United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Eli Rock
January 28, 1998
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Eli Rock, conducted by Randy Goldman on January 28, 1998 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.

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.

ELI ROCK
January 28, 1998

A: That -- this -- that engrave was given to me by Henri Hightown and his wife, who were on my JDC team that went into Bavaria after 1945. He was a French, Polish, Jewish doctor living in France. He was there with -- in Feldifing when we initially went in. His wife was the nurse of our team.

Q: Let me -- let's just sort of start this, officially.

A: Yeah.

Q: By your stating your name, date and place of birth.

A: Start now?

Q: Please.

A: My name is Eli Rock, spelled E-l-i and R-o-c-k. I was born in Rochester, New York, on August 12th, 1915. My parents were Russian Jews, who had come to this country around the turn of the century and I had an older sister who was born in 1913 and a younger brother, who lives in California. My sister died some time ago. And my parents set up a -- a -- when they initially came, they worked in clothing shops and whatnot, but they -- in the early 20's, opened a dry goods store in the Italian section of Rochester and we lived over the store, initially. And I went to school, Jefferson Junior High School and then I went to East High School in Rochester and -- and my freshman year at Jefferson Junior High School, I met a lifelong friend named Joe Platt. We discovered we had the same birthday and that's what made us close friends. He was later the president of Harvey Mudd College and another college and I hope to see him, before too long. I grew up in this Italian neighborhood in Rochester, where I formed some good friendships and they were -- these were first generation immigrants and some of them were fairly tough kids, but some weren't and when I graduated from East High School, we went -- I went to the University of Rochester. And by then my parents had moved away from State Street and work -- were living in another section of Rochester. And I lived at home and when I graduated from the University of Rochester in 1937, I first went to Michigan Law School for one year and then transferred to Yale Law School, from which I graduated in 1940 and I was interested in labor relations, I had been a member of the Teamsters Union while I was in school, driving, quote, an ice truck. In those days they still had ice and the football players all had pictures in summertime carrying blocks of ice on their shoulder and I fancied myself doing that and I did it. But it paid well, that was the main thing. And I even wrote a history of that local union for a class I had in college. But anyway, I went to law school and I got out in 1940 and practiced law in Rochester. I guess I stayed in Rochester for a number of years and then in '42, went to work for the War Labor Board in Washington and they transferred me eventually, to the Philadelphia Regional War

Labor Board, which is how I came to Philadelphia. And then in 1947, I went overseas to drive an ambulance in the French army.

Q: Didn't you go there before 1947?

A: Yeah, I left in '47.

Q: You left the Labor Board in '47?

A: Yeah, I think.

Q: No, didn't you go to Europe in '45?

A: I guess you're right. I went to work for the War Labor Board, come to think of it, in 1942. I left Rochester, went to Washington and then they sent me to the Philadelphia Regional War Labor Board and I left in late '44, is that what I mentioned earlier? I -- I worked in Philadelphia for a couple of years and I -- I wanted to get into the war.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I was a 4-F, but I -- I was born with a -- a -- a heart abnormality, which disqualified me for military service, but I still felt it was an event I wanted to observe first hand and I heard about the American field service, which sent ambulance drivers, as it had done in World War One, to Italy and to the first French army, which was then not yet back actually into France. But I -- I drove an ambulac-ambulance for the American field service in the first French army. And when the war ended, I stayed on in Europe and went to work for the Joint Distribution Committee.

Q: Okay, let me ask you just a little bit more about your sort of family life, your religious background.

A: Well, my parents were typically of their generation of immigrants, not terribly observant. My grandparents were very observant, they -- both, on both sides had come to Rochester from Russia and we observed all of the important holidays. My mother had two sets of dishes and another two sets for Passover, that's four sets of dishes. And we -- I used to -- she used to send me over to the showthefab near the Jewish section of Rochester to get kosher meat and whatnot. She was -- she wouldn't have thought of not having kosher meat. And actually I studied, my initial Hebrew, Jewish lessons were with my maternal grandfather at his home. And then to prepare for my Bar Mitzvah, I went to more formal Hebrew school run by a revel -- Rabbi Solomon, which we used to call Rabbi Solomon's slaughterhouse because he had a strap, a big strap if the kids didn't pay attention and -- Rabbi Not's slaughter academy or something like that. And I got Bar Mitzvahed in Rochester and I was observant for a brief period. I did the fillinin for about three months

and I stayed in Rochester. After graduating from East High School, I went to the University of Rochester in 1933.

Q: Did you -- and so you -- you did certainly identify with being Jewish?

A: Oh sure, I mean all of the holidays and even though we grew up in this non-Jewish neighborhood, I [indecipherable]

Q: And so you had non-Jewish friends as well?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you -- can you remember, sort of any -- sort of quality, any values that were instilled about your family life?

A: In all honesty, I -- I mean it's -- I don't think I resented the inconveniences of being Jewish at that time, having to walk across town all the time to get kosher meat and the -- but I -- I certainly observed the dietary laws. I just didn't eat at anybody else's house because I -- and except for this close friend that I've been friends with from -- Joe Platt and I met as friends in the seventh grade, in junior high school. We went all through junior high school, high school and college together, the University of Rochester. But whenever -- when -- when I went to his house for a meal, which was the first time I ever ate anywhere else, his mother was very careful to give me -- give us a dairy meal, dairy foods, she just -- she realized I could not eat traifa food. But -- yeah, I had good friends, like Joe Platt, primarily Joe Platt and then I formed -- I did not join the Jewish fraternity at the University of Rochester. There was only one. And -- and then I went to law school, first to Michigan for one year, Michigan Law School in '37, '38 and then to Yale Law School, [indecipherable] graduated.

Q: What -- did you have any -- were there any sort of cultural groups, any Zion-Zionist groups, anything like that?

A: I think I used, at one point, I belonged to some sort of a Jewish group, a -- the -- again it was in another section of town. Priorly, I -- I had very ex -- in th -- in those early days, very few Jewish friends and my closest friend was Joe Platt and the -- I guess a couple of the Italian, we grew -- this was an Italian neighborhood and I guess I did have -- Frankie Deponzio was a pretty good friend. We li-lived -- our dry goods store was next to the Deponzo's -- Deponzio's grocery store on State Street. But I don't think I had any -- we -- we observed all of the holidays but I don't think I had any intent to get into Jewish affairs, it just worked out that way.

Q: I guess what I'm trying to get a sense of, was there something about your family life, certain values you grew up with that in some way prepared you or motivated you later on to do the sort of work you did?

A: Oh, that's hard to -- that's hard to say. I was a liberal, politically, I just seemed to be that way. I guess I identified with underdogs. I certainly felt that I was a minority and maybe that's what enabled me to identify. But I think I got into labor relations work because they were do-gooders. I joined it -- I belonged to this union when I peddled ice and I wrote the term paper, something about that experience. So I identified and my parents were both members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. I knew the head of the Amalgamated in Rochester, in fact he was a close friend of my family's and so I -- I -- I had, somehow this moving in that direction.

Q: Socially motivated?

A: Yeah. By family and associations.

Q: Okay. You -- you were starting to say that you wanted to -- to be part of the war effort, you couldn't go as a soldier, so I think you heard about the American Field Service?

A: Right.

Q: Why don't you tell me?

A: Okay, in the fall of '44, I signed up to be an ambulance driver with the field service and they sent me to Europe and I became -- I became part of a -- a medical unit that was working with the first French army, which was the first French effort after their defeat by Germany, to mount a military effort. And I drove an ambulance for the first French army in France and Germany. And had some interesting experiences and when the war ended, I joined the JDC in Paris.

Q: Well, tell me a little -- you're saying you had some interesting experiences --

A: But because --

Q: I want to hear about those.

A: With the French army?

Q: No. Yeah, with the Field Service.

A: The -- I was reviewing some of them. The -- in -- there was a -- things were chaotic after the war, in the immediate, th-that is after the armistice and everything was disorganized. The armistice was in May, '45. May 12th, I think. And we were stranded in Germany when the war ended and we drove back and the amusing experience was everything was chaotic, but here we were in uniforms, a motley kind of group and we -- we came by this great, big hotel in Badenbaden. I guess it was called the Hotel Badenbaden and we went

up to the hotel and there was a -- the manager or director was still there -- it was empty, the Germans had fled and the French had not yet occupied it and we -- this group of -- of 10 or so ambulance drivers said, "We are requisitioning the hotel." And this man nodded his head, "Will you come in?" And he treated us like -- muddy, with our duffel bags and whatnot, he ushered us to each room, where the rugs were about six inches thick and you had these glittering chandeliers and we spent a few days there. It was a memorable experience coming after the living cond -- well, we didn't live badly as ambulance drivers, but -- wi-with local families. And -- and then I -- I went to Paris and initi -- I didn't want to go back home yet, I had -- I didn't know when I'd get back to Europe and this was a chance to see Europe and I -- I at first tried to get a job with UNRA and friends of mine, Ben and Marnie Shaufler were in Europe with UNRA and they -- Marnie was there and Ben, I think. Marnie worked for UNRA and UNRA would not hire me, they just didn't under -- they didn't hire people in -- in that way. And -- but they -- Marnie and Ben knew about the JDC, they had done some work for the JDC and they sent me around to the JDC Paris office, where I met Greenleigh, Arthur Greenleigh, G-r-e-e-n-l-e-i-g-h, who was running the program of the Joint in Paris at that point. They had not yet brought over any people. They hadn't been able to -- or supplies, but they were doing whatever they could and here was an American who could at least be a body in Germany and in Paris. Initially in Paris and then I sent myself into Germany in the summer of '45, to Feldifing which wa -- became the -- initially it was a -- a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish displaced persons, but it became all Jewish and I was stationed there for the Joint Distribution Committee.

Q: We're jumping ahead a little bit. I want -- I want to ask you a couple questions.

A: Sure.

Q: Just quickly back to the AFS. Were you -- when you were driving ambulances, were you able to observe anything about what was going on in the war, or about camps, anything like that?

