Did you notice in the camps that there -- it -- was more male than female in terms of the survivor population that you could tell?

A: I could not tell. I guess there are some statistics on it, but I don't know what they were. I have a feeling there were more men than women. You know, I want to say something else: I wish I had these pictures here. People came from various directions. You know, you had people who came out of the concentration camps. And, by God, I had a feeling as I looked at them, that they bore the scars of that experience on their faces, on their bodies. And then there was another group of people, who were mainly single, who had fought in the Soviet army, or who had been in the partisan underground in the *valder*, they used to say, in the woods. And they comported themselves differently. After a number of years with these people, I knew -- I could tell so many things. I was almost -- had become like, I think, I stayed the longest of anybody in working in that field.

02:48:11 For some reason or other, I was drawn to it. And you see guys walk with this kind of an attitude, and you knew this was a guy -- there is a picture there, and I don't know whether you have a chance to see it. They were standing on the hood of a truck, on the hood and on the fenders of the truck, dressed in *ledermantel*, these leather coats which, I think, were taken from Nazis officers. And the *shtivl*, the boots, taken from Nazis. Many Jews came dressed in Nazi clothing with the buttons removed, you know, all of the decorations. They simply, in a fight someplace or battle, had taken this clothing. Clothing was very valuable. And they are just standing there, saying, “In your face”. And that was their attitude. They were difficult for me to control, these people. They were constantly in fist fights. Whereas, I think, there was a kind of a -- I don't want to call it submissive, that’s not what it was -- but these were people who had suffered deeply, who had been *gepiniket* is the Yiddish term. They were *pinikt*, they were tortured in some way physically and deprived of food, or whatever. Living on the brink. Not knowing, you know, that any day somebody would say “Out”.

Q: When you arrived in Europe you didn't really know very much. Didn’t know what had happened.

A: Not a bit. Well, I knew something.

Q: Did your knowledge through these years come from spending time with these particular survivors, and them telling you the story, or from the reading about the reports from the newspapers?

A: Well, they were very anxious to talk to me, that is, survivors, especially concentration camp survivors. This is what was done to me. They had to speak. They were anxious to talk about it. And the people who were in the woods would also speak about it. I learned a lot from them. But what I have learned has been modified, or enriched, by what I got from my reading. That is, I was really dealing with a sort of macro at the very local level where great events were, like when Jews moved by the hundreds of thousands out of the Soviet Union in 1946, as a result of the *Mikolajczyk ohpmacht*. Mikolajczyk was the president of the London government of the Poles, who had reached an agreement with the Russians to allow the Polish nationals to leave the Soviet Union.

02:51:03 I learned that from somewhere else, or I learned the real truth. That is, these people also had a very limited view of their universe, which was very small. And lead to some miscalculations on their part, or misunderstanding, so it's a combination of both. But I think the human feelings, the sense of what these people experienced, I seemed to get from my personal encounter with them.

Q: Can you give us some instances of what people told you and what effect that had on you. Because it couldn't have been easy, either, to be in that situation for so many years.

A: Well, they told me the horror, what they experienced people, being assassinated before their very eyes, shot down, babies being smashed against walls. I mean, it was really unbelievable for me. I learned, also, something about the almost accidental way in which things happened to these people. That is, they are sitting in a ghetto and the mother said, “Moishe, go get me a loaf of bread or something. See if you can find something.” He goes out -- I know this happened to somebody I know -- looks for the bread, comes back, and there is nobody there. In the meantime, while he was gone, just accidentally -- she could have said it to another brother of his -- they were all taken out and deported, dead. Can you imagine this guy surviving this way? Concentration camp experiences dealing with *kapos*, dealing with the violence in the camps, and it wasn't a pretty picture. Survival meant, very often, set one Jew against the next. In some cases, stories of some kindness, some act of kindness, even by an SS officer – “Get away from here,” something like that. Or by other ethnics, you know. They hated the Ukrainians and the Balts because they were the principal accessories. All of the gruesome details. They had this man telling me about having to eat somebody's flesh in order to survive. No food there. They just were ready to starve you to death. How they were arrested, you know. What happened in their towns, how the Germans came and suddenly they were -- they reported to the *apelplutzs* (ph) . When they were asked to report, they went. And that was their

mistake. If a cop comes and says "You go down and appear at the police station tomorrow morning at 8:00 o'clock," don't go. That was their philosophy. It was all melding into one big mass remembrance. But there was a tremendous amount of conversation and talk about it, until I had it up to here.

Q: Did you go away did you go on a small vacations?

A: Well, we would go occasionally on vacations. But the only place that I could go with some regularity -- we'd get away maybe once every couple of months. If you look at your map, you could see we were about three or four hours from Switzerland, from the Swiss border. And we'd drive down to Konstanz, which is the border town on the Swiss German border. And from there, about another 30 miles to Zurich. And there was just an incredible change, you know. *Schlagsaahner*, that's whipped cream and cookies and cakes and chocolate and night clubs and all of the rest. And you'd spend three or four days. You thought you were refreshed. And then, you would come back to the grimness of the horrors. Occasionally, I would accompany a group of Jews who were being, again, treated for tuberculosis in Switzerland. I remember that Davos was the place, the site. Have you heard of Davos, D-a-v-o-s? Now I hear about it in ski contests. It's a resort city and they hold ski meets there. But Davos was a place with a number of sanitoriums, and the Jews stayed there to recover. And then they were sent back. UNRRA paid the bill in Davos and Malmo. You have heard of Malmo? Where is that, Norway or Sweden? Sweden. I have to say something about the international organization. Malmo -- I mean, all of the processing of Jews, that is, was paid for, the welfare and their migration, their tickets were bought, to Israel when it was established, to the United States, to Canada. Their medical care in foreign countries when that became vital, when people were thought to be able to be helped. So it was a great humanitarian service.

