NAME: ARI FRALIK

INTERVIEWER: KAETHE SOLOMON

CAMP: JASTRUN

DATE: JULY 6, 1980

Q: My name is Kaethe Solomon. I am talking to Dr. Leon...

A: Ari.

Q: Ari Fralik. And your address, Dr. Fralik?

A: 1185 Park Avenue, New York, 10028.

Q: Your involvement, Dr. Fralik, was as a liberator. In which Army?

A: It started out with the Soviet Army, where I was inducted after running from Warsaw at the beginning of the war. I was supposed to reach my unit in the Polish Army, but before I reached the unit, the unit was destroyed. We were running from the Germans towards the area where the Soviets were supposed to be. They had met us after a few days of running and being under constant fire of Messerschmits. We reached a little town called Kovel. When the Russians came and they saw us, they thought that we were spies and they kept us for a while under very strict, strict surveillance and I would call it "arrest".

Q: Who's "us"?

A: There were many other people but there was one more physician who, unfortunately, died -- my colleague, who was on duty at the same night where I was in the University Hospital in Warsaw in the Gynecological Department. He was in the Urological Department.

Q: I am going to stop you for one moment, Doctor. Don't forget where you were. You were how old when you went into the service?

A: Well, I am now 72. How old was I in 1939?

Q: We have to go back since my math is very poor. You went into the service in 1939.

A: Yes.

Q: What was your title in the service? Do you remember that?

A: I was a gynecologist. First, I was a so-called physician of third rank and gradually I grew from third to second, from second to first and I finished the service with a rank of a Colonel. In the Russian Army, we had Polish uniforms given to us before we entered Warsaw to make believe that the liberators of Warsaw are not the Russian soldiers but genuine Polish. As a group, they wore Polish uniforms.

Q: You entered the Army then after....

A: I didn't enter. The took me.

Q: They took you. It wasn't voluntary.

A: No, this wasn't voluntary.

Q: And you had graduated medical school, obviously?

A: I graduated medical school in 1933. My diploma then made me eligible to practice in Poland, and I did it in 1934 and I was at the University of Warsaw after taking my oral exams again in Poland. I took my residency and during the beginning of the war, I was a so-called adjunct on the University Hospital in the Gynecological Department and started out as a Research Fellow.

Q: Where are you from?

A: I was born in a little town in Galesia, called Brzezany. But I lived

there a short while because I attended, after my 7th year of life, a very strict Orthodox rabbinical school, where I was supposed to graduate as a strict Orthodox rabbi.

Q: They were going to make a rabbi out of you?

A: Yes.

Q: You are one of how many children?

A: The youngest of 4.

Q: The only male?

A: Two males. One brother, two older sisters, a sister-in-law, two brothers-in-law, two nieces, two nephews and a mother who were all killed. My father died a normal death a year before the war. I was living in Warsaw, as I mentioned before, and I expected a career, if it would be possible for such a Jew as I. I not only did not deny my Jewishness, but I spoke with my patients in plain Jewish because this was my language in which....

Q: "Plain Jewish." Are we talking about Yiddish?

A: I am talking about Yiddish. Yes. I already spoke Hebrew too, at that time, because before I became a physician, I was involved in a [Hebrew word.]

Q: Oh, you were involved in the [Hebrew word].

A: And I had mastered the Hebrew language very well, coming over from the Talmud and Prophets into a daily language, with a Sephardic pronunciation which helped me a lot during my years of activity in the [Hebrew word].

Q: Your father was also a professional man?

A: My father was a business man, a very progressive Orthodox. My older

sisters and my brother all went to professional schools. I was supposed to be devoted to a rabbinical career. I had not betrayed my father. I promised him that with my medical studies I would continue Talmudic studies, which I continued. When I graduated from medical school, I also finished the rabbinical school in Frankfurt am Main in Germany.

Q: And that was Samson Rafael Hersh, of course?

A: Yes.