A: Really only once. We met a concentration camp survivor on a road, he had wandered off by himself and his head was shaven and -- this is while I'm driving an ambulance, before I've gone to work for the JDC. And I think he'd -- I'm not sure whether he was still wearing concentration camp pajamas, but then we -- when I went to work for the JDC, of course, that was in the early days after the war and that was -- those first -- those six months between May -- if that's when I went to work for the JDC, in -- no, we said I was in Paris first. In July of '45, I went back int-into Germany and worked at Feldifing until -- which was this first Jewish all DP camp, until December, '45 and there -- there were some very, very emotional experiences. People did not know, initially, that their families had been decimated. They were separated. People who could work were sent to labor camps. Nobody knew yet about the -- the death camps or even the full extent of the concentration camps. And I remember one man in particular who had just learned about what had happened to his family and I was there in this JDC uniform, which was like a

military uniform and I was good, strong physical condition and I remember his walking up to me, with tears, he had just learned apparently, about what had happened to his family. And he said to me in Yiddish, "Dusha svair itsa zine a Yid." It is hard to be a Jew and -- with tears flowing down his face. That was -- I met, I'm sure -- I mean, stationed at Feldifing, I met a lot of people, but in those early days, when it was just being learned by these people who had been separated, that they -- their families had been liquidated, that became a very emotional kind of period to work -- to be working with those people.

Q: How much did you know?

A: I don't think I knew much. I mean, I had driven the ambulance and I'd met this one guy, who -- who mentioned something about what had happened to him. And then I came to Paris and people began their -- come into Paris and we learned from some of them, what had been happening. The awareness of what had been done by the Germans to the Jews of Poland and Russia, did not take place until sometime after the war. There just wasn't the communication, there wasn't the information and -- course the average German said he didn't know, she didn't know about it either. But there were relatives who must have come back from the concentration camps who must have told them what Hitler was doing.

Q: I'm going to stop the tape here, because we need to change the tape.

A: Sure.

Q: As much -- you know, I -- I'm stopping you because there's much o-of this sort of personal detail, you think it's really helpful?

A: Well I -- I've been…

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: Okay, we were starting to talk a little bit about your work with the Joint Distribution Committee in Paris. And I have a couple questions I'd like to throw out and then sort of let you --

A: Sure.

Q: -- tell me. The first is, what your primary responsibilities were there. What, you know, what kind of work you were involved in, cause I know they -- they were trying to accomplish a lot and also what -- what credentials you had or what experience you had for the kind of work that you would be doing?

A: Well my only credentials were that A -- I knew something about Germany because I'd been driving an ambulance there and we would be sending people in to work in Germany, in the DP camps and the JDC initially had nobody in parts -- those parts of Germany or even in the northern -- the British occupied parts. So I -- I certainly could be helpful in the red tape of getting somebody into Germany and -- and then we had dealings with the French-Jewish community and I had fairly good command of French, I had had a lot of French in school and then I -- when I drove an ambulance for the first French army, we spoke a lot of French, so that was kind of -- but I think mainly there was nobody else for them to hire and they desperately needed people for whatever programs they could organize.

Q: And then sort of let you --

A: Sure.

Q: Tell me. The first is, what your primary responsibilities were there. What -- you know, what kind of work you were involved in, cause I know they -- they were trying to accomplish a lot and also what -- what credentials you had or what experience you had for the kind of work that you would be doing?

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Q: And so what --

A: And so I was there as Arthur Greenleigh's assistant and I think what we did, basically, was to prepare people or -- for -- prepare for sending people into Germany. And dealing with the French-Jewish community or it's representatives in Paris and maintaining contact with the JDC in the states and Greenleigh held down the Paris office. Schwartz was in charge of everything in Europe. He had been there before the armistice, he had been in -- I think on some missions in occupied Hungary and -- and the JDC had a representative in Switzerland, Solly -- that fabled Solly Meir, who was able to send supplies. I-In fact, I once organized a convoy of -- of trucks that went to Switzerland from Feldifing. The army gave us, I don't know, 10 or 15 trucks to go to Switzerland, where the JDC, through Solly Meir had a big supply of food packages. Packetten. And we -- we took a whole truckload. I think maybe more than one truckload back into Bavaria, to Feldifing, where they were eagerly distributed by the Jewish committee there and this was something the JDC could do. UNRA provided all of the basic supplies, we never had the -- the facility for -- we never -- we were always a supplementary organization, there was -- oh, they had a phra -- a word for people like us and the Quakers, who were not UNRA. UNRA was the official relief organization and we were -- whatever we -- we were called, we supplemented the work of UNRA.

Q: When you said that you were sending people into Germany or you were working with the French-Jewish community, what does that mean? What -- what for?

A: Well, we wanted staff in Germany. The JDC did not have any staff in Germany and we were the representatives of -- we were the overseas relief organization for the American Jewish community. And in this unprecedented catastrophe, it was certainly important for the American Jewish committee -- c-community, to have representatives in Germany, for observation, for suppla -- for relief work and even though it could not bring -- it could not -- there was not the transportation available to bring over supplies from the States, to help feed and so forth, we -- we could do immigration counseling. We -- we had a -- a -- in Berlin a really wonderful s -- I forgot what we called it, a search organization. A Lithuanian -- young Lithuanian Jew named Larry Lebetsky, whose family had survived the Nazis in Lithuania, through the help of -- actually I think it was a German military friend whom they had come to know during the German occupation of Lith-Lithuania. Larry Lebetsky became one of our staff people in Munich, I guess, after the war. And he set up a tracing bureau in Munich, because people needed to find each other. They needed to contact their relatives and the -- they didn't know yet who was alive and who wasn't. And one really emotional experience occurred when somebody from Feldifing or somebody in -- if there was a camp in Munich, came to our office -- I'm not sure whether this happened in Munich or in Berlin. I think probably it happened in Berlin. Somebody came into our office one day and said, "Would you help me find my relatives in Chicago? I had relatives and I haven't been in touch with them for a long time." And he left us his name and it was -- we didn't get the first name, it was Cohen or Hymen or something like that. And our tracing office, run by Larry Lebetsky, this survivor, found a relative in

Chicago I think, who -- these were relatives of course, who were delighted to find that this Herman Cohen had survived and the -- but we didn't have his full name, we just had Cohen, I think and we -- Larry put up a notice in the DP camp, on the DP camp bulletin board, saying, "So and so, will you come into our office, we have located your relative in Chicago." And after awhile a person came in and said, "This is my name and I have relatives in Chicago and I'm delighted that you -- you -- you've -- you know them, but how did you know I was looking for them?" And we said, "Somebody with your name was just here a month ago." He said, "That must be my brother." That other person had already left the DP camp and was wandering around Germany to find -- try to find his relatives. And oh -- but at least they knew, he -- he knew that one member of his sur -- family had survived and they would then wander around Germany in those days, where there was terrible -- lack -- no communication. Telephones, whatnot were not working -- to try to find his brother. Eventually they would find each other, maybe in what was then Palestine.

Q: How did this tracing bureau work?

A: Well, Larry would correspond with -- whether he worked with the UNRA tracing bureau or directly with the JDC in New York, I'm not sure. But he would get names, I think primarily of people who -- who came in and -- and said they heard there was a tracing bureau or maybe we had a branch in the DP camp and said, "Would you help me, I don't have the -- the address, I have a relative, my mother spoke of a relative who had migrated to the States and he lives in Chicago, but I don't know anything more about that, I don't know where he lives. I don't have his address, but I would like to make contact with him. I would like to go to the States and he could help me and -- or the family could help me." And so we tried to -- so -- and we had facilities in the States, in Chicago. But sometimes, with no more than a name, we would try to find somebody in Chicago and -- and sometimes we were successful. I've forgotten what facilities there might have been in Chicago. I suppose we used the local United Jewish Appeal. I've forgotten. Anyway, then we -- Larry Lebetsky got word back, in -- in Munich or Berlin, that there was a relative in Chicago. And he posted this on the bulletin board, saying, "Mr. blank Cohen, of this town, please come in, we have found your relative in Chicago." And then a couple of days later, somebody comes in and says, "My name is Cohen, but how did you know about my relatives in Chicago?" And we said, "Somebody was just here two days ago and he's asking us." And that's -- was his first knowledge that he -- that brother had survived.

Q: What about -- do -- did these tracing efforts also attempt to find surviving family members in Europe?

A: In those early days, everybody was doing it on his own. People would come back to their hometowns in Poland, there was no public transportation and they would often walk and thumb rides and whatnot from the concentration camps, to get back to Poland, to try to find their relatives. And then they would find that there was nobody left there and -- and

they turned around and came back into occupied Germany, where there were American organizations that could help them go to Palestine or to the States, to find relatives. I mean there was a s -- quite a lot of that by the survivors, trying to find each other. And Larry Lebetsky ran this tracing bureau in our office to try to contact people together. How he did it, the details of it, I don't remember. But he -- he was competent and I'm sure we -- we did a lot of that successfully.

Q: The general work of the Joint, is there any way to describe that?

A: Well --

Q: Your -- and most importantly, your work with it, not others.

A: As I said, we could not have brought in supplies, so all we could do was help out with things like uniting families, helping people to migrate, getting them visas to the States and we had people in the States that we could contact. We also tried to furnish some social amenities. For example, we decided one day -- there was a c-central -- there was a c -- there were committees. You'd put a bunch of Jews in a camp and you've got UNRA and whatnot, but you're soon going to have a Jewish committee. And there was a central committee of -- of surviving Jews in Bavaria. The head of which was a Dr. Chaim Greenberg, he was actually a medical doctor and oh, there's a wonderful monastery that became a -- a place for surviving Jewish DP's, where he was and that was a -- a big function and to the extent that we could bring in supplies to supplement what was available. The JDC brought in a -- a -- a lot of supplies, I think from the Scandinavian countries in those early days, when it was important to have. And we had packages -- we -- from Switzerland, from Scandinavia and in Berlin, it became an advantage. Under the Nazis, you didn't want to proclaim your Jewishness, if you were living as a Jew -- living in Berlin instead of having been deported, you had been hiding or whatnot. And y-you -- you had people who were 50 percent Jewish, 25 percent Jewish, who'd been in hiding, or they didn't have food cards because they didn't want to proclaim. So they -- life would have been sort of difficult for them and these packages, but there became a question of how did you identify yourself, how could you claim you were a b -- you were a Jew, if -- because everybody now wanted to -- the irony of ironies, everybody in Berlin now wanted to -- if they were even an eighth Jewish, they -- they proclaimed it and they -- they wanted to get these -- and we had the phrase, "Packett Yim." Package Jews, [inaudible]. They -- and it was understandable. What got me off on that? What could the JDC do? Well, we -- we could supplement and we could help with migration. We could help with tracing, Larry Lebetsky did that.