02:56:22 I know that many of our people here, UNRRA, think of the Arab states and the refugee problem and there is a negative feeling about the U.N., generally. You know, the U.N. intrudes -- especially on the basis of the U.N. -- the Middle Eastern situation. But they can be eternally grateful to the United Nations to UNRRA, for the great service which they rendered to the Jewish people as well as other refugees. But the Jews especially.

Tape 3

03:00:07 Q: Can you talk a little bit more about the black market, both looked like a solution to a lot of problems, but I suspect it also generated its own problems?

A: Terrible. I think the black market, more than anything else I can think of, generated hostility towards the Jewish community as it then existed in the camps, among the military and among, I think, Germans, generally. And the newspaper people would come over from the United States and want to know about "the black market"

because I think it was publicized here in the United States, as well. And we were very sensitive about it. UNRRA was told that a number one priority of the occupation immediately after the end of the war was the reconstruction of Germany's economy, which was smashed. And Eisenhower and the people that came after him, and in particular, John McCloy, General Clay, all made that a number one priority. And therefore, the diversion of goods, of manufactured goods, and food from the regular market was considered a very great threat to the economy. And measures were to be taken against it, police measures. At the same time, the people who were withholding these goods -- if you walked into a German shop, camera store, for example -- until the currency was reformed, that store lay absolutely empty of any merchandise. You couldn't buy food. You couldn't buy clothing because the clothing had to be sold at regulated prices, and the mark, the *reichsmark*, which was still the old *reich* before the d-mark, was practically worthless. I mean, it went to like 800 to a dollar at one point, so that the Germans would not sell their goods on the open market. That is, on the regular market under controlled prices, because they would be losing their shirts. And it was only to be bought with hard currencies: dollars, or Swiss francs, or British pounds, or whatever. Now, for the Jews, the black market was the only place. These were people who had come out of the most terrible conditions, in eastern Europe, either concentration camps or in hiding, or in the Soviet Union where there was nothing to eat. And there was a thrust to rebuild themselves, to rebuild their families. They were producing children, doing all of these things, and the black market became the only way in which they could meet that need.

03:02:57 And, also, to produce some income for them, so that when they went overseas to the country in which they would settle, they would have a few dollars in their pockets. And so this black market developed. It took the form very frequently of little shops in the DP camps, thriving in Feldafing, Foehrenwald, Neu Freimann also. You could buy most anything you needed or wanted. Food, cloth for making clothing. The joke was, you could get anything you want -- You couldn't get anything you want, but you could get a lot of things. And it thrived. Now, the military authorities knew about it, and they would launch raids on the camps to grab these people in the act. And early in the morning, maybe about 5:00, 6:00, or 7:00 o'clock in the morning, they would surround the DP camp with armed vehicles, and they would go marching in there looking for contraband: cigarettes, coffee, all kinds of things. I remember a funny story about how this stuff got into the camp at Foehrenwald. There's a big meat market. The question is, where do you get meat in a market? Now, we discovered the meat was gotten in this way: garbage was collected by German firms. And they didn't use trucks, they used sort of sledges, which were dragged along the ground, no wheels, just like sleighs. And they were pulled by two oxen; they would come into the camp with two oxen. And then, the same sledge would emerge with one ox. Then for a few days, there would be meat, kosher meat in the camp. But in any case, in the event of a raid in a camp, the United Nations had to receive prior notice from the military. No military people could enter a United Nations Displaced Persons Camp

without prior clearance from UNRRA, from the responsible United Nations official. So, when any of the camps over which I had any kind of supervising relationships were about to be raided, I would receive a call from the colonel in Munich saying, "Mr. Sorrin, tomorrow morning at 7:00 o'clock, we are going to be entering your camp." And of course, now, 40 or 50 years later, I am free to say it -- I would call up and tell Haim Yankel or the president of the camp, tomorrow is going to be a *razzia*, a raid. You know, I could not abide these -- I mean, I was sympathetic with what the Jews were trying to do. I had no participation in it, but I would just tell them, if you don't want to be raided, put your stuff out of sight. And that thrived.

03:06:04 And I understood it. And the military did not, from their vantage point, nor did the United Nations authorities. They were simply obeying the mandate of the military government. But without that, it would have been tragic for Jewish families.

Q: What happened between Jews, because obviously, some people were more entrepreneurial and others were not so entrepreneurial?

