

Oh, yeah. OK, whatever it was. I remember he was there, but I know I wasn't involved at all in him being there. But this congressional committee, I remember very well.

Tell me more about that. How long were the hearings. Tell me about Dickstein.

Well, I told you. He looked like Edward G. Robinson with the diamond ring on his finger. Short guy, white hair, wavy white hair, talked with a Brooklyn accent. Was he from Brooklyn?

He was.

OK. And then there were some other guys there. And I don't really remember what questions they were asking. I know I was sitting there and I was translating for them. I don't even know how long it lasted, whether it lasted a day, or two days, or whatever it was. Everybody was at his best behavior. Everybody put on his best suit and all this stuff.

And all the refugees were trying to impress them at how American they were, and that they wanted to stay. Is that about right?

That's right. Sure, everybody. Everybody had family in America, even people who never had anybody in America claimed that they had family in America. But I really, again, I don't remember the details.

It wasn't until December of '45, that the new president, Truman, said, OK. It's foolish to send you back to Europe. We'll let you apply for immigrant status from here.

Yeah.

That must have been some party.

This was some party, right. This everybody was very happy and scared. You know, you get scared when I think like this. Here you're fighting to get to America. Now what am I going to do now? That's like the dog chasing a car. He catches it. What do I do with a car now? Right?

What happened then?

Well, then there were, again, we had-- I don't know who came in, what government agency came in. And they were not hearings. They were interviews with everybody and background interviews. I know that, again, I was present at some of these interviews. But nobody was rejected really. Everybody was allowed to come in. There was a big to-do for nothing.

And then the guys from the Jewish agencies came, and they made speeches, and kept on making speeches, and they're like politicians. The first speech was a novelty. After this, it was the same speech they were making. So I told the guy, I don't remember his name anymore. I said, don't make this speech. I'll tell them what you would say. Because I remembered it after five, six times that he was repeating everything.

There was quite a bit of Jewish agencies coming into the camp, and working with people, and helping people. HIAS was there. I don't remember any more the names of these agencies. But there were some permanent people there who stayed in Oswego and came to the camp every day. And then there was the bunch of Quaker kids who came, and stayed in the camp, and worked with the refugees, and so on. With the residents, not refugees, whatever you want to call them.

Now 40 some odd years later--

Yeah.

Those former refugees have made tremendous successes of themselves.

Absolutely, many of them.

You're the president of a company. Doctors, musicians, engineers.

Engineers.

What kind of message does that send?

A bunch of smart people, that's the message. No, listen. People were-- first of all, they were smart, and they were industrious, and they wanted to achieve something. Many of them would have achieved the same thing in Europe, if they would have stayed in Europe in peace. There's no doubt about it.

But then on the other hand, you had some people who did not do so well in America, for whom America was the wrong place to be. I know some people, they're now-- either they died or they're very old. But they were struggling from the day they came into this country, when we came back from Canada. So there is a large proportion of people who were very successful.

But there were hundreds of them who weren't so successful, who struggled from the moment they got into the United States until they died.

The record of the United States in terms of rescuing the Jews of Europe was pretty dismal.

There is no record at all.

They didn't rescue anybody. We just got a free trip from Europe here, and stayed here for two years, and ate here. But then they didn't do anything for Jews in Europe, the United States.

So how should Oswego be judged by history then, as a triumph for you and 980 some odd others, or is it a failure for not having more Oswegos.

Well, more Oswegos, if these Oswegos would have been the same thing that this Oswego was, in other words bring us to America after we were liberated. What was the idea really? At a time when we were coming to Oswego, there was a bunch of people who were in the same place in Italy where we were, who went to Palestine at that time. So they also they were liberated and they had a choice of whether they want to go to Palestine. They went to Palestine. It was Palestine at that time, it wasn't Israeli yet.

We had a choice to come to America. We came to America. But we haven't been rescued really, rescued from nothing.

When you look back now and you know the record of the United States in terms of rescuing European Jews, are you angry? Are you bitter?

No.

Do you think the government should have done more?

Pardon me?

Do you think the US government should have done more?

Oh, sure, they should have done more. They could have done more. They could have prevented some of that slaughter in Auschwitz by bombing the railroads, the railroad tracks going to Auschwitz, or to Treblinka, or wherever it is. They didn't do any of these things really.

We were there. Because we were brought to America because we were free. They didn't go up to Rome to rescue people

while the Germans were in Rome. And there was just about at that time when we were going to America, there was the thing in Rome where they killed a whole bunch of people, the Germans, because somebody was assassinated or something. But they didn't go into Yugoslavia and rescue the Jews from the concentration camps.

So this was a gesture. And you can make it look like it was a saving of 1,000 people, and you can make it look like it was a free trip to America, and a schooling of 1 and 1/2 years getting an idea of how America really is, or something of that sort. But it was no rescue.

OK, super. Great.

Good.

We'll get some two shots--

[AUDIO OUT]