Q: So you have a very fine background. You had friends when you were forced to enter the armed services? Other Jewish friends who entered with you?

A: One doctor. After we left Warsaw in 1946, I went to Germany and was there working for the Joint Distribution Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation as a Gynecological Consultant in DP camps, in Schlachtensee and Marienfeldt. He went to Israel and was a Chief Urologist in Israel and, unfortunately, died.

Q: I'd like to hear a little more about that experience in the DP camp.

A: What you want to know about is before DP, because all experiences during the Army and the problems of seeing and helping as much as one could happened before I went to the DP camp.

Q: Let's start from the beginning. You got into the Army.

A: Yes.

Q: You were obviously in a medical battalion.

A: Yes. I was first told by a Russian-Jewish physician not to give them my specialty and to "play it by ear" because he warned me that the lower position you will get, the safer is your life. The higher position

you will get, the more you will be exposed to and the more your life will be in danger.

Q: How did you react to that when you were told that?

A: How I reacted to that? It was something very painful to hear. But I was very grateful to that physician because I found it later very helpful during my five years, nine months and six days in the service in the Army. But I couldn't help it. They had elevated me to position of a surgeon in front military units in the special sections of abdominal surgery. Since I was a gynecologist, they could only use me as an abdominal surgeon.

Q: You used your knowledge with the men that were injured, I'm sure.

A: I operated day and night.

Q: These were front-line hospitals.

A: Front-line hospitals. First-line.

Q: Did you get into any of the concentration camps?

A: Yes. First we were on defense, running away. Then we started our so-called offensive and then we crossed Eastern Poland. We entered first into Lublin, a Jewish town, which was a great experience because in no time a few hidden Jews appeared and somehow they found out that there was a Jewish surgeon. What they did is they asked me to circumcise their sons born in the forest. I took them to the Lublin Hospital and circumcised two boys who were born in hiding not far from Lublin.

Q: Did they come out of the forest to seek you out?

A: To seek me out because they had heard that the Polish Army entered Lublin. We were not Polish; we were Russian wearing Polish

uniforms. It spread over that there were some Jews around there and they found me.

Q: They risked their lives to find a doctor that would circumcise their sons?

A: To circumcise their children.

Q: And they were in hiding at that point?

A: Yes.

Q: That really speaks for dedication for ceremony.

A: Yes. I was, unfortunately, very short time with these few Jews that I met there, listening to their stories, because my unit was marching forward and I had to go and be sure that my whole hospital and the smaller units that were under my care and responsibility moved together with the forwarding armies.

Q: What happened when you took these children to the Lublin Hospital? Was there a problem?

A: There was no problem. There was an old physician there who was actually a Jew who survived there. I did not have too much details about how he survived.

Q: This was in 1939?

A: This was in 1942 or 1943. 1939 was the offensive years.

Q: So you had no problem conducting the circumcision?

A: No, I had no problems at all.

Q: And you brought the child back to the forest or they took the child back to the forest after?

A: They did not have to take him back to the forest any longer. They were looking for some places to live because we were the liberation

army who liberated them from the Germans and they were all looking to find places. How they found them I don't know. I only know how other ones found places later. Unfortunately, they got very, very hostile greetings from the non-Jewish population and they had to overcome great difficulties to start a temporary life. I don't think they had been there for a long time since, as I now know, in retrospect, the situation was a very unfavorable one for Jewish survivors who settled back into their homes. It never happened. Almost never.

Q: Did you actually get into any of the actual ghettoes or camps?

A: Not in Lublin. There was no time for me because we were marching forward and we had no time to go into any details at that time. I went in later but not at this time.

Q: Were you still in the army when you went in?

A: Oh, yes. I was in the Army until I came to Berlin. I was all the time in uniform in the Army. All the time. We marched all through Eastern Europe. I was in the Army that took Berlin-- with the Russian-Polish Army-- from the east side. I was one of the few officers who were delegated to meet Petain's army who entered through the west.