Q: Well, let's talk about some of these specifically. The emigration, for example. Was that fairly easy to do?

A: I think we had some difficulties with migrating to the States. There -- there was a quota system and it just wasn't easy to get to the States. I've forgotten what the limitations

were, but the certain number from each country and it -- it wasn't just Jews who were migrating and who wanted to migrate. And I -- I don't know how successful we were in those early days in getting the people into the States. And that became one of the reasons we started to get people to Palestine. We had some sort of -- of a -- tra -- truck transportation system for taking people from Berlin to Bavaria, from which they could then go to Palestine. And the British were -- Berlin was a four power city and the British strongly opposed any such movement because they didn't want people going to Palestine. They wanted the people who were in Berlin either to stay there or to go to other countries. But General Clay, the American general in charge of American forces, was very cooperative. He was a wonderful man. And he -- he -- he was helpful in our evading the -- or avoiding the British efforts to restrict that passage from Berlin to Bavaria. We sent truckloads of people on the -- on that trip from Berlin to -- to Munich. The -- and then from Munich -- in the back of my mind there's a -- a picture of a truck loaded with baggage, which belonged to people who were leaving Germany and who were going in other vehicles and a little five year old boy, who -- who was alone. He'd somehow gotten into this and he got on the back of this load of baggage and went off with this truckload of this group of trucks that were taking people to embarkation ports from -- I think it was Berlin. I just -- you know, this little kid, alone, out. That's something in my mind, but I can't -- I don't remember the details, but that little boy is very much in my mind. Imagine a boy that age being alone and not knowing what had happened to his family. Must -- there must have been a lot of that. Course usually, those little -- those kids were -- were killed in the camps.

Q: Were these -- was this organized through the Breecha?

A: Ach, they did a lot. They were wonderful. They -- they did -- they brought people out of Poland, into Berlin. Their main job was to find Jews who had -- I mean, the Jewish quote, nation, had been decimated. Every surviving Jew was important. And they worked in -- when I was in Berlin, we supplied them. We had Feldifing and then we also had this other camp in -- which was -- I've got a -- a certificate from the people in that other camp, when I left Berlin. It's in my room right now. And it has the name of this smaller -- it was just really not a camp, it was an apartment building or a series of apartment buildings in the French or Russian sector of Berlin. And the Breecha would bring survivors -- now the area around Berlin was four powered, so they would -- they would come in at night, so they wouldn't be stopped and the British couldn't intercept them with these survivors that they had and they would leave the survivors at this small place that -- this secondary camp that we had in Berlin and then the next day, in daylight, those people could be moved in to the -- the big DP camp. Now I -- there was a committee -- imagine this -- of survivors, three or four -- six Jews who ran that Wittenau, Wittenau, W-i-t-t-e-n-a-u. That quote, camp, that's a group of apartments in the -- pretty sure it was the Russian sector and they took care of people as they -- the Breecha brought them in at night from Poland. They left them there and -- and this was a very important function that the Breecha performed, finding people and bringing them in and -- and we got to know a number of Breecha people and we gave them supplies for themselves and to feed the

people they were taking. Was all unofficial or illegal or -- but we were able to do that and the -- and they were a wonderful group of people, they -- these were guys who had been in the Jewish brigade, they had signed up with the British army during the war and they'd left Palestine and now they had giv -- that was their identity, their way to get back to their relatives. They gave their blouses, their British army blouses and whatnot, to concentration camp survivors, who then used those, with other ident -- be -- well, they could get on a ship and whatnot. These people, after giving up their -- this -- the Breecha guys, after giving up their uniforms and whatnot, stayed on in Germany, looking for survivors in the -- in the -- in Poland and bringing them into Berlin and years later I looked up one of them in Palestine, we had a very warm reunion. They were absolutely wonderful guys. There's a whole book about Breecha. It was written by a guy who interviewed me. I've got that book, it's called Breecha. It's a -- I'm not sure the author -- I've forgotten his name, interviewed me, I think. I'm not sure whether it was right here in this apartment, about my experiences with the Breecha. I can show you the book later.

Q: The other -- I guess the other question is, there were these various organizations working after the war in Europe. You mentioned UNRA. The U.S. Army was over there. How did you all work together and wh -- and was that easy?

A: Well, I can only speak from my personal experience in the American occupied areas of Germany, Bavaria and later in Berlin. You know, the American army was always cooperative and helpful. General Clay -- what I was going to say, there was a Yizkor service at some point in that period, at one of the camps and the people who -- the survivors who were there, needless to say, a Yizkor service at that time, for people who were just learning they were maybe the sole survivors was an intensely emotional experience. And they started to weep during the service and there was mass weeping and I looked over at General Clay and he was wiping away tears. H-He was just -- you know, a warm, decent human being. This general had a good record -- you know, an important role in the war. The -- the -- but that was an intensely emotional scene and I just remember him wiping away some tears. Where or when was I? Cantbeasec.

Q: Well I had -- I had read that -- that initially anyway, the army and maybe to some extent UNRA people were in no way prepared to handle the hundred -- hundreds of thousands, for that matter, of survivors. That they weren't always sensitive, that a lot of the U.S. army was anti-Semitic and that it was -- that there were problems, and I --

A: No, that's true. All of that is true. The -- the army didn't want to be bothered with refugee problems. They -- I mean, they'd fought a tough war. They had fought well and in the absence of -- of others to play a role, they -- there they were with this refugee problem and these people were difficult, they were demanding and they were some in -- in some instances black marketeering. And -- so there was not and -- and these army guys were not social workers. Maybe some of them were anti-Semitic, but I certainly -- I know there was resentment of these Jewish survivors, who were much more difficult to handle than the -- the non-Jewish, Polish DP's, who -- many of whom had reason to fear going back

home because of what they may have done under the Nazis. So the army, yeah, there was a -- a just -- now, how they felt about UNRA, I -- I don't know, but clearly they were in charge of Bavaria at that point. That was military government and -- but I remember one time, this guy coming -- coming into my office after there had been a lot of criticism of the army's failure and in the inter -- there had been an intervening week, where they had done all sorts of things to help the DP's, brought in supplies and whatnot. And he came into my office and he said, "Do you --

End of Tape #2

Tape #3

Q: Okay. What we were talking about was you -- you had mentioned that some army person had come in to --

A: To my office. There had been criticism by visiting delegations of the army and UNRA's performances in the immediate post-war period, where these displaced person's camps were terribly overcrowded and lacking in supplies. And this army West Pointer, I think he was a colonel, a young, lean Texan, who was in charge of something in that area and i-it -- I wrote somewhere that it was really unfair to put this burden on these army guys, who were not trained at all in this kind of stuff and -- and this officer came in after the criticism had gone to the States and Eisenhower then visited the camps, because of the word of the overcrowded conditions and -- and a lot had been done in -- in -- in that week. And he came in to my office and he said, "Do you agree that we've done a lot in this past week?" And I said, "Yes, you have." And he said, "Would you make a public statement to that effect?" And I said, "That's not for me, I'm just a lowly figure here in this office," and I could imagine if this would be used -- it was just one thing and there was such legitimate outrage at the -- the dawning awareness of what had happened to the Jews and how little was being done to help the survivors in those early days. And to indicate that in one place -- to counter that by saying there's been some improvement in one, small segment, was something I felt would not be my job, as a -- just a director in Bavaria. But they -- they did, I mean, they got on the ball, after the -- the initial period of inaction, when there was so much criticism.

Q: As I understand it, in the summer of '45, you and a group of people went to Feldifing. How did that come about, maybe you can tell me who you went with and what you experienced.

A: Ah, boy. I was initially in Feldifing after the -- right after the war. Incidentally, there were two chaplains in -- in the army in those days that I worked with, two Jewish chaplains, one named Abraham Klausner and the other Herbert Friedman. And -- who, as you know, was the head of the United Jewish Appeal and then later, I mean today, is -- isn't he one of the directors of Holocaust Museum? He works for Wexner, I think, or he did. He's probably retired now. But Herb was there, in some of these places, with Abe Klausner, these two chaplains who were there with the U.S. army and fo-forgot their role of ministering to army -- Jewish army soldiers, when this -- this -- these other needs were so much greater. But there are two names that come to mind. Now, I was talking about the army --

Q: I was asking you how you came to go to Feldifing in August of 1945. With whom and what you saw.

A: I was in Paris. I did bring -- take this team in, consisting of Henri and Charlotte Hightown. Henri was our doctor and then -- and they gave me that wonderful engraving

over there, later. But they came into Paris, they wanted to do something and we -- we -- we had to do something -- whatever we could, even if we didn't have supplies, so I organized this team of the Hightowns and Ruth Lambert, who was a French, Jewish nurse and Holtzer, Leon Holtzer, who was a Polish Jew, who had survived and was living in Paris. And we went into Germany, we got permission and we went to Feldifing and established ourselves in Feldifing. The Hightowns did what they could with medical problems, to supplement the -- whatever medical programs were. Henri gave a lot of inoculations, I know. And the other two helped in various ways. We had a -- we lived not very far from Feldifing. We took over a house or the army gave us a house where we could live. And for a number of months in those early days after the war, the JDC did what it could in Feldifing and I think a similar effort was mounted in a Jewish displaced camp in the British zone of -- of Germany. And, we turned over a vehicle to the JDC in Paris -- the -- we had gotten in Germany some army vehicle I think, a big car. That -- it's not important, I guess.

Q: Can you describe to me your impressions when you went into Feldifing?