A: That's right. Some people made a lot of money, but most people made a little money, enough to get along. But we used to hear that some people made big deals. Now, I want to also mention that very often, involved in these big deals were members of the armed forces themselves. That is, some of the P.X. people who had access to cigarettes and coffee from the P.X. They didn't have to steal it. It was charged out as purchased in some way, and it ended up in a black market operation. And these black market operations were not of course only Jewish -- everybody was participating in them because Germany was vulnerable, its economic system was vulnerable, because of the war, to that kind of activity. What happened here in the United States, if you went to go buy a camera, let's say, for $400, and each dollar is worth a tenth of what its value is, so that you're really buying it for $40 dollars, or maybe even $4 when the mark really went down, the people producing these cameras are going to take them off the shelves and wait for someone to come in with another currency. But then a real act of genius occurred, a genius on the part of the United States and their economic planners. When the war was over, the currency which was in use was *reichsmarks*. And a lot of their currency had pictures of German emperors on them, whatever. But some of them, many of them had Hitler and Goering and Goebbels and people like that. That money was discarded. But the other currency, the old currency was still in circulation, and it was subject to extraordinary fluctuation because of the black market situation. Now, a decision was taken by the military government in connection with the finance leaders of West Germany at the time -- Conrad Adenauer was the chancellor of Germany -- to change the currency, to completely abandon the *reichsmarks*, and to substitute d-marks for them. And this had to be done secretly, because if it got out, there would be all kinds of dislocations. All kinds of things would happen if this was happening.

03:09:02 It was no secret, by the way. You can't do something that massive without somebody

knowing. But what happened was that for a couple of weeks before the day of the currency reform, which I think took place in '48, black market goods disappeared. You couldn't buy, because nobody knew what the price would be. And the people were withholding it, waiting for the new currency to come on line. And that was a period of enormous restlessness in the Jewish DP camps at the time. I guess it must have been out in the general society, but in the camps, I could -- we could see the tension rising. There were fights. There was a small riot in some camp, I remember. They had all kinds of problems, because you couldn't get anything to eat. And people had to feed themselves and their families. And then on a given day, an announcement was put up, broadcast through the camps, and the currency reform began.

Now, what they did was -- I am trying to remember -- everybody got, I think, 10 marks, or maybe it was 100 marks. If you had 10 million dollars stashed in old currency, it was worthless to you. You could just burn it in the furnace because you got the same thing. Every individual got the same amount in d-marks. And it was a miracle. By the way, the Germans had a word for it, *wirtschaft wunder*, economic wonder, economic miracle. Within days, the shops filled with merchandise, cameras, food, cakes, meat, cookies. You could buy whatever you wanted, clothing, just in a matter of weeks, because the d-marks were around, and people suddenly had lots of d-marks, even though they were distributed in this democratic way. And that began Germany's real economic recovery, and changed entirely the nature of the black market – it disappeared. It was no longer a viable instrument, you know, for doing business in Germany. Before, during the days of the black market, it was necessary. Otherwise, you would not move anything. So I remember that day. We had to supervise. We went camp to camp, saw people lined up. And there were German treasury officials, handing out -- taking -- you had to bring a certain amount of *reichsmarks*. There was an exchange for the old marks to the new marks, but you had a limited amount that you could get. And I tell you, I remember, it was an absolute wonder. And that was done by the American people, the American economists who were working over there, together with the Germans and the Jews. It changed the life of the Jews in the camps at that time, very much so. And the people living in the cities as well.

03:12:02 Q: Tell me about the situation with the Greek Jews who were trying to open up a shop?

A: Now, this is an interesting story. In Feldafing, there was a street, I don't remember its name, on which Jewish DPs lived. They had built small -- in Yiddish it’s called *geveldelach*, little shops, little stands, one after the other. On these stands, you could buy almost anything. Fruit, oranges, apples, meat, bread, booze, and cloth. Whatever you needed, for to live. And it thrived. I mean, the market was busy. In this camp, most of the Jews, I would say like 97 percent of the Jews or 95 percent of the Jews were Polish Jews. And they controlled -- they were the big merchants in these *geveldelach*, these little stores. But there was a little corner where the Greeks had established themselves. Now, Greek Jews had a hard time, and many of them were

deported, and lived and died in Dachau. They were a rough and ready group of people. These Jews that I met there, were from Salonika. They lived on the waterfront and worked the waterfront. They were people known for their roughness, you know, their occupations, and all of the rest. And they ran these businesses and competed with the Poles, and the Poles didn't like these Greek Jews taking some of their business away. There was an ethnic competition. And fights would break out. And they were bloody. I mean, they were fighting with clubs and knives, you name it. And we decided that we had to do something about it. We had to get these Greeks out of there, otherwise there would be deaths. But I do recall that in one fight between the Greek Jews and the Polish Jews that the Greek Jews went to Munich, where there was a colony of Greeks, who had also suffered in the concentration camps. They had been dragged in as forced labor, and called on them to come to Feldafing to fight the Polish Jews. In other words, there was a Greek ethnic solidarity. It was unprecedented in a sense, solidarity against the Polish ethnic group. Well, the end was, we reached a decision that they would have to leave. We would find space for them in another camp. But then began a great problem because they had established businesses. They liked it in Feldafing, and they didn't want to leave. And then the cry went up from them. They had a rabbi there, by the way, a Greek Sephardic rabbi, who was a survivor himself.

03:15:16 He came and charged us, charged me right in my office, with doing, for the second time, what had been done to the Greek Jews, that is, a deportation. It wasn't a deport -- but it was for dramatic effect. And we were very sensitive to that. We were trying to save these people. There would have undoubtedly been a death, or something. But you know what they did? They were in touch with a famous Sephardic rabbi in New York
-- he was a very close friend of Franklin Roosevelt, by the way. His name was Rabbi de Sola Pool. I think he had a big synagogue on 5th Avenue in New York. And he sent us a message, telegram, which read “You are deporting my people.” You know, whatever, some charge. And he came over. He flew over. He got permission to enter the zone. He met with us and made the same charge. But we explained to him what was involved here, that it was a lifesaving venture, that the Jews were not being deported. They would have the same privileges they had in other camps. They may not be able to run those black market operations, but their rights were being protected. The thing settled down after a while. Then, I think, the Greeks drifted away, and maybe the Poles were initially involved. I don't remember how it was ultimately settled, but it was quieted down. But that was a very strange sort of an incident for us in these camps.