Q: What was the first camp that you saw?

A: My first camp that I saw was a little town called Jastrun, in German territory. I will never forget. I was driven in a Russian Zues. They had given me all privileges of having a...even a soldier-servant because they needed me very badly.

Q: Is that a Russian tank, a Zues?

A: A Zues is like a jeep in the American Army. It was a Russian jeep.

In Jastrun we had had very bitter fights, street fights. We were crossing the streets in the jeep and I saw from far away a burning shack. I made my driver stop and we opened that and there was a horrible experience. There were many dead bodies around. It was a female camp. In the center there were a few young girls sitting and I didn't believe that somebody opened that wide the door. There were 4 or 5 girls which I immediately took out. I took them with us to the nearest town and made sure that they were fed. I was very, at this time, heart-broken because a short time earlier I found out from a mobilized Ukraine fellow about the death of part of my family. He gave me all the symptoms that he could be lying. I believe that he was, this Ukrainian fellow, so I did not have at that time the inclination to start writing about our experiences; I just had taken them. I don't remember how long they were huddled in our kitchen until I make sure they were sent behind the front lines. As a matter of fact, two of these girls found me just this year in New York. One of them came from Germany through Israel. She lives in Israel and she said she looked for me for forty years and she finally found me and she came and she started to cry and she thanked me. A week ago, I had another call from her sister, who came also from Israel, who went with her husband to Washington who told me she had to see me. Her sister told her that she saw me.

Q: Oh, my. That must have been an incredible experience, seeing these people.

A: Yes. It was, among others, very traumatic, depressing, and horror producing.

Q: Tell me a little bit about this place where you opened the door. What did you see? How did you get there?

A: By chance. Strictly by chance.

Q: What did it look like?

A: Like a stable. It was probably a labor camp where the Germans left and they [the women] starved for a while. I didn't see any signs of shooting, but just emaciated corpses, so I don't think they were killed. And, again, we were rushing forward. I took the live ones; the dead ones I left behind.

Q: Do you have a memory of approximately how many there were?

A: I can't tell you how many. I believe there were maybe 100 or many more. I can't tell you.

Q: Crowded?

A: Crowded around the walls, lying on the floor.

Q: Straw?

A: I don't think there was straw.

Q: No evidence of burning?

A: No evidence of burning. No.

Q: Do you remember seeing windows?

A: No. I didn't see any windows.

Q: How far away did the closest population live? The closest house? Do you remember seeing any type of citizenry?

A: It was on the outskirts of Jastrun. I don't remember how close the houses were, but I'm sure that the civilian population knew about that place, as they knew about all the places I had more experience with when I came to Berlin.

Q: You didn't talk to anybody at that point?

A: At that point, I didn't talk. I didn't have time.

Q: These girls --women-- were how old at the time?

A: I believe they were 16-, 17-, 18-year-old girls. Very young girls. This was a labor camp.

Q: When you took them to safety, how did you manage to take them? Where did you take them to? Was it your own Army unit?

A: I took them in my jeep.

Q: Your own jeep.

A: I brought them into the so-called quarters of the staff, the general's staff, because they were my quarters, too. I asked first to bring the food immediately. I was the senior officer at that time. I ordered them to make sure that they are in a safe place. I saw these girls a few times later on because they were traveling not back, but sideways, into further places in Germany with our Army units. We didn't have a place to leave them behind. So when we stopped and I had located my hospitals, I would always make sure that they are somewhere with our units. I found them and I spoke to them and I was together trying to teach them some Jewish songs, some Hebrew songs. And they were singing with me and they remember it, still. And I promised them that I would make sure that they will be located somewhere safe. They were sent to Lodz, in Poland, where I also had organized something else....

Q: I want to hear that story. But I want to stay with those two young girls for a moment.

A: There were about 4 or 5.

Q: What did they tell you about their experience? Were they able to speak? Were they mentally alert enough?