A: Well, it's hard to separate in my mind, the Eisenhower-Patton visit, which was some months after my first arrival there. Conditions, I think, on my first exposure to Feldifing were worse than -- I mean th-they gradually improved, but it was overcrowded. Bunks -- it had been just sort of a -- a military camp with bunks from the floor to the ceiling and -- and it was -- there just wasn't enough room. And supplies were inadequate and people expected that we, as the Joint Distribution Committee, would come in -- I mean this was the big Jewish relief organization, going back to 1910 or so, the European Jews knew about their -- their Joint, it wasn't called the JDC, it was the Joint. And they expected that we would come in and reef -- after -- after everything they'd been through, surely the Joint would -- would now -- could perform it's traditional role. But we couldn't and -- and I've forgotten the phrase we use, but they mimicked it -- they even quoted us unfavorably, "Here's what the Joint says," or -- and -- but we couldn't do any more than just be there as a physical presence in those very early days to -- it -- it had some morale value, when they hadn't seen anything except their concentration camp persecutors or Germans, or Poles, to see and American team of Jews -- or headed by somebody like myself. It -- it was a -- a sort of an emotional catharsis for a lot of those people in those early days, too. And later I'll -- I'll see what I have left in my room. The JDC made it -- took a picture of me, which they used for -- or maybe it was the j -- united UJA putting a -- trying out a shoe on a little girl who was raggedly dressed and this became -- I think it was on the fr-front page of the Jewish exfonit in Philadelphia. The -- but it -- it -- there was a -- a -- and you know I had not been strongly Jewish identified, but this -- this awakened not a -- not only identification, but anger that so little was being done, or anger over what had been done. And the -- and it's -- I'd never hidden my Jewishness and I certainly, even though I hadn't been much of a Jew in the States -- a Rosh Hashonah Jew and I didn't do anything in Jewish organizations in those early years, I -- I -- I never attempted to escape or hide my Jewishness. So it was clearly an emotional experience. The -- identifying with these people.

Q: Why couldn't you do more for them, initially?

A: Well, the JDC had not been able to bring supplies during the war. Under the Nazis you couldn't bring anything in. And in -- in the post-war period, or the period after Paris was liberated, the -- they just -- the shipping was not available. We did bring some things from Norway and some things from Switzerland, but the war with Japan was still going on and it was very -- th-the ships were being used to transport troops and whatnot to the -- in the Pacific to the battle -- the expected forthcoming battle with -- with Japan. I -- I don't remember precisely why we couldn't do more. I do know the -- the expressions of disappointment and anger that the American Joint could do so little for these survivors in that immediate period. That's -- that was before we even -- you know that -- that load of packages that we brought in from Switzerland or from Norway, were just packages. They weren't the basic food supplies that these people needed. And clothing.

Q: What kind of condition were these people in physically, emotionally, medically?

A: Well, we've had lots of information about the condition of the concentration camp survivors when the camps were liberated by allied troops.

Q: But when you saw these people?

A: But when I saw them -- I was not in any of those concentration camps immediately after the war. The one -- the only one that is -- not even a camp, it was a -- well, there was Wittenau, but in the immediate liberation period, I don't think I saw any of these skeletal survivors. I did see more of them when I went back into Germany. At Feldifing, people were still coming in from the east, but eve -- but even by then they were no longer the emaciated concentration camp figures that we associate with that immediate post-war period. But I certainly identified with them and felt that all of this could have happened to me if my parents hadn't migrated. I-It's not only the Jewishness that came to the surface but the whole American upbringing of believing in justice and fair play and fighting for the underdog, which was something I grew up with. I read a lot of fiction and whatnot. I had this sympathy for the underdog, wherever it came from. And that plus the Jewish identification made this quite an emotional catharsis kind of thing for me.

Q: What was -- sort of this -- kind of the morale like? Were people hopeful? Were --

A: Well --

Q: At Feldifing.

A: Yeah… this -- this guy who sort of shuffled up to me, apologetically and said, "Ineshouldic, but excuse me, am I number 33?" And I was busy and whatnot, "What's he bothering me with? D-Does he want a nu -- how to get more food or something?" And --

and I had this great feeling of guilt when he -- all he wanted from me was, "Could you help me in some way to find my family, my children?" That was -- you know [indecipherable], oh my God, I was resentful of this poor guy and I felt -- tremendously identified with him. I -- individual experiences like that mounted, and when I came back to my life in Philadelphia, I -- there was -- I couldn't talk about anything else, my friends tell me, except what I had just been through. I have a couple of guys that were co-workers and they were on th-the War Labor Board before I went overseas and the -- th-that's all I wanted to talk about, they tell me. It's -- that Wittenau camp, which I have the certificate with -- the -- this was the place where the Breecha would bring people in at night, af -- when they wouldn't be detected. They -- they had left them in Wittenau overnight and then the next day they could be brought into the American sector of Berlin in daylight. And -- but we needed this ha -- little place where the Breecha could leave the people it was rescuing, for overnight or for a few days until they could be brought to the American sector of Berlin. And there was a -- a little committee that stayed in Wittenau, which sort of kept the place going o-of Jewish survivors, not JDC people and -- and they -- they would run -- they would have little plays. They had a couple of -- one little kid, Yusso, who was about five, who somehow had survived and he was -- he could sing. And there was another guy, he had -- he was Litvack, he was the teacher and one day I -- my little delegation of JDC people in uniform went to vis-visit Wittenau and they had auschtella, a little play in our honor. And this Litvack with the withered arm had written some words of a song for this little troupe to sing. Especially this little five year old -- and the song went, in Yiddish, like this, "Anier director in Joint da? Yiddish yacholtare, knish came fort. Venmen zucht azolchenvae, mater az been zug zugt, okay." And that went -- there were JDC directors in other places in Bavaria and they said, "That song has been haunting us. The people are confronting us with it. We don't speak Yiddish either." And they couldn't understand that American Jews, Jewish relief workers who couldn't speak Yiddish. And of course, you know, most of us had just a smattering of it. Even Philip Bernstein, the -- who was the advisor to Eisenhower on Jewish affairs, Eisenhower or the nec -- or Clay, one of them. And he was a -- it was a top notch job. He was a friend of mine, his younger brother, even today -- Phil died a long time ago, but he -- Phil and I both had to appear in Berlin in someplace to speak to a group and neither he nor I could speak any Yiddish and everybody was aghast that our -- an American -- here's a rabbi who can't speak Yiddish. And -- and that was some experience, I remember.

Q: What was the translation of that song?

A: "Anier director in -- in Joint da." There's a new director in the Joint. Anier means new, "Anier director in Joint da," -- here. A new director in the Joint here. Yiddish -- "Yacholtere, knish came fort." Yachol is one of those untranslatable word, but basically he cannot speak a word of Yiddish. "Venmen zucht azolchenvae." Now, azolchenvae is -- yar -- ee, yachol is translatable, azolchenvae, I remember my parents throwing up their hands at something that was impossible, saying, "Azolchenvae." Whatever it means, it's just sort of an expression of -- of hopelessness. So this song says, "Venmen zucht azolchenvae." When we say "azolchenvae, mater" the -- he thinks, "mater az been zugt,"

okay -- he thinks we are saying okay. And that song just -- which this wonderful guy, Hush, yeah -- was it Vichovsky -- wrote in my honor, at Wittenau was spread all over Jewish DP camps in Germany.

Q: How much time we have still? Let's see, we've got about six minutes.

Q: Okay. Let's go back to Feldifing.

A: Okay.

Q: After you were there awhile, there was the famous visit.

A: Yeah.

Q: If you can tell me how that came about and describe it.

A: The -- the word had leaked through that there was -- that conditions were terrible. That for these poor survivors to be living in this kind of a camp, while the Germans were living still, luxuriously in their own homes and their blonde children looked healthy and then were -- they were there, they had survived, they were alive. There was great resentment after what had -- they'd been through, that they were now being forced to live in this crowded camp, which had too many people and was a camp. And so American visitors came back and Truman, somehow was told about this and he told Eisenhower to look into it. And Eisenhower came down to Bavaria from where -- whatever his headquarters were, with Patton, who -- who's army occupied Bavaria. Eisenhower was the American general for all of the American occupied parts of Germany. And they decided to inspect this camp and there was a delegation, the two of them, with their aides. One of Patton's aides, with a guy named Fisher. And I went along and Irving Smith, who was the army military government guy in charge of that area. He was, incidentally, Jewish. We all made this inspection together and we -- we went through the camp and it was obviously overcrowded and that was when, as we walked past these overcrowded rooms and also the -- the sewing machine, Eisenhower said to Patton, as we looked at the overcrowded rooms, "George, if Harry could see this, he would blow his top." And that indicated that Truman had gotten in touch, after he'd heard these complaints, with Eisenhower and said, "You'd better look into this." And then we -- Patton, whose territory this was and who had been shamefully neglectful of what -- of th-the -- the needs of these people. When we walked past a room where there was -- there was some sewing machines and no tables to put them on and Eisenhower said to Patton, "George, I don't understand it. If we had some cannons in here without stands and we had some stands here, without cannon, neither one of those alone would be of any -- do -- would be any good. So what we would try to do would be to put them together in the same place, don't you agree, George?" And that's when Patton said, "General, when I was here last time, this condition didn't exist." And he had never been in the camp before. But he just felt he had to defend himself, which was sort of pathetic, because he had such a great

record in -- as a fighting general, but he really -- he really couldn't care less about this and he -- he besmirched his -- his record really, by his -- he just wasn't qualified to be a general in charge of civilian -- allied civilians. It hurt him.

Q: You want to change it? Okay. We need to change the tape.

A: All right [indecipherable] he's doing --

End of Tape #3

Tape #4

Q: Okay. We were talking about the Eisenhower visit. As I understand it, that was at the time of Yom Kippur. Do you remember that?

A: I'm sure i-i-it was, if you say so, I don't specifically remember that.

Q: I -- I was just trying to -- I have an image of what it must have been like to be in a DP camp on the first high holiday after the war and it -- it -- if you participated in that.

A: I just don't remember what we did about Yom Kippur in that first year. The -- there was -- nope, nor Rosh Hashonah, the -- at some point I -- I think we brought in matzahs for Passover period. I think in Berlin we brought in matzah.

Q: It's okay if you don't remember.

A: Yeah, right.