Q: Was this an uncommon kind of thing, or were there lots of different kinds of fights?

A: There were lots of fights, but as I say, none of them on this ethnic basis. There would be fights about “you aced me out of this”, or “you swindled me”. And we would try to settle those things ourselves, or they would settle them themselves, that is, through

a *deen Torah*, through a rabbinic court. The decisions of that rabbinic court were obeyed to the letter. And there were some very big sums of money involved, I heard. So the black market, as I say, played a powerful -- I hear it to this very day -- a powerful role in defining the Jewish survivor community in that way. And it was an unjust one. I was once in a bus with a group of American officials going someplace, some meeting and somebody sitting next to me, some army officer.

03:18:01 And we passed a Jewish DP camp, and we could see the big sign, a Magen David outside. He said to me, "You know, I wouldn't go in there if my life depended on it." I said, "Why?" He didn't know I was Jewish. He expressed great fear. He had heard about the black market, you know, a bunch of cut throats, and all kinds of things. It was so stupid. But that attitude was very strongly held in the military. Patton himself spoke in the most anti-Semitic terms about Jews. Couldn't stand Jews. Hated Jews. Called them sub-humans, I think, at one point he is quoted. You know, he was killed about 25 or 30 miles from Foehrenwald in an automobile accident. I saw a documentary on Patton the other day, a couple of weeks ago, in which Eisenhower comes to his office in Germany to give him the bad news, that because of various comments he had made, you know – Patton had organized an S.S. military unit after the war, which was unbelievable. And these troopers, he explained, were getting ready to fight the Russians. And of course, he retained Nazi officials in the Bavarian government. So when it got to be too much, they ordered him transferred or downgraded, so he was appointed the commanding officer of the 15th Army or something, which was an army which only kept a history. It had about 150 troops or something. But Eisenhower is portrayed in this documentary, coming in to talk to Patton, to explain to him why he is being transferred. And Patton says now one more thing, he said, "I am here by order of the president," he said, "to check into conditions in the DP camps." And that was the time, I saw it on the film, that he had come to see us in Neu Freimann. So it was an important visit.

Q: Why do you think there was such a reputation about Jews since lots of people were involved in the black market?

A: Well, anti-Semitism. It was a stereotype of the Jew that had existed prior to World War II. Anti-Semitism was very great. People who study anti-Semitism in America say it reached a peak precisely at the end of World War II, after the Nazis were destroyed. That's when it rose here. There was strong anti-Semitism, and the black market seemed to fit the stereotype, those notions.

Q: Were you bothered by behaviors of DPs, whether they were Jewish or not? You can't come out of a situation like this into so-called peace with --

A: Was I bothered in what way?

Q: Well, there was a lot of lying, there had to be a lot of lying.

A: Well, incessant. The lying was a response to unreasonable situations for these Jews. They were going to be locked up in Germany for years to come because McCarren, the senator from Nevada, decided he didn't want any Jews in America, and some others along with him. I mean, it was an intolerable situation, so that anything you did to frustrate that or get around that made sense, and made ethical sense. But there were some things which were very questionable.

Q: Do you think that was a function of having gone through such an inhuman situation that one came --

A: You mean for the DPs?

Q: Yeah.

A: Sure. That was the only way you could survive. Otherwise, I would say most would be dead, would be gone. If they all obeyed what the existing law was, and didn't steal food or change documents, they'd be gone. It was clear. That was a way of coping. And to the degree that I could, I helped them cope.

Q: You described the visage of the partisan, of the fighter.

A: Right.

Q: Did that express itself in how they were able to organize, to get things happening? Was there a difference in the camps between these two groups?

03:22:44 A: You mean the nonpartisan.

Q: Yeah, the nonpartisans?

A: Yeah, I felt the people who were the most aggressive and most active were people who -- had been -- had not been in concentration camps. I don't know. That's just an instinctive feeling. I know that if somebody listens to that, they are going to get angry about it. But that was my sense as I saw these two groups of people. There was a kind of -- among the people, especially who had been soldiers or who had been partisans just by chance -- you didn't get to be a partisan because you went up and volunteered and the others would not. It was just where you happened to be at a given moment. They had a kind of "in your face" attitude. You know, screw you. Fool around with me and you are going to get it. Something like that. I had a problem coping with it. There was one guy I remember. He was in my court. I used to sit as a judge. And he went and took firewood, from the guy next door. I said to him, when he was caught at it, I said, "What did you do? Why do you steal from your fellow Jews?" He said to me, "That's not stealing." This is in Yiddish, he said, "*Ich hob*

nohr organiziert." He said he "organized" it, you know. But there was a defiance there. I could tell. It was sort of hands on -- you have seen that kind of thing. I have to show you that picture.

Q: Did you notice a difference between the female deportees and the male deportees in terms of being able to be aggressive?