A: When I saw them again, about 3-4 days after the first time, they were absolutely normal in appearance and reacting normally, amazingly, and quickly recuperating from all traumas and getting back to their old selves. They were very much invigorated by the fact that they met friendly people and Jewish people, and I befriended them immediately. I was always used to dealing with youth as an organizer in the [Hebrew word] where I formed many units through singing. Songs brought Jews together and they were very happy.

Q: The national language. When you first found them and you said "Come with me," you spoke in what language?

A: Yiddish.

Q: The immediate bond, the love bond.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Did they want to touch you? Did they want to hug you?

A: Yes. They hung around my neck. And this one girl [one who recently sought Mr. Fralik out in New York] was asking me if I remember how many kisses she gave me. I said I don't.

Q: You don’t remember. You don't have the score, but you could repeat it again so we could find out, right? They were not that emaciated that they couldn't walk, obviously.

A: In the beginning, I was sure we would have difficulty in putting them on their feet. It is really a most wonderful experience to see how quickly they regained their physical fitness, in a sense. And, mentally, they were so young that these traumatic experiences went

very fast and they were overwhelmed with the experience they had just gained, unexpectedly. And when they never hoped for that and suddenly this occurred, the happiness was so overwhelming that it probably had suppressed all physical and mental pain. We know that positive attitudes and a very great experience of happiness may cause you to forget pain.

Q: Encapsulate it.

A: Encapsulate it for a while.

Q: These girls were able to tell you about their families? Were they asked about their families?

A: I did not ask them.

Q: You did not.

A: I did not ask them. I knew.

Q: Consciously?

A: Consciously. Yes. I knew from before when we crossed and we knew from reports that we had listened to everyday from the Russian papers, reports by the famous Ilia Ehrenburg who was describing the atrocities of the people under the German yoke.

Q: This was a Russian reporter? Ilia Ehrenberg?

A: Russian writer for the Soviet Army. He was a controversial type of a Jew, although I always felt that he did a great service. Some Jewish poets and writers were against him because he survived experiences which others, his contemporaries, did not. So they had suspected that he must have been a collaborator. But I did not think so. Anyhow, we knew from that report. Also, by the time we reached Jastrun, we had already gone through Poland. In Poland I had horrible experiences.

One of the experiences was when we took Warsaw. We took Warsaw, where I lived, and I didn't go into my apartment. I didn't want to see my apartment because it was everything burning. There were many episodes in Warsaw which were heart-breaking and today when I recall them, it is typically this one episode. We had to put on Polish uniforms and take off the Russian uniforms. The Russians wanted to make sure that the Polish population believed this was Polish units, so they attached priests and rabbis to the divisions. In my division, in my medical unit, there was a priest and a rabbi. The rabbi's name was Kahane. I entered with this Rabbi Kahane into Warsaw. We got very close. We felt each other, smelling each other, so to say. Certainly, we had both a very good common language. We entered Warsaw which was in flames. The first place we went to see was [unintelligible], an old temple of the famous singer Sirota. The temple was empty and burning. One corner was free and the Ark was there. But the Ark was empty. I entered with the rabbi into the [unintelligible] room. He was standing there in silence. Then in about half an hour maybe two or three dozen Jews came in. Suddenly, from hiding. [It was as though] they smelled that the Russians are here and the Germans are out. They joined us and the laments and crying were undescribable. The rabbi stepped up. There was the Ark. He stepped up three steps higher and turned with his back to these gathered Jews and to me and he put on a tallith he had with him and said to the Ark, "God, all the years of my life I've asked you to forgive the sins of my community. Today, I stay in front of you and tell you I don't know if we will forgive you Your sins."

Q: You knew this man very well. Did you share the same feelings?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you still have the same feelings?