Q: Let's just move on. Okay, so after this Eisenhower visit, did things change and --

A: Well, yes. I -- I didn't feel that I could comply with the wishes of this West Point Lieutenant Colonel or if that -- to send out an official statement as a representative of the JDC, that all was well, or that things had greatly improved. I said, "That's something -- th-that's only something that the JDC in New York would authorize," and to give the impression that all -- th-this could be interpreted as meaning that the army had discharged it's responsibilities and all was well, when in fact that was not true. And the army -- I -- I was never critical of the army, I felt th-they were simply not equipped, not trained to be relief workers, particularly for this unprecedented situation of highly -- the people were distraught, as they were beginning to realize what had happened. And they were unwilling to stay in camps, they -- some of them immediately started to do black marketing and we had a situation in which -- a friend of mine, later he came to Philadelphia, I -- I don't think he's a-around any more, who was one of the people -- he was a part of the camp -- the people elected their own camp committee in Feldifing. Elected them, picked them or somehow. People who were going to be there for awhile and Joe Lifshitz, who later came to Philadelphia had it -- was a member of that committee and the -- and they acquired -- I think they -- some guns or something. They -- as a police organization they had to have some -- some firearms. And the army somehow learned that these difficult people or -- had armaments and they raided Feldifing in the middle of the night, rousted everybody out, to find these armaments. And they arrested these several people who were on the camp committee and it was so stupid, I mean it was so reminiscent of what these people had suffered under -- under the -- the Nazis. And -- and then to arrest some of them for having unauthorized -- I remembered there was a military judge, a military government or an army judge, before whom they were brought and I went with them to this judge, who was a very decent man and I -- I said, "Look,

your honor, this is ridiculous. You know, these people are our friends, they're our allies." And -- you know, he -- he -- he immediately agreed and he discharged them, but the army had been so stupid in arresting these people and treating them as though they were just like some Germans who were somehow violating the regulations. And -- so that was something -- one -- one instance. But I was -- there was this Major Fisher at -- third army. Eisen -- Patton's army was the famous third army and they -- their headquarters were just outside of Berlin and they had -- th-th-they were in charge of -- of these areas where these camps were and f -- I went over to this guy, Major Fisher, in Patton's headquarters, who was presumably in charge of this sort of thing and I said, "Look, can't you do something to relieve the overcrowding in Feldifing? It's terrible. The -- after what these people have been through." And I'd been driving through Bavaria to try to find a place that -- a farm or a German army camp or something that could be used and there is this Wulfratshausen -- what did I -- did I say there was another name for it? Did I mention that?

Q: [inaudible] hausen?

A: Anyway, which is not far from Feldifing, which is a series of small buildings with rooms and bathrooms and whatnot, which the -- the Germans had used for, I think army people and the -- there were Polish officers, or members -- Poles, who had somehow taken control of that and were living there. And -- and it was outrageous that these Poles, many of whom had fled because of their -- not only bec -- some because they didn't want to live under the Russians, but others because they were afraid they'd be made to pay for their anti-Jewish and whatnot actions under the Nazis -- their collaborations. And -- and I -- I said to Fisher, "Can't we use this Wulfratshausen c-camp, with it's wonderful facilities, to siphon off this overcrowding at -- at -- in Feldifing?" And he brushed me aside and whatnot. Then came the day when Eisenhower and Patton were visiting and there was the conversation where Eisenhower -- where they saw the -- the sewing machines without bases. And we were walking away and they were talking about how overcrowded it was and this f -- that was when I heard Fisher for the first time say, "Oh, by the way generals, we're about to relieve this overcrowding by this new Jewish displaced person's camp, which we are just opening in Wulfratshausen." And that was -- up to then he had firmly refused to entertain that idea and I-I heard it for the first time when he felt that he had a problem and he'd better try to do something to protect himself. So that was something I did.

Q: Now, at this -- at this point in time, was Feldifing mixed Jewish and non-Jewish?

A: No, no, it -- it became all Jewish fairly -- fairly soon after -- oh, I don't know, after the liberation. The -- it was just so plain that you couldn't keep them in -- Jews and non-Jews together in the camp. First because of the Jewish needs and second because of the hostility the Jews felt towards the Poles. They -- and they, as I say -- and many of those Poles included people who had come voluntarily to Germany to work for the Germans in Germany.

Q: So this happened before Eisenhower came over there? He came in September.

A: Of '45. Yeah, I sus -- well, but it was in this visit by Eisenhower and Patton, where Fisher, for the first time, mentioned that Wulfratshausen was now going to be used for Jewish DP's, but when were the Polish DP's moved out? Somewhere around that time. It -- it was just clear you couldn't kee -- I think they were only together for a short time after the war in the same DP camps. I-It was very clear you couldn't keep them --

Q: And it was Jewish DP's who were moved to Wulfratshausen?

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Okay. What other improvements do you think were a result of the Eisenhower visit? Or of the Harrison report for that matter?

A: Ah, yeah. I -- I spoke to Earl Harrison, a Philadelphian and connected with Wilosco, I believe, at Penn. On his way -- he and Joe Schwartz made this visit to Germany in the period after the war and they stopped off at the JDC office in Paris, where I was then located and I -- I think I -- well, Schwartz didn't -- I had some meeting with -- with Harrison where I -- I think I told him what to -- or suggested what to look for and just told him whatever I could, whatever he might ask me about his forthcoming visit. Now it was that visit that -- was that where they recommended that X number of people be sent to Palestine? Was that -- yeah. But I only saw him in Paris, I did not -- either it was before I'd gone back into Germany or after I'd come out, I've forgotten when, but I definitely spoke to him in -- in Paris, on his way into Germany. The --

Q: I'm trying to get a sense of the impact of both Harrison's visit and Eisenhower's visit and how it enabled you to make some improvements, if -- if at all.

A: Yeah, I don't think -- I don't know, I don't think the Harrison visit, as such, made a difference. But the Eisenhower visit did, because it was right after the Eisenhower visit that this -- oh, what was his name -- this colonel -- this Texas fighting officer came in and said -- to my office and said, "My career is in the army, I -- I've fought valiantly in -- in the war and now my reputation is being jeopardized by this criticism of these conditions in my area -- in my area. And -- tell me what I should do -- tell me what I can do. I -- I -- I don't want this hang -- this hanging over me or ruining my record and I-I'll do whatever I can." And -- and I f -- I can't remember what I told him precisely. I guess he did not have any supplies, but I -- it was -- it was a friendly meeting, I sympathized with him. He hadn't been trained for this sort of thing and -- and I sympathized with Patton too. I mean these were my friends, they had fought the Nazis and I didn't want to see them -- and I just felt they weren't trained for this sort of thing.

Q: So when he said, "What can I do to keep my reputation intact," what -- what did you say?

A: I -- I must have said, "Well, if there's any way you can help us get more supplies and to create more camps to relieve the overcrowding in Feldifing." And I know I traveled around. I went th-through Bavaria, parts of Bavaria at that point, looking for a possible place that we could set up another DP camp and the -- and I -- this parenthetically, I would stop at military government officers -- offices, through these other parts of Germany, not just Bavaria and in one of them, the military government officer in charge of this question was R.W. Fleming, Robin W. Fleming, who had been f -- he was later the president of the University of Michigan. Oh -- umnot much more important job later. He was a friend of mine, we had shared offices together in the War Labor Board and so I -- he was as surprised to see me as I was to see his name and -- but I was looking for areas and I asked him t -- if he had any suggestions that could be used to set up a new displaced person's camp, to relieve the -- the overcrowding at Feldifing and I just don't remember how that worked out -- whether UNRA created another facility to relieve the overcrowding at Feldifing or whether people just left. They didn't want to stay in Feldifing of course, they wanted to get to the States. And there was this other DP camp that I think might have been created to relieve the overcrowding at Feldifing. But there was some improvement, I don't remember the details, nor my -- my role.

Q: What -- you had mentioned Black Market activities. Was there a lot of that?

A: Oh, I don't know. The -- there was a lot of it by everybody, but -- in that -- in the post-war period. The -- there were Jews living in regular -- out of the camps, in Munich, they had managed to establish themselves in Munich and -- where they had some money and they didn't -- if you could avoid living in the camps, you of course, did and there were these people living in apartments and whatnot in Munich and for awhile we had an -- a JDC office in Munich on Kaunenstrasser -- K-a-u-n. And black marketing was rife. I suspect it always is where you have this kind of a -- a rigorously controlled economy, with great shortages. And the -- and there were, I'm sure, Jewish black marketers and some of them were probably living in Feldifing and I don't know, I think they lived in Munich mostly. And I don't remember defending anybody who was arrested for black marketing. The only court appearance I remember was for these -- the camp committee guys, who had firearms and were arrested.

Q: So there wasn't much effort to control this black market activity?

A: No and I don't know how -- oh, I'm sure the army made efforts and there may have been some arrests I didn't know about. I -- I wasn't in charge of all -- of all of the Jews of Bavaria.

Q: Another area that's -- I'm curious about, there was a Jewish community, not a DP ca -- you know, not a [indecipherable]

A: Yeah.

Q: -- in Munich, outside of the camp.

A: The Centralle Committee of Liberated Jews of Bavaria was the committee that had established itself. Central Committee of Liberated Jews of Bavaria. A doctor Greenberg, I believe, was the chairman. He was a medical doctor and -- who had somehow survived and -- there were people who were in fairly good physical condition and maybe they'd lived in the underground in Berlin or something of that sort and they had decent clothing and -- and Dr. Greenberg went to Palestine before too long, but he was just a natural leader and he was the leader of this Central Committee, and there were several other people whose names I don't remember. But they were located in Munich and maybe in the same building where we had our office. I certainly would have wanted to help them to the extent that I could.

Q: Was there a relationship between the Jewish community and the DP community?