A: Oh yeah. The women, I found the women aggressive. They were tough-minded. They looked tough-minded. They dressed in whatever they could, whatever you could find, and the women were very practical. They wore *schtivl*, boots. In the muck, in the mire and holes in the ground, whatever. That was very practical. And they really looked very able and very tough. I remember the women who went to make *aliyah* knew what they were going into and they were strong. I remember a couple, Feigher was the name. They went to Palestine, and she dragged him along. And I knew she would cope with anything. So they were tough, I mean, they were all tough.

Q: When the change came, when the I.R.O. came in and UNRRA left, and the organization of the camp changes so that now there's elected officials --

A: All men, no women. I don't think they would have ever dreamed of it. As I think about it now, the thing was so, what's the term, so male-oriented. By the way, in Israel, I am also told while women served in the military, this and that, that the country was very macho and that men controlled everything. And that's what existed in the camps, too.

Q: Was there ever any dispute about it?

A: No. Nobody ever came to me and said, I was done out of a job, or done out of this because I'm a woman. That may have been, but I knew nothing at all about that. That's part after later age, I guess.

Q: Now the slates of those who were running are all Zionists?

A: All Zionists slates. Bundists were out. There was another Jewish agency. And I have to mention them, not really Jewish, which did a very effective job. And that was the Jewish Labor Committee. But they were not a visible presence. That is, the Jewish Labor Committee worked with the I.R.C., the International Rescue Committee. The leader was Leo Churn. Do you know that name? Has he been around, involved here? He did a great job. They were a rescue operation. And Makusha Fischer. I don't know whether you know that name. Louie Fischer was her husband. He was an historian on the Soviet Union. Makusha ran the I.R.C. office in Munich, and they did a lot of rescue work. They had a woman working for them, for the Jewish Labor Committee. She came over from New York. The name escapes me at the moment.

They did a lot of work. Now, the work they did had almost a total emphasis, the Jewish Labor Committee, on in some way getting around the restrictive regulations which prevented Jews from marching, from leaving. I remember that the I.R.C. itself, which had Makusha Fischer, she was Jewish, and Leo Churn, the head of it, was Jewish, but they had a strong orientation to finding people who had suffered, non-Jews, Germans who had suffered persecution under Hitler.

03:28:08 For example, the head of this German socialist, Shoemacher -- do you know that name -- he was a crippled guy, lost an eye or something, suffered terribly under the Nazis. He was sent by, I think, the International Rescue Committee before the war to Istanbul, where he lived as a refugee. After the war, he came back to Germany and the I.R.C. got him out of Germany to the United States, where, I think, he passed away here. He was a magnificent figure of a guy. And there was great criticism in the Jewish DP camps about that act by the Jewish Labor Committee, *Yiddishe Arbiter Comitet*. But the Jewish Labor Committee, which had a strong anti-Zionist position before the war, that is, I wouldn't call it anti– , they were non-Zionist. And my father and everybody who was in the Workmen's Circle, for example, was part of that socialist, Jewish socialists, were not Zionists. But when the war came, and the results of the tragedy of the Jewish people were felt, the Jewish Labor Committee abandoned that. And I remember receiving into a camp, for an inspection, David Dubinsky came with his wife and deeply affected by what he learned there and what he saw. I asked him about it. He said, "Bundism is dead." You know, the *Bund*, *Arbeiter Ring* -- the *Arbeiter Ring* is not dead, but the anti-Zionist impulse disappeared with the war's end. Now, how much time have we got? Now, there were a couple of other –

Q: I want to ask you about this just for a second. Does this mean that the Jews that you knew in the DP camps were hard put to recognize that there were other victim groups like social democrats, like communists --

A: I think they probably -- those people had been in the DP, in the concentration camps, of course -- knew because they were cheek and jowl beside the people with the different markers on their concentration camp clothing. That is, marker for gays, for gypsies, for political opponents, criminals, and various categories. So they knew about it. But there was very little patience. I mean, there was very little time to call a meeting, or whatever, or to meet with them, or to express some protests. I think there was some embarrassment about gays, if I am not mistaken, put in the same category. I think now, in later years, that survivors have matured on that score. I hear it in my own community. But there was really no time for that. No particular access, no way to make it manifest. Now, we talked also about entertainment and culture. That became an unbelievable frenzy of activity in the DP camps, all of them, all over Germany. Newspapers were organized -- numbers of them representing different aspects, different movements within Zionism or different views or different thoughts. And the publishing business was tremendous. We also had very active theater in all

the camps.

Q: Excuse me. How did they publish these papers?

A: Well, no. German printing firms. I think they found, I think, somewhere through the help of Jewish agencies, what do you call it, not linotype, typesetting kits in the *Yiddishe buchstaben*, Yiddish Hebrew letters, was sent to Germany to printers, and they were contracted with by the newspaper publishers. And pamphlets were being published. People began immediately to write about their experiences. I remember people bringing me books, small books were published. As I say, there was an unbelievable, I would call it a frenzy. And then there was theater, all sorts of theaters, dramas, a little hammy, you know, not too great, but they were there. I had a theater built out of lumber that we got with cigarettes in Neu Freimann. And plays were presented. Many of them were traditional plays with the Jewish problems, with the children, and with marriage, and with going away, and all of the rest. I don't recall anything that had any political themes -- but I didn't go to the theater too often. But as I say, concerts were being played all the time. Musicians would come from the United States. I am trying to remember, a number of concert violinists came over to entertain in various camps.

03:33:23Q: Bernstein?

A: No, he is a pianist.