A: Yes. Yes. So this was before I met these girls. After that I did not personally open any camps any more. I was very much pushed forward with the offensive and the forward-marching armies. I was the responsible surgeon for the Polish divisions. When we entered Berlin -- I believe it was the 4th of May -- one thing I did was go see the office of Hitler in the Reichstag. There was a room with a very high roof, tremendously high. This was four hours after the Russian marching infantry entered, and a Russian soldier had already time enough to write down with charcoal on the ceiling "Ivan brought order into Europe." There was nothing left in this room, only an old desk, and from the desk I took a little book, a little book I have with me. This book was given by one of Hitler's girlfriends to the Fuhrer for his birthday.

Q: Signed?

A: Signed by "Eleanor [unintelligible].

Q: My goodness. What is the book about?

A: [Unintelligible]

Q: What is [unintelligible]? Oh, I see. Sure. [Unintelligible]. I didn't know what you were saying.

A: It was a revelation for somebody I showed it to that Hitler would indulge in that, but he did. This is my book.

Q: You've got a valuable volume there.

A: Some professor from Cornell wanted to buy it.

Q: I'm sure. You went into Berlin. Did you get any instructions as to how to handle starved people?

A: I was in Berlin twice. The first time I was in Berlin with the Army we met the Germans from the West and we came in from the East. I met an American rabbi, and we got very friendly and I was very happy to hear from him that he was having Friday night services, which I did not have for years.

Q: That was something that you were happy about.

A: Yes.

Q: In spite of your feeling of God's denial for the community.

A: Yes. Because I am very, very Jewish. I have a very deep sentiment for tradition, great nostalgia for many years spent in a deep belief, not so much in Yahweh, but in Eloihim, the God of mercy. I used to pray 3 times a day as a youngster. I used to be ecstatic in praying. Of course, I'm too old so I have to go through many stages, including atheistic propaganda among youth, then I came back.

Q: You were ecstatic in praying. What comes to my mind is a Hassidic orientation.

A: Yes. Yes. My father was not a Hassid; my father belonged rather to [unintelligible], but he had a great knowledge of Hassidism and I, myself, having been far from home from my early youth, had witnessed prayers in Hassidic, so-called [unintelligible]. I was at that time a deep believer and I had the need to come together, the need to sing, and the need to reminisce. These prayers which I have joined the American rabbi in the evening with had convinced me about our immortality and about the link which this gives between yesterday and

tomorrow.

Q: The link. Your ecstatic experience in prayer. How would you verbalize that?

A: It was a total transfer into a deep, mystical belief in the supernatural and the guidance one reaches with himself by feeling that supernatural power. The deep belief in the existence of that supernatural power has very often helped me to overcome my great rebellion against the fact that I had to be in that rabbinical school [while] my brother and sisters and the other little boys from my home were going to the secular schools and wore nice uniforms. I wore a very Hassidic outfit. When I came home to visit my parents, I wasn't allowed to leave the street because I was injured by stones thrown by Gentile boys who had so willingly seen me as one of their God-killers, being I was in a very Jewish attire.

Q: That changed, that ecstatic.

A: Yes.

Q: When? During your Army... ?

A: No, no. I was transformed a few times. This happened in the [unintelligible]. It's the year I started to dig more into sociology and philosophy and my whole way of thinking on the position of the human being in the universe. I tried to understand what it meant for me in the past and what it could mean to me in the present to continue to believe in that supernatural mystic power which I started doubting and further on harsh realism had helped me overcome that feeling of really being under a guiding power on which I might totally rely and put my faith in.

Q: You substituted that...?

A: With self-confidence and self-assurance and a certain feeling of ethics which have to be substituted for that supernatural power, without which I couldn't go the rest of my life.

Q: That's a very beautiful explanation. It really is. The orientation you had in your family, did you think of that at any point when your life may have been in jeopardy in the Army?