A: The German Jewish community in -- which I was more familiar with in Berlin than in Munich was composed of people who were 100 percent Jewish, people who were 75, 50, 25 percent Jewish. There was a whole range and of course the -- the 25 percenters were persecuted much less than the 100 percenters. I mean, they were not sent to concentration camps. They might have had reduced rations, but they had more than the 50 or 75. Everything was, you know, German -- meticulously worked out. If you -- if you ca -- you got a better card if you were only a 25 percent Jew than if you were a 75 percent Jew. I remember that and the -- so there was -- no, wait a minute, no. It's the other way around. People suddenly proclaimed their Jewishness because -- there was, I know, some sort of a table and I guess people -- if you got more as a 75 percenter or even a 100 percenter, people were now emerging and claiming to be Jews because they wanted the favorable treatment of supplies and getting more food, getting packetten -- packages.

Q: But what I'm trying to understand is -- the German Jewish community --

A: All right --

Q: Was it open -- was it open -- did it have a relationship with the displaced persons who had come in from --

A: No. They were -- they -- they -- the local German Jewish community -- like German Jews have been different in this country from eastern European Jewish immigrants, the -- I knew a few members of the German Jewish community -- I believe it was in Berlin, who had survived the Nazis by either living without ration cards -- they were unregistered, or they -- they may have been registered, but they were on reduced rations, depending on where they -- they were 25 percent Jewish or 75 percent Jewish, assuming they were not deported. Some of them had friends in the non-Jewish community who -- who helped them, though in those early days, nobody had a surplus of food allowances, the -- but

there -- so there were these German Jews, we -- well, as a matter of fact, what am I talking about? There was an organized German Jewish community of Berlin, with a president and their own -- it was formed right after the war. Th-They -- we worked with them, there was a -- they -- there was a doctor something or other, who was a -- not a -- I don't think a medical doctor, who was the head of it. And oh, they had an -- an office, Julius -- Julius something or other, I guess was actually the -- Dr. Fabian was one officer and a Julius -- Julius something was -- who was -- I mean Fabian was cultured, educated. Julius what's his name was a rough and tumble, less educated sort of guy. But they emerged and reorganized the Jewish community of Berlin and claimed property that the -- I guess it was called the Gaminda, they claimed property that had belonged to the Gaminda and -- or whether it had remained in Jewish -- that property remained in Jewish possession, I don't know. But definitely there was a committee of -- of German Jews that Dr. Fabian, Julius what's his name and a -- this Julius guy was the sort of guy who could capitalize on -- on that. He would use it to his advantage.

Q: Did they welcome the non-German Jews, who had --

A: The eastern European Jews -- the -- there had traditionally certainly been a distinction, culturally, whatnot, between the German Jews and the Austume, that's what they were called. And when the war ended, eastern European Jews were in Berlin and Bavaria not only from having survived the concentration camps, but they were now pouring in to get out of Poland, as the Russians prepared to take over all of Poland and -- and irony of ironies, the place they ran for refuge and escape was Germany. Voluntarily coming into the Germany that had so destroyed the -- the -- the Jews. And th -- and Germany became a haven -- primarily the American occupied areas of Germany.

Q: Did the German Jewish --

A: And the --

Q: -- community empathize after the war and -- and --

A: I don't -- I don't know that there was any -- any real relationship after the war between the German Jews and the eastern European Jews. The German Jews took over the properties and whatnot and they certainly had people who had needs. But I -- for the traditional separation between Polish Jews and German Jews, I don't remember, but I -- I -- I'm fairly sure that the divide continued, that they were -- the Polish Jews were taken care of by the displaced person's, wh -- I'm trying to remember the name of the omino director of that camp. Schlacktenza was the camp.

Q: Okay. I guess we just have a minute left on this tape, so --

A: Right.

Q: We're going to have to change in a second. It -- I just though that maybe, after these people in -- had moved west, that they would want to become incorporated, included into some Jewish community outside of the camp. And I guess what you're saying is that really didn't happen.

A: They didn't want to stay in Germany. The few who had already established themselves, found that it -- it was a good place to -- to do business. I mean they -- they knew how to make money and they stayed in -- in Berlin, it was -- Jews have stayed in Germany after the war.

Q: Okay. Let's change the tape. I think when we --

End of Tape #4

Tape #5

Q: See, in your -- in your notes, I guess this is testimony you gave awhile ago as -- as an interview.

A: Yeah.

Q: They may have gotten it wrong, they may have written it down wrong.

A: Either the Herb Katsky interview, or --

Q: No, this is -- this is from --

A: Ellen?

Q: No. This is from the museum, I think. But -- I mean, she could have taken it down wrong. You had said --

A: Oh, yes, somebody -- a very poor typist. Is that the -- the document that's poorly typed?

Q: Probably, yeah.

A: The language is poor.

Q: Yeah, she also made mistakes --

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: Because she put American friends service and field service --

A: Yeah, right, right.

Q: But, in this you said that in the fall of '45, you opened Wulfratshausen for Polish -- okay, let's just take -- how long did you stay in Feldifing or in the Munich area?

A: I think just -- just --

Q: Wait a minute, serious noise here, stop.

A: Not yet.

Q: Okay. You were in Feldifing how long?

A: I believe until December, ‘45. Either in Feldifing or in Munich. I think it was Munich. Initially, we -- my little team, which we organized in Paris and which I then went back into Germany with -- in the summer of ‘45 and we stayed -- and I stayed until the end of ‘45. And -- and I went back to the States and then in January ‘46, I went to Berlin, from the States. I think those are the dates.

Q: And why did you go back to Berlin?

A: Well, Joe Schwartz -- I was ready to quit. I had another career and this was something that I intended to do on a temporary basis. I had my -- I had a very important experience in ‘45 and I didn’t want to become a social worker. But Schwartz persuaded me that in December ‘45, in the States, in New York, when I was talked in -- to go back in and I went back to Berlin. And he said, “This time we’ll want you to work in Berlin.” And I went to work in January ‘46, in Berlin and I stayed in Berlin, I think, working in Feldifing. No, not Feldifing, Schlacktenza, with Fishbein, who was the under-director, a brother of the famous Morris Fishbein, of the American Medical Association. That was the end of ‘46. Have I s --mentioned how long I worked for the JDC in Berlin? Was it about four years? From the end of ‘46 to -- I lived in New York and worked on the restitution program and other things that I’ve mentioned. I was -- I guess the JDC’s general counsel. I was the only lawyer who they employed, but they called me their general counsel in New York.

Q: Let’s talk a little bit about your Berlin experience. What was Schlacktenza like, what did you do there?

A: Well, it was overcrowded. There were two places in Berlin. Wittenau, this small place in the French sector of Berlin, where anishe -- and the JDC clearly supported that place and that was where the Breecha brought in people. And that was on -- the one thing we could do was support and help that unofficial camp. It was not -- it was not an UNRA camp and they couldn’t get UNRA help. And then there was this large Schlacktenza camp, where the director was Harold Fishbein, a brother of the famous Morris Fishbein, of the American Medical Association. And Harold, he was sort of a character, but he was the director and if we -- we tried to help in various ways. The -- now at this time, the -- the Hightown’s were no longer a part of the picture, they had gone back to their careers. They -- they were part of that picture in Bavaria, but in -- in Berlin, we had two directors. We -- a guy named Henry Levy came -- the JDC signed him up to go back into Berlin with me in January ‘46. And Henry was a trained social worker and we became co-directors of the JDC program in Berlin. And we had a house and -- which the army gave us. Peppy may not have come with us originally. Peppy was Henry’s wife. And w-we -- we helped with tracing, we did bring in some supplemental -- supplementary supplies. We tried to help with m-migration. W-We weren’t -- both of us in that -- both Henry and I in that picture, for too long. I think the -- the JDC or the UJA sent him off someplace else before too long. But there’s this one incident of a humorous nature. We -- one of the things we did was to try to -- I mean, we did it once. We -- we lived in this large house in

Dallum, in Berlin and we had a sort of an evening party for the committee of the people in Schlacktenza. And they came to this -- these were people who were middle class, whatnot, they hadn't been to any kind of a party in a luxurious house, no less, after -- for years, I mean ever since they'd been deported by the Germans to the concentration camps. And they -- so they came to this luxury house that we had, to celebrate a party at our house, which was in their honor and they borrowed -- one borrowed a jacket from a neighbor, another one borrowed a dress from a neighbor and in the -- this sort of -- an -- none of the clothing was luxury clothing and they -- they came to our house for this evening and one of my famous goofs was, I greeted them at the -- at the door as they came in and I wanted -- I was the host and I wanted them to feel comfortable and I -- I wanted to say, "Take off your coats. Take off your things," I -- which we would say. "Let me have your clothes," is -- which is what you say when you greet somebody, I guess, even today, if -- "Let's have your things, let me have your clothes." I translated clothes into a Yiddish word, which my mother used to use the word vesha in Yi-Yiddish, to describe when she was going to put the clothing in the laundry or the wash. She said, "I got to do the vesh." So vesh became clothing. The expression was, "Let me have your clothing." So I greeted -- greeted these poor people as they came to the door, "Guden haben mein adaman, mein herr. Sienzi haas," take off, "eer vesha," your underwear. But I remember the panicky expression. What kind of party is this we're coming to? And that sticks in my mind as one of my major goofs.

Q: What -- what was different about Schlacktenza than Feldifing, your experience there?

A: Well, Schlacktenza was a -- compared to Feldifing, a -- a luxury camp. It -- it had much more space, much more facilities and -- and it was part of Berlin, people could go back and forth and circulate in Berlin. And more supplies were available now. And it was less crowded, had more supplies, more food than -- it was within a large community. I mean Feldifing was 20 miles or so away from Munich. This camp was right in Berlin. People could move around in Berlin and carry -- many of them just left the camp and settled in Berlin and got into businesses of various arts, legitimate businesses.

Q: And this was also a little bit later?

A: Yeah. Well, it had to be in the year '46.

Q: So maybe the situations --

A: Sure.

Q: More under control, or?

A: Yeah, I think everything ha -- was. Conditions had improved from my days in Feldifing, the external conditions had im -- external surroundings had made it possible to do more. The -- but Morris Fishbein was the director and I tried to -- we tried to help him as much

as we could. He of course, had all -- UNRA supplies and whatnot, but if we could help with tracing, with immigration, reli -- with services, religious services, we did something. This business where General Clay attended.