Q: Leonard Bernstein?

A: Yeah. He came, but he came initially to conduct the Munich Symphony Orchestra. Shall I tell you about that? That is unbelievable. And he performed in the Bavarian Opera House. The regular concert hall had been destroyed. This opera house, I remember, was on Prince Ragetin Strasse. By the way, it was right next door to the apartment building which had Hitler's apartment with his lover Eva Braun. But anyway, Bernstein came. There was a lot of anger on the part of Jews: "*Vos kumt er*?" Why is he coming here to entertain the Germans? I went to hear him, I went to see the concert. We were seated pretty close. With cigarettes, you can get all kinds of better seats. It was wintertime. I am trying to remember, I think it was the spring of '46 and it was still pretty cold. There was a shortage of soap in Germany. And whenever you went into a crowd where Germans were crowding into a room or German Jews the body odors were just horrendous. Anyway, we sat down. The theater was packed just up to the roof.

I had never seen Bernstein before, except maybe a picture. When he came out, the orchestra was seated. Now he comes out – in Germany that was just destroyed -- in his white full dress suit and in that darkness, this dark-looking, handsome, very handsome-looking fellow. It was like a thunderbolt in that theater. There was a

moment of silence. People were not quite sure how to respond. And suddenly, applause, which I thought would tear the roof off the theater. They were so enthusiastic. I don't know. I subsequently felt that his appearance there, this Jewish guy, just so soon after this tremendous raining down, death, and all that they had experienced, and everything else, was some sign they were still part of the world, you know. They were still, in a sense, human. He has said that himself. I read it in a statement he made about the concert he gave in Vienna, where there was also criticism of him. It was unbelievable. Just swell. Then he began the concert and, of course, it was dramatic and magnificent. I am not a musical fiend, but I think he chose Mendelssohn. He chose music that first was modern, post-modern or something. And then he played some things which had been forbidden. Mendelssohn, and I'm trying to remember, one or two things otherwise. I am telling you, I will never forget that concert. The Jews did not participate in that, and they frowned upon it. Subsequently, in later years, he went to Berlin, and there was another problem. Again, there was a riot outside the concert hall on the part of Jews in Berlin.

03:36:52 You know who is the director of Wahnse, the big Jewish DP camps in Berlin was Dr. Fischer. There was a famous Jewish doctor who was the head of the American Medical Association in the United States. His name was very famous in the Jewish community. His brother was the UNRRA director in Berlin. Anyway, because of the riot, he decided that whenever he made another appearance, he would go to a Jewish DP camp nearby. And Bernstein came to Feldafing to perform when he appeared again. And in Feldafing, Bernstein led a Jewish orchestra, which had been all Dachau inmates, prisoners of Dachau. The Germans had caused that little orchestra to be created, and they used it to confuse the Red Cross officials that used to come occasionally, very, from Switzerland. There was an orchestra, about eight pieces or something. (Abram, Avraham, Abrasha) Stupel was a Lithuanian Jew. He was a very nice man. And he would conduct -- I don't know what happened to him -- where he went. And then he conducted it. I provided the piano, by the way, which was destroyed immediately after, I don't know why. It was just an act on the part of the Jewish people carrying it, of revenge. You know, they tossed it off the truck it was being carried on. And oh, he played the piano. And they asked him to play Gershwin. The Jews loved Gershwin. He played a concerto about Paris ("An American in Paris"). And he played from "Porgy and Bess", and just tore the house down. And I saw Stupel present Bernstein with a Dachau striped *haftling* shirt, prisoner shirt, with the Jewish star on it. And he wept. He was so profoundly affected.

So that was it. The culture played an extremely important life. Jews were just clinging to life in every way. And they would have dances. I think I told you they danced to American music. And a very popular song, because everybody could say the words, and they would all yell it out and sing it, "Open de Door, Richard," which was a big hit, I think, in 1946 or '7. And I'd go there occasionally to dance with some of the girls. It was very nice.

Q: Were there poetry readings also?

A: No, not poetry, but there were readings, *declaamatzias*, we used to call them, declamations. Some of them had to do with the DP experience. Some of them were old. I remember some of the declamations which were read were declamations, which my father read to us here in New York. That played a very important -- and the Jews were very dramatic and very much involved in that. But I know there was poetry written about the Holocaust period. There was a guy, he was in my DP camp for a brief time, and he went off to Paris. Somebody got him out to France. His name begins with a "K", and he wrote songs which have become known as the ghetto songs, concentration camp songs. "*Zag nisht keinmal az du gehst dem letzten veg*". Have you heard that one? "Never say that this is your last way to go." There were some other songs he had written, which were sung very emotionally by Jews. And he was a Polish Jew. And he composed that song.

Q: You mentioned in passing, when you were in the theater watching Bernstein, and you would be in a room packed with people, because of the lack of soap, it smelled.

A: Right.

Q: What were the sanitation conditions in the camp? What were the toilet facilities --

A: It depended on the camp. In the beginning, when *casernes* -- *caserne* is a military building. *Flunt caserne, loch caserne*, various places where soldiers were housed.

03:41:52 It was very bad. I mean the conditions were very bad. There were no sinks. There were these troughs which they used. There was no private housing, you know, primitive. As time went on, things began to change. Neu Freimann came in. These were houses, and you had sinks. We distributed soap. We distributed sanitary materials, toilet paper, towels, and things of that sort. Otherwise, people had to go out and organize it for themselves if they needed something. But they worked out their own way. In places where there was community housing, people used basins. They would go to a place. It was worked out. It was very difficult, but it was worked out.