A: Yes. I had envied my father, who was a deeply honest believer. I was with him at his death. I had an unusual relationship with my father. Although I lived in Warsaw and he lived in a little town, I used to come see him and before his death, a year before the war, I was with him for three weeks. I was with him when he died. I was observing his death. I was a young physician and I had envied his death, but with such a belief in... It is very funny. He was an Orthodox Jew, but very progressive in the sense that he had his daughters and his sons study. And in those days it was unusual, but I reminded myself that he had, for Sabbath day, a special tallith, a Turkish tallith, and I had to see to it. I was executor of his will, the youngest, but I was unmarried and supposed to be more objective and take care of my mother and so on. And he had been buried in his tallith. I have a tallith. I have a Turkish tallith and I have in my will that I be buried in my tallith.

Q: Traditional.

A: Power of tradition.

Q: Power of tradition. You saw death. You saw death because of war.

A: I saw death and I saw life because I am an obstetrician. I delivered

more than 5,000 children in my life. I love life.

Q: In the Army?

A: Not in the Army. Before the Army. In this United States of ours, I delivered thousands of children. I saw life coming and I considered myself for a long time a Partner to the Creator. Again there was a mixture of some kind of mystical feeling. It was, of course, never on a conscious level.

Q: But you saw death in the Army.

A: And how did I see death! Yes.

Q: How did you see death in the Army?

A: I was in the first line of abdominal care hospital, where the soldier had to be operated on as soon as possible after being injured because we learned that the sooner the operation follows the injury, the greater the percentage of survival, because there is no infection. I have seen these people. We had very little medication, but a lot of blood. We transfused blood. I have seen a soldier who lost his upper and lower extremities and didn't want to die. I have seen people who were so injured that one could not imagine that one would want to live after that, but I have seen the power of preservation. I have also operated on a general of the German artillery where we were before we took the town called Sandomierz. We couldn't take the town because we had to cross the river, and every time our companies were trying to go, we were destroyed. One morning at 4:00 I was called by the General. "We have captured an important man; he has to live." I operated on him. It was my first operation on a German officer. I had, at that time, thought twice. Should I refuse to operate? Should I

operate? At that moment, my medical profession prevailed. But I took revenge in a certain sense. He was a young, very handsome General. He was in shock; I gave him a transfusion. As he came out of shock, I told him, "You know what blood you got? From a Russian soldier. You know who's going to operate on you? I. I am a Jew." This man was operated on. It was a very difficult operation. Four hours after that, our FBI took him away and about six hours later, we crossed the river and we took Sandomierz. He gave out all the secrets where the artillery is and I didn't see him or hear from him anymore. Episodes like that you could talk about until morning. I'm not going to.

Q: When you saw the emaciated bodies and death as a result, was that different for you than death on a battlefield?

A: Yes.

Q: Consciously different, if you can put yourself into that time?

A: Yes.

Q: How?

A: There was a great difference when I was aware that these were enemies, enemies of my people, enemies of my closest family. [The others] were innocent victims of cruelty and inhumanity and bestiality to the lowest degree. How could I not distinguish them?

Q: Were you the only one or did you have anybody else that you talked to who felt the same way?

A: I believe that every thinking person who was around me, if he was a Jew, felt that way. I think that we Jews had a greater reason to be very devoted to the work we did in every place we could -- to take

revenge and help destroy the enemy. Therefore, I was operating day and night until one day in Kohlberg I was given a written order to sleep. [I had been operating day and night] because I felt this was the only activity [I could do]. I couldn't shoot. I couldn't be on the front line -- they didn't let me -- so this was the only thing I could do somehow to have a part in destroying that Humankind's Hangman.

Q: Did you talk to any German citizens?