Q: What -- I'm sort of curious at this point, because it is -- now there's a little bit of a distance, time-wise, from the war end. Were people really be -- at this point, able to rebuild their lives and perform new associations -- was that something that was palpable?

A: No. We had a program in Poland and I did make a trip back to Poland from Berlin at one point. In fact, the army newspaper in Berlin, the American army newspaper -- it was a four power city, printed some pictures of -- that I took while on my visit back to Warsaw -- to the Warsaw ghetto. And they were just -- and the Germans had bombed the whole ghetto and they were just digging out the ghetto. There were no survivors, but there were skeletons that had been hiding in places that had been bombed and whatnot, by the Germans. That had been dynamited, blown up by the Germans and skeletons were being pulled out of these buildings and they -- of people who'd been hiding from the Germans and then been inundated by whatever the Germans did to the Warsaw ghetto. And that was -- I could go back to the Warsaw ghetto because the jo -- JDC had a -- they'd always had a program in Warsaw and Bill -- Bill -- the long time director of the JDC in -- in Warsaw. Bill -- oh, I almost had it. I may have mentioned it earlier. So I went back and -- from Berlin to Warsaw and I -- he -- he took care of me and -- and I -- that's when I visited the -- these piles of rubble that had been the Warsaw ghetto and took pictures, which were published in the army newspaper in Berlin when I got back -- of dug out dwellings where the Jews had been hiding and had been reduced to skeletons when they were found after the war. And that -- I don't -- that was '45 probably. Bill Bar -- William Baren, B-a-r-e-n, was I think the JDC director in Warsaw. Yeah, Bill Baren.

Q: Was there a sense in Schlacktenza that people were being resurrected? Able to move on with their lives?

A: …Gee, now they're -- Herbert Friedman, the famous Herbert Friedman, who was the -- the Wexner person, initially the head of the United Jewish Appeal in this country, was a -- a -- with the army in Berlin while I was there. And he was -- he had a place that he maintained. We -- we were really, became pretty close friends. He -- he was the chaplain, stationed with the army in Berlin, but as he and other Jewish chaplains, who were in these areas where there were remnants of the Jewish community, the Shehari taplata was a Hebrew word for the remnants of the Jewish community. Herb would furnish them -- he had -- there was a chaplain's house and he would furnish them evenings or some escape from the camps and then I -- I f -- whether it was the same time, I don't know, I had this -- this house where we also had people, where Henry Levy and I lived.

Q: Did you know Herb Katsky, was he in Berlin at that time?

A: No. Jake Trueb was my immediate supervisor, he was in charge of both -- wait a minute. In Berlin, yeah I think Jake -- who lives in Philadelphia, incidentally, right now -- I think -- now Katsky appeared -- I don't remember seeing Herb in -- in Berlin or Bavaria in those days. I just don't --

Q: So, did you ever work with him at all?

A: Well, yeah.

Q: But back in this country?

A: Back in this country. And he was the one who collected this history and I -- I gave him a taped interview at some point. That was his job with the JDC, but he had clearly been -- I mean, at that time he was preparing the history of the Joint Distribution Committee, or contributing to it. When I was in Germany, I don't think Herb -- if I had any supervision, it would have been Jake Trueb and Herb Katsky was over us. Mife -- I'm not sure -- I think Herb was in Europe or England at -- at one point.

Q: I was just trying to remember whether you had worked with him over there, but I guess not.

A: I'm not sure.

Q: Yeah. Anything else you want to tell me about your experiences in the Berlin area? I always get a sense of -- wh -- you know, in all of this European work, what do you think was your most significant accomplishment? What were you able to really do?

A: Well, you know, I -- and there was a great sense of frustration, because we were able to do so little, as I indicated. We had no supplies. All we could do was furnish personnel to -- like the Hightowns, who s -- in Feldifing were a valuable addition to the -- whatever medical facilities were available in Feldifing for the people who -- these people and -- and the Hightowns came into the JDC office in Paris in 1945, just before I -- I went back into Germany and they -- they became part of our team and were ve -- a very important -- played an important role in Bavaria. Now, when I went back later, Berlin, with Henry Levy, Leevy, Levy -- we didn't -- I don't think -- did I s -- mention whether that team includ -- I don't think we inclu -- we had a doctor on that team.

Q: But surely you must have felt good about what you were doing over there?

A: Well, yeah. The -- it was extremely important, as I mentioned earlier, for these eastern European Jews to know that the Joint was there again, even though the Joint could not do much in -- in connection with -- in reference or com-comparison with what it traditionally did for the eastern European Jews. But we were at least there. They -- they welcomed, they would go -- happy to see us. We -- we did, from time to time, bring in

food and we had this convoy that -- no, that was -- the convoy to Switzerland, was -- was that from Berlin or from Munich? I think that was for -- I'm not sure. The -- w-we certainly helped with -- helped them get visas. We -- we helped them with supplemental foods. We helped them find relatives. Our tracing bureau was very in -- useful in -- in that respect. So I -- I -- I think I had a fairly -- a feeling of being useful. Not in any -- y-you could not claim a major role. We just didn't have the facilities to play a major role. UNRA was the designated organization and we were simply one of several organizations accredited to UNRA to supplement what they were doing.

Q: How long did you stay in Germany?

A: Initially, I -- after -- I was there already during the war, I stayed on til December. I came back to the States and then I went to Berlin in January '46. I stayed in Berlin, I believe, until the spring of '47, when I left and at that point went to Palestine. I'd -- I mean all sorts of people were going to Palestine from Germany and it was something I -- I didn't know when I'd be able to do it again, so I went to Palestine. And met some people there -- well, I think there were these Breecha guys that I looked up when I was there and I stayed in several places. I -- I was treated like a -- an honored guest and I was sh -- a guide was assigned to me to show me around the kibbutzim and whatnot.

Q: Did you go as a representative of the Joint? Or just a --

A: As a JDC per -- Joint person. I went on my own, I paid my own way. There was a JDC program of some sorts, I think in Palestine. No, this was something I wanted to do before I went home. And I had no official role in Palestine at that point.

Q: How was the experience?

A: Well, it was wonderful. I mean, I just -- as I've mentioned, I had this sort of re-awakening and Palestine was -- it was not yet officially a Jewish state, but it -- it certainly was Jewish. The -- I was in Tel Aviv -- I don't remember too much about that, I -- I w --

Q: Was there an -- was there an -- a special energy after the war, so many people trying to -- to get there and the reality of it becoming a Jewish state was closer. Was there something special about being there at that time?

A: Well, now the British tried to close it off and there was that illegal ship that went from Italy to Haifa. What was that ship called?

Q: The Exodus.

A: The Exodus, oh.

Q: In for -- in for -- in ‘47.

A: Yeah. No, I think that was after my -- my time. But I -- I did look up some of these Breecha guys that I’d known in Berlin and it was -- I mean, I had a very good feeling about being there. Prob -- you know, all sorts of things are going to be popping up after we f-finish this interview. They -- they’re working their way up, but slowly.

Q: Call me. So you went back to New York, after?

A: Around ‘47, yeah. That’s -- and I stayed in New York from ‘47 to ‘51 or so, working for the JDC in New York on various things, including the Claims Committee. The people -- did I describe that, the -- the -- there were, in the Warsaw ghetto, I think that I must have started this -- there were people who had jewelry, who had dollars and the JDC, under Gussic had a program in the Warsaw ghetto. What had been in the JDC program in -- in Poland before the war and Gussic borrowed from -- in Warsaw ghetto, Gussic and -- to bring in supplies and things for the people in the ghetto. Needed money, needed -- and he would borrow jewelry and money and whatnot from people in the ghetto, so he could bring in supplies from outside the ghetto and -- but he owed those people and after the war, there were people who had some sort of writing -- wh -- they came to the JDC in New York and they said, “My uncle or my brother or I loaned money to the JDC in the Warsaw ghetto that -- and I was glad to do it, I could get -- I felt safe I’d be paid -- repaid someday,” and w -- but we couldn’t just automatically honor every claim, people could -- there could be fraud, so we set up a -- the JDC in New York set up a Claims Committee, and I, as the JDC’s counsel in New York, worked with that Claims Committee. And that was an interesting experience --

Q: Okay. Let’s change the tape and then let you continue.

A: Okay.

Q: It’s cause it -- we’re going to run out on you.

End of Tape #5

Tape #6

Q: You were beginning to tell me that you came back to New York and you got involved with a Claims Committee --

A: Yeah.

Q: Through the -- through the Joint.

A: That was a really interesting experience. The -- the JDC had borrowed, in the Warsaw ghetto, Gussic and his --

Q: All right, you -- actually you had explained this, so --

A: Right. All right, so now we have to pay back these loans and the records are poor and the JDC in New York is beginning to get requests for repayment, either by the people that loaned the money directly, or the jewelry or whatnot, or relatives, and relatives who -- who only heard that their father or brother or uncle had loaned something to the JDC, they had nothing in writing. Those relatives had died and they just felt that while they were glad to make contributions and so forth, to the United Jewish Appeal, if these were loans, it was supposed to be repaid, as was promised at the time, they would like to have repayments. The Joint in New York recognized the validity of that position, but it wasn't about to give away stuff or recognize fraudulent claims. So it appointed a Claims Commission. The chairman's name escapes me at the moment, but there was a chairman and I think two people, one of them a lawyer -- Saul -- Saul something was the chairman. I got the first name. And I worked with them, I was then the JDC's house counsel. I had come back, I wasn't ready to go back -- come back to my old career and I wanted to stay in New York and so Moe Levitt hired me and he needed -- he -- my legal background was attractive to him because the JDC was just now getting into restitution and reparations and he felt that having a lawyer in -- in the JDC headquarters in New York would be a good idea and I -- I -- I wanted to s-stay in New York, for whatever the reasons. And for about -- I think four years, that I lived in New York, from '47 to '51, I worked for the JDC and th-the Claims Committee was one of the as -- working with the Claims Committee was one aspect of my work for the JDC and it -- it was really an interesting, challenging kind of -- what do you do? You've got -- you know you borrowed from people in the ghetto, you know that you offered to repay them and yet here are people without proof, they only heard from their relatives or they had -- they had -- th -- there was not -- know diday were no records and so we set up this Claims Committee. Saul -- Saul what's his name and somebody named Stuart, to constitute a Claims Commission to pass on these claims. And we interviewed people, we looked at whatever records and I did -- I was sort of the staff person for that committee. And -- and we paid back some claims. Not in full, it was -- sorry -- number usually partial payment. But these were legitimate claims and at the same time, we had to be protected against

unverifiable or fraudulent claims. So I did that with the JDC for just -- I don't know how long. When I was just living in New York.