Q: Were sanitary napkins brought in for women?

A: Yes, we had sanitary napkins for women. We had all of that. It was a massive job of organization, of distributing the meats, you know, which were cut. We had to weigh them up, as we gave them out in a community kitchen, you would cook up a big bowl of meat, or whatever. But in a home where people were cooking by themselves, it had to be weighed out. We tried to be as equitable as possible. We had hospitals. In Foehrenwald, there was a good size hospital which contained operating rooms, and I

think about 60 beds. It had been used by the Germans for the troops who were living in those *casernes*. We found out later on that the equipment, including a pretty well-equipped surgical suite with the beds and the lights on top, was taken by the Germans, as they were wont to do, from the Romanians, who were their sort of partial allies. The Germans just packed up this hospital from Romania and just shipped it right off to Germany. Now, we were using that hospital. It was very, very important to us. We had people operating in there. We had all of the equipment, surgical tools, and all of the rest, pretty well-equipped. One day, I got a letter from General Clarence Huebner, who was by then the commandant of the American zone, I think. The letter said that the hospital is going to be returned, as of such and such a date, to the Romanian government, and that the United States had agreed that this hospital, which had been taken by the Germans, would now be returned. Well, I was stunned. The doctors came and saw me, and we discussed what to do. So I went down to Frankfurt to see Huebner. I am trying to remember where he was. By the way, he ended up, ultimately, as the Director of Civil Defense for the State of New York. He was a decent man. I said to him, you know, "These are people who have all sorts of illnesses and problems which they received as a result of the years in the concentration camps and the years of their treatment, and if you take it away, people are going to die." He said he agreed. He said, "I am going to appeal this decision." And we won it. We kept the hospital.

There was also a railroad, a trunk line going into Foehrenwald, and we shipped foodstuffs, coal, wood, and other supplies on it. A locomotive and two or three freight cars ran along the short line, about two miles. And they wanted that back, too. That also came from Romania. And we beat them on that one, too. Because if they had done that, if we didn't have that short spur, I don't know how we would have gotten tons of potatoes and fuel and other stuff into the camp. All kinds of problems. Germans said we were holding their stuff, and we had to fight them. We had all kinds of difficulties. Now the Israelis came, people checking on immigration to Palestine. Dentists came to check the teeth of people going to Palestine because they did not want to have an enormous dental burden at the time that the state was being established. And they had all kinds of problems. So we had a dental clinic, which was equipped by the military. They gave us about 15 or so chairs, which were run, not by electricity, but by a foot pedal. And we had 15 or so dentists, *zahnarzt* in there, doing dental work.

03:47:10 But now something interesting happened. Some of these dentists had been in the Soviet Union during the war. And they'd learned the Soviet system. So what would happen was, a Jew would come in a DP and he'd get free dental care. He would present himself and the dentist would say "Look, my friend, I can't take you now. It's very busy. It will be about a month. Come back." And this guy has a toothache. He says, "I can't come back in a month." So then the dentist would say -- and this is exactly a duplicate of Soviet system corruption in plumbing or anything -- "Look, I will tell you what. If you want fast service, you come to my house. I have a dental

chair and I will take you right away." You understand there was a competition between UNRRA and this guy's private interests. And I can't tell you what happened, what used to happen. Then they were competing among themselves for the business, and they were doing things to patients of other people. We had a big scandal. I am not going to tell you all, because it is too horrible to remember. But we had to reform that. We had to kick some people out. It was "Nellie Bar the Door." But imagine, altogether, we did get out. When *Gehretzreid* was open, this Israeli departure center we had, suddenly thousands of people began to show up from all over, Jews, to be processed.

03:48:37 We had a dental problem of enormous proportions in this place, *Gehretzreid*. But as I say, everything, I guess, seemed to work. Sometimes you turned your head away. I don't want to hear about it. And when you turn back, it was gone.

Q: Were a lot of the dental problems a function of the --

A: Of the war. Lack of diet and the rest. You see people with occluded, badly occluded, teeth falling out, rotting gums, and all of the rest.

Q: And you actually had facilities to give people dentures?

A: Oh, yeah. I forgot to mention, the chairs and some of the instrumentation came from the army. But teeth and drugs and other things came from the JDC. They did a fantastic job.

Q: What other effects, physical effects did you see? Were there people with -- I don't know -- broken legs?

A: We had all of that. One of the most visible effects was the distended stomachs. Women, you could see a lot on women. I don't know whether it occurs more on women than on men, but I don't know what produces that but when you are underfed for a long time, children, babies you see that. You have distention of the stomachs. I remember there was a Hungarian woman, who was a clerk, a brilliant, intellectual woman. I sent her to the United States. And she was to marry a guy from her town who was a doctor here. When I came over, I met them. And he met me, took me aside. And he said, "Look at her stomach." He spoke about her distention. I don't know. Eventually, she ended up in the New York Public Library as the curator of the Hungarian collection -- they have a big Hungarian collection.

Q: How long did you see the effects? The physical kind of --

A: I don't know. I think I saw them all of the time. They always looked bad to me. I could tell. Until they really came over here and stayed here for a couple of years, I could see, I could just look, pass somebody in the street, and say that's a Jewish DP.