A: Yes. I talked a lot. I was twice in Berlin. I was sent back to Lodz, to Poland, after we took Berlin in order to fight the Polish Army who was against the government, the so-called Polish government. There were two armies -- the People's Army, where I belonged to, and the [unintelligible] army to the Soviets, and we had to fight them and pacify them. Then I was made a commander of the big hospital unit in a district of [unintelligible]. I was coming there on a Saturday evening, to take over the uniform. I called a meeting of the physicians, non-Jews who were there for a long time. There were no Jews in these military hospitals before the war. I called a meeting. One occurred because my name was Leon Ari Fralik. The next morning I came back to Warsaw, reported to my general, whose name was Scharetsky, and told him that I am leaving Poland. He could not believe that. He told me, "You, who deserved everything from us, thankfulness. You get so many medals. How could you talk like that?" I told him the truth, that I was disappointed in the post-war, that anti-Semitism did not disappear but just the opposite. It was augmented. It was much worse than it was before the war. He called in a friend of mine, who studied with me in Prague. His name was

General Somit, who had been fighting in the Spanish War because he was a real idealist Communist. Then he was taken somewhere to Africa into a prison, was freed, and became the political Commissar's position of that Polish general's position. And he called in that Somit, and he said: "Here is your colleague. He also wants to leave Poland." He tried to persuade me to stay and I said, "No. Under no circumstances." So they tried to find [a way to give me] a so-called honorable discharge; they put me in a hospital for three weeks and found something in my heart which permitted them to discharge me honorably. Then I came to Berlin as a civilian, and I took over a hospital on the west side of Berlin where I had all DP's. I was the head of that department there for 2 years. I lived with a German family and I lived with the civilian people. It was an interesting transformation. When I was in uniform, I wouldn't mind shooting any German. When I took off my uniform and I [became a civilian] and I was a physician in the hospital, I couldn't kill anybody. I had disregard and disrespect for [the civilians]. They were like worms crawling. They were begging forgiveness as if they knew nothing, but I didn't believe anybody, because I had proved that they had lied.

Q: You had disregard. You had disrespect? No hate?

A: Yes. At that time there was hate, too. Yes. Hate. But I wouldn't be able to do anything. I would help them if they would call for help. Yes, that was again a transformation for the same person, as if there would be a change in my whole attitude, because in the uniform I had to defend my life. In a civilian uniform, I had to help, be it the enemy or not. But I could not kill at that time, anymore. These people were

always apologizing. [It was] nauseating. They "didn't know anything" and I had shown to them. I knew because I was in Lodz and I saw reports from German women who had been responsible for children's camps. They had asked the German Army not to send the clothes filled with blood, but to clean the clothes first. And they wanted to tell me that the civilian people didn't know about what happened!? All the atrocities were unknown to them!? I threw it into their eyes. Yes, I did speak. I did do a lot of speaking.

Q: Would it be fair to say that you felt when you were wearing the uniform and you killed...

A: I didn't kill anybody. I could kill. I didn't kill.

Q: Then it's your country. You killed for your country? You killed for your people?

A: I did not kill for my country. I was never a Polish patriot. I killed for my people.

Q: Certainly more accurate. When you were not in that uniform, then that was....

A: Then I was a physician. It was then only me which I had cultivated all my life.

Q: And killing was not part of that.

A: No.

Q: That's an interesting division. [Let's talk again about] the DP camps.

A: Yes. I met Ben Gurion and LaGuardia there. I had a lot of discussions with them. I was very unhappy to see that at the DP camps the young survivors were given food and shelter [but not made] to rehabilitate themselves. [These camps] made them feel that the war had to feed

them and give them everything ready and [turned them into] people who grew with a demand from the world to be paid for the fact that they survived. There was a Mr. Fischbein who was the head of the DP camps. I told them my opinion. They chose me to the Executive Committee there so it was my deepest belief that the DP camps were a big failure. They should not have given them food, shelter, and everything ready. They should have opened workshops, made them work and earn the money, and [helped them] regain their self-respect. Many of these people came to the United States and Israel with a demand from the surrounding world: "Pay us because we survived." This was not a logical and not a foresight attitude.

Q: You were dealing with people who were starved both emotionally and physically.

A: I was dealing with people who were almost degenerated.

Q: Degeneration of self respect? That was your first concern?

A: Yes, feelings of respect, [having] a certain belief in themselves and [the ability to see] a normal way of life. Because they went from one abnormality to another.