Q: And then did that -- did that than grow into a larger restitution organization?

A: Well, then --

Q: Wait a minute.

A: Then, separately, there was this restitution program. The -- as though -- programs were set up for claims by -- from the Germans, to property th-that had been taken away by the Germans and the allies set up s -- I mean the Americans, the British were less interested in it, I think and I don't remember what the Russians had -- we had four powers, but the Americans did something to help people claim back either what the Germans had confiscated or which they had left behind. And then there was the whole business of what do you do with heirless Jewish property left in Germany? That were -- these were -- this was property that was going to remain in the hands of the Germans, if the su -- nothing was done and it would remain in the hands in those cases, where the Germans had been most successful in destroying the Jews, because there were no heirs. So where they had been most successful, they would be rewarded by retaining the property. Well, obviously this was unacceptable, so an organization was created, called the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, to reclaim heirless Jewish property in Germany. Meant primarily the American occupied areas of Germany. And I worked with earso as we called it, as did Mikania Robinson, who was with the World Jewish Congress, stationed in -- in New York. The two of us really did the organizing of that program and then in Germany, Benjamin Firenze, who had re-remained in Germany after the Nuremberg Trials, where he had worked with Maxwell Taylor. Ben either went back into Germany or stayed there. And he undertook a program to find heirless Jewish property in -- in Germany. And -- and then we made claims for the -- the heirless property in -- in Switzerland, which is only recently surfaced. I'm -- I don't know why, I don't re-remember the details. But I was -- I definitely worked with the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. I helped establish it with Mikania Robinson and in the State Department recognized it as -- which didn't come easy, some of the old line State Department types did not like the idea, but this became the official Jewish Restitution Successor Organization for heirless Jewish property that was unclaimed, anyplace. And it was used to -- the proceeds were used for Israel -- Palestine. Now, the Swiss have recently -- what is it that the Swiss have done recently? They've just recently acknowledged that there is heirless Jewish property in their hands, that the Jews who were being deported and whatnot, people transferred their assets to Switzerland and no one ever claimed them because their families were wiped out and there were no records and the Swiss, I think, had hoped just to keep it, because there were no claimants and now there is some sort of effort. But the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization did not -- I don't think -- function in Switzerland, it just functioned in Germany. And Benjamin Firenze ran the program from Nuremberg and I ran it from the JDC offices in New York. I -- I worked on it with Robinson.

Q: You're fairly successful at recovering?

A: Oh, I don't know, I don't know. We -- Firenze did, I'm sure, a great job of finding heirless Jewish property. Ha -- it's a needle in a haystack, in a sense. I mean, how do -- you have records, I guess, but who were the -- the Jewish -- in heirless cases, there was -- I mean, if there were any relatives who had claims, you had something to go on, but without heirs, I just don't remember how he -- he operated, how he found property, but he found property. And the odinor government was -- I mean that was -- h-he was a good person and they cooperated in those days. The -- but I -- I -- I'm not su -- seven hundred million dollars, does that sound right for the value of the heirless Jewish property? Most of which was used for Palestine, I'm pretty sure.

Q: Must have been hard to corroborate.

A: These claims, oh, yeah, the -- for the claims countenfrance.

Q: No, even for the heirless.

A: Yeah. The -- it was a hit and miss sort of thing, as I recall, but gee, I'm not too clear on the details of -- of earso. Firenze would -- would have a -- he -- did you say he's been interviewed? Yeah, he would certainly know more about that. And there was a guy that worked with him who later took my job at the -- succeeded me at the Joint in New York, Kaden, Kazen. Can't remember.

Q: What can you tell me about Firenze?

A: Oh, he's -- he's great. I'd love to see him. He was extremely able, very bright and energetic. A little guy, he's oh, about five two or so and -- but much bigger, in reality. And I guess he's practicing law in Washington or -- years ago I had some contact with him, but we've had no -- no reason to be in contact with each other. Wonderful, wonderful person.

Q: Let me ask you, sort of on a personal level. The impact all these experiences have had on you, have they changed you? Did they change you, I should say.

A: Well, at the time, I-I certainly don't -- they caused this strong re-identification with my background, my heritage. I'm a pretty proud Jew. I mean I think we have a wonderful history and I'm very happy to be part of it. The -- go back these thousands of years and we've survived, we haven't disappeared in -- in the general population. And I think the Orthodox Jews deserve most of the credit for that, during long periods when the -- that was the only f-faith. And they went through a heck of a lot. I'm not observant, I -- but I -- I feel very strongly my identification. I'm proud of it and my kids -- well I -- I mean my grandchildren got Bar Mitzvahed, my son celeb-celebrates the Sabbath. My two

daughters certainly are very clear in their identification. My oldest son is just a wandering minstrel type. I mean he doesn't really have any identification, but -- and -- and -- I think it's -- I mean we -- we could have done with fewer Holocaust, but it's absolutely remarkable the way this group gets up from the floor and continues to battle for it's survival and existence and -- and takes pride in being part of this extraordinary tradition. It would have been much easier to disappear and fewer people would have died. But I think the world would be a lot poorer if there were no Jews left.

Q: After you finished your work with the Joint, did you go back into labor relations?

A: Yeah.

Q: Labor law?

A: I -- I was and am still a -- a labor arbitrator, I arbitrate labor disputes. But for a long time I was the advisor to the city of Philadelphia on it's labor relations and dealing with it's unions of city employees. And that's -- I -- I was on a retainer of some sort and when I arbitrate cases, which I don't do much of any more, I get paid for it. I've got a small retainer which pays for my office expenses, but at my age, I -- I shouldn't complain.

Q: Anything else you want to say about some of these experiences an-and what they've meant to you?

A: First I'm -- you know, I'm very pleased that you are doing what you're doing. I -- I mean, too many things of historical significance get lost and certainly the personal experiences of people like myself get lost. And I've done a -- a certain amount of memoir keeping, but it -- it's -- it's inadequate coverag -- I'm trying to cover my whole life and there a whole lot of people who -- whose experiences may be lost. I -- I was thinking of the -- the people in Berlin, they -- are they -- is there still a Jewish community in Berlin? I guess there is. The current leaders -- but I'll -- I'll always remember that experience. I'm lucky to have had these experiences.

Q: The only other thing I can think of is that earlier you said that when you came back from Europe, you were -- I don't know if obsessed is the right word, but -- but this was all you could think about --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and talk about. Maybe you can elaborate on -- on that impact, cause that seems pretty [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, I got sort of diverted. I -- I remember aw -- aw -- I mean I had these non-Jewish friends, close friends, I -- roommates and whatnot, in -- in the War Labor Board and I'm ca -- I came back in early '51, to Philadelphia, to -- and I -- I mean those friends included

Walter Philips, who was the city's Commissioner of Commerce and City Representative under Mayor Joe Clark. And Scotty Crawford, who was a roommate of mine in the War Labor Board days and they wanted to know what had happened to me while I was away and I remember feeling I was more than happy to tell them about my experiences, but I do remember feeling great anger at the outside world at what had been done to my co-religionist fellow Jews. The -- the killing of children, it was just something I could not get over. And so, for a long time after I came back, I -- I had this sort of can -- this reawakened sense of identification. I've never been very religious. We've always observed the high holidays and that's about it. And I've -- th-the children involved in -- made aware of the fact that they are Jews. And that's -- that's my life today, I --

Q: What about anger toward American apathy? Which included Jewish Americans as well, to some extent?

A: Yeah, I remember feeling some -- some anger about that. The -- there's some deep -- want me to hold --

Q: Okay.

A: I don't think I've ever -- I certainly had a generalized hatred of -- of the Nazis. But even -- even though I've been critical of German apathy, I mean Germans claim they didn't know what Hitler was doing -- the ones who were not, the Germans who were not actively involved in the Holocaust, I've -- I've doubted that. I mean, I didn't know how they could not have known of what was happening and they just chose to ignore it. I mean it would have -- to overthrow Hitler would have been a difficult thing to do. He had all the marbl -- all the arms and so I -- I -- I don't know whether I, if I were a German living under Hitler, whether I would have been willing to risk my life to overthrow him because I didn't like what he was doing to minorities. But I still have sort of -- no I don't really hate the Germans any more. I did in those early days, I hated every German I saw. Even German children that I would see in Bavaria, I -- I would say, I mean there's, you know, a future Nazi. It just was a blind hatred that made no sense and I've gotten over that a long time ago. The -- but I think there are people who -- Jews today who won't go to Germany, isn't that right? I mean they -- they'll never forgive, even though three generations are -- and certainly Germans have been helpful in ways.

Q: Were you struck by American apathy?

A: Yeah, you ask me that. I -- at the time, I had a -- I -- I had the experience in Germany of some good guys like Clay and -- and Eisenhower. When I got back to the States, I just don't remember that I felt hostility to the American people. In that immediate period, I don't think I did. The war with Japan was still going down. I don't think I've ever had that feeling.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add, because I --

A: You've finished.

Q: I feel like I've sort of covered.

A: My period with the JDC in New York, four years, I had an office and it was not one of my better periods. I -- I wasn't really very busy and I -- and I had too much idle time. And Moe Levitt -- Moses A. Levitt was not somebody th -- he wa -- was -- wa -- the head of the JDC in New York. Schwartz was the overseas head. I never -- I could not relate warmly to Levitt, but Schwartz was a hero. I've written about Joe Schwartz, those ex -- Jewish exponent article. As I indicated in that article, he was a genuinely great man and he just performed -- he was the right man at the right time and he had a - a sense of mission and dedication and courage. He was one of my real heroes, I can't say enough about Joe Schwartz. I think that's it.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: Well, thank you.

End of Tape #6
Conclusion of Interview