There was something about them physically. Of course, they had scars of various sorts, the numbers and -- it's tough.

Q: What about education?

A: Now -- yeah, education. There was adult education. And there was ORT, trade schools, *fachshul*. We had a problem getting, especially men, not the women, men into these trades schools. I don't know, they were not interested. They didn't see their future as working as watchmakers or tooth technicians. We had to convince them by giving them Joint packages.

03:51:38 Not we, the ORT did. Rabbi Max Braude, who had been a chaplain in the military, did some work with DPs. And when he came back here, he was named World ORT Director. Anyway, they had to give them special inducements which were packages, a supplementary packet, to get them into these schools. This happened while Eisenhower was there, and looked in at a school. We took him to another school and a guy had gone to two schools, he got two packages, and he really didn't attend either one. We had a problem with that. That was one of the unattractive things. I remember, Jews were very good working in places where they had some authority. They were clerks, assigning people to houses, or doing whatever. But when it came to some of the physical things, stacking wood, clearing away garbage, forget it.

03:52:47 We could not get any volunteers. So one day, a group of American Jews came through one of the camps, and they passed by. They saw it looked like maybe a ghetto, you know. A guy sitting in the sun smoking cigarettes, and nearby a German is working, cleaning up the street. So the American, applying his standards, called the guy over and said in Yiddish, "Why aren't you working? This is your town, this is where you live. Why aren't you cleaning up?" The man replied, "I worked for them for five years. Now they will work for me." That's what he said. I don't know whether it was a rationalization, but, you know, that kind of work is not attractive. We see it in Israel today. Even Russians who come, or even the Jews who came, they don't clean up. The Palestinians, Arabs were cleaning up. And that is still happening today. And we had a problem. We were trying to convince the people because it is an American tradition that you work in your own community. It's your wood. We had a lot of vandalism, for example, within the houses. And it was irresponsible, sometimes done in anger. They would tear banisters off the steps. Now, the houses were German-owned, and they were saying, “To hell with them.” But they didn't realize that other Jews, when they left, had to come in there. And then, ultimately, Uncle Sam picked up the bill. All these places were brought back spanking new by the United States. They had that commitment. That included the house I lived in, by the way. We would have some wild parties there, and they would tear down pictures from the wall and everything else.

Q: You lived in a villa?

A: I lived in a big house, yeah, big villa.

Q: With a maid?

A: Two maids. A cook and a maid. "*Vas felt er*?" my mother would say.

Q: Did they teach languages there?

A: Oh, yeah. Now most were English classes, given by people who spoke English. They were very good and very useful. There was elementary school education for small children. Schools were organized and they were quite good. And there was confusion as to what language -- should they learn Hebrew? Where were you going? If you're going to Palestine, you had to learn some Hebrew. If you were going to America, you learned English. But they were very assiduous. We suffered shortages of supplies, mainly, but we made do. In Foehrenwald, I have to talk about, there were streets. All of the streets were named after Nazis when the camp was taken. You had Adolph Hitler Platz, Goebbels Strasse, Goering Strasse. And of course, no Jew is going to say he lives on Goering Strasse or on Adolph Hitler Platz. So they tore all these signs down, and they named these streets after American states. And that was constantly a source of humor. "*Vu voynt er*? Where do you live? On the *Michiganiga Gass*. They added a syllable, so Michigan became *Michiganiga*. "*Ich voyn oyf dem kantuzki"* because the "C" in Polish is a sibilant like an "S." That's the way they named their streets. It was so funny. It was very serious. An American would come in and ask him where do you live, he would say *Ochyo*. What? *Ochyo* -- Ohio.

Q: Ok, let's cut the tape.

A: Well, I want to say a few words about the meaning, the significance for the Jewish community, for Jewish history, of the whole DP experience. We are commanded to communicate to the world what it is Jews experienced during this period of the Holocaust. And the principal vehicle for that is the DP survivor community. Both those survivors who survived the horrors, and they are a smaller number of the concentration camps and the extermination camps, and those who survived by fleeing into the woods, or fighting in the Soviet army, or living as refugees within the Soviet Union. Without them, the world would not know anything at all about these experiences. So I think, to the degree that we are commanded to tell the story and retell it to generations which follow us, they serve this vital purpose. They are also an indication of the vitality, the will to life, and to survival of the Jewish community, both the survivors and the rest of us, who face formidable challenges to our survival. These people were so grimly determined. It used to seem to me that if I had children, I would say to them maybe I don't want them to be Jewish. Who needs that kind of threat hanging over our lives? Yet, these people produced children, recreated their

families. We could not provide the beds, to birth these children that they needed. A great will, a great desire, even to be found in the so-called black market, to provide the means for survival and the means to support whatever families they would create. They were really the phoenix rising out of the ashes of European Jewry. And they have gone on to produce great things, both here and in Israel. All over the United States, I know Jews who are survivors and are wonderfully contributing members of society. There is so much talk about immigrants coming in, and the threats which are posed by immigrants to the American economy and the American people. The Jews of Europe who came here did nothing but produce life and energy and things that we need in order to maintain the richness of our society. So it's an important thing. We have to be truly thankful to these people and understanding of who they were, what motivated them, and the dangers which they lived through. Even after the Holocaust appeared to have ended came this period. We know so much about the sufferings, but now we ought to know more about the work which they did, the sacrifices which they have made. Do you agree with me?

A: That was very well put.

End of Tape #3
End of Interview