Q: The DP camp was also an abnormality.

A: Abnormality. Absolutely an abnormality.

Q: And that had been the place to develop self-respect in such an abnormal situation?

A: Yes. Yes. [There could have been] open schools, open work shops, everybody do something, earn that. After a day's work, you get your food, you get your shelter, you get your clothes. But don't stay a whole day and wait with your proportions. What happened was [some

people] became black market racketeers who left the camp and went into the population and started doing many unpleasant things, but I'm not going to get into that. There were episodes which were heart-breaking. When a young man who had married a surviving Jewish-Russian girl brought in a German mistress, the neighbors brought him in to us. We asked him how can he do that? He said, "This is the way I take revenge on the Germans." I mean, it speaks to a total lack of any...they lost the moral basis, if they had it. But this was not the regaining, by giving them everything ready on a plate. You had to make them feel as human beings who must work for life.

Q: Were you instrumental in organizing the mechanics of the DP camp?

A: I was a consultant and a physician. I did not help in organizing the camp itself. I just raised my critical voice. But I couldn't do because I was very busy. There was enough work for me in two camps. There were 2,000 people.

Q: Where were these camps?

A: In west Berlin.

Q: You saw people come and go and they were for the most part single people. They were not families? They were isolated?

A: They created peers.

Q: They developed their own support system.

A: It was not something that was organized in a sense where a planned educational program was prepared for these people who had come out of the camps and who had seen cruelty and had lost faith in humanity [as a means of] rehabilitating them. [There was no] professional psychological attitude on how to rehabilitate them and not give them

rides and, as I said, pay them for the fact that they survived.

Q: How do you view, in those terms, the Vietnamese situation when they are collected into a camp situation?

A: As a first stage of survival, you have to feed them. Once the stomach is full, we have to do something else. You cannot permit yourself to have the people, all alone, feel they are going to be supported by generosity of the surrounders. They have to be productive in a certain way. Productivity. To make a person feel he is productive is the first step [in making him] feel he is a person on his feet and is wanted, needed, and important. Not a parasite. A feeling of a parasite is a horrible deteriorating element.

Q: Was this feeling ever shared with you by any of the DP's? Was there something that you saw?

A: Some, yes. But I would say it was only the small intellectual group. And a small handful of those were in the DP camps.

Q: So you are talking about a very small population that would have immediately benefited by that type of training whereas the majority really needed to be nurtured.

A: No, I am not talking about that. I misunderstood your question. You asked did somebody share with me? I would not have, in a democratic way, asked the members of the camp, "Do you want to have schools and workshops or do you want to stay in bed until breakfast and wait for lunch; eat lunch and wait for dinner? I wouldn't ask them that.

Q: I understand that. You would provide it.

A: I would provide it. I wouldn't ask that. Sorry.

Q: Did that seem feasible to you at that time, from your point of view? Was that a possibility under the circumstances?

A: Yes, it was. I wouldn't say it would be blooming right away, but it was absolutely feasible. [We could have started in] a very most primitive way. Build your shacks, whoever knows something. One tailor should teach another one how to sew. There is absolutely no reason to let people -- young, old, except the sick ones -- sit and do nothing. The first few days [you need to] make sure they are under control, that the undernourishment is controlled. After the hunger is over and the sickness is out [you need to] start doing something with them.

Q: Do you believe that these people suffered psychologically as a result of that treatment, as a result of being cared for, nurtured after such a traumatic experience? I know your wife is in that profession.

A: The majority of people I don't believe suffered. I think the majority of survivors in these camps as I observed them were people who became, to a certain degree...

NOTE TO TRANSCRIPT:

[The interview was terminated due to the obvious strain on the respondent which was also felt by the interviewer. Dr. Fralik agreed to continue the interview at some other time. It was later learned through a friend of Dr. Fralik's that he experienced a sleeplessness the night of the interview.]