

This is tape three, side A. And you were talking about your feelings about Romanians and the Germans.

My feeling about Romania is they were, my generation, good people and bad people. I was a Romanian. Again, last year, two years ago, I see the new generation. They're good people, most of them. The new generation is not more with the hate feelings, maybe few of them. But they have their problem. In Romania they have problem to find out work, to find out what foods, to make something.

They don't have more time and the feeling to be anti-Semitic. But for me, the best is everybody to stay at his home. Jewish people have to stay in Israel or in the United States and not to show too much, like, who's the big billionaire? No, if you have money, keep it for you. Keep your mouth shut. Make money, but don't show up too much. Because here, we have, also, our problem.

We have our Louis Farrakhan. We have our Jesse Jackson. We have other people what [? they eyes is ?] who make their money. And who is the guy who make the money? And I don't want to go. Sometime my wife said, why do you don't make to mix up business and Romania? I don't want to make business at Romania.

Did what you--

Israel, I was in Israel. I cannot recognize more Israel. Israel was, for me, the sun on the sky. Israel is a business state. Money will make money. No more [? cynicism ?]

I was last year, and I was to my sister. She have two kids. They were married. They have kids. I was living in her apartment, medium class. [INAUDIBLE] had friends. It's not [INAUDIBLE] Israel. Is a business state. And I cannot agree with this. They forget who was Theodor Herzl, who was Ben-Gurion, who was Golda Meir.

They fight. Their salary was a janitor's salary. They want the money to go for the state. How much money is paid right now, secretary or a minister in Israel government? I cannot understand.

Did what you went through between 1939 and 1945 make you more Jewish, make you feel more Jewish, less Jewish?

Oh, I'm 101% Jewish. My feeling is-- I have a friend in Israel, [? Benun ?] David. And Jewish people, his wife a Jew. They have kids-- grandkid. And one time, when I meet with him and his wife, my wife-- his wife asked me I guess, Ionel-- she knows my wife is not Jewish Ionel, why you don't change your religion? Because your wife is-- well, you know. And my answer was, spontaneously, I don't think about that. I was born a Jew. I will died a Jew.

What do you think kept you going as a young boy during those six years, 1939 to '45? Your youth? Do you think it was your youth that--

No.

Hearing the pogroms and hearing of terrible things?

My feeling was, where are the people? God select us. We have to go through all this thing because we have to show the world we are the best.

Do you receive any reparations?

No, after a couple of years what I am coming here, I go to the German embassy somewhere on the-- it was West German embassy on Reservory roads. And I fill up some paper there. After a couple of month, I have my answer. No, you are not-- you don't meet our requirements.

Are there any sights, or smells, or sounds today that remind you of the war time? Does anything call it back sometime?

I grow older. And I sleep more. I dream more. And my dreams-- without-- to will is coming back sometime, the old memories, old people, faces. And maybe it's that because I'm old, I have old philosophy.

You have to bless, and forget, and give the blessing for everything, forgive, forgive everything. But I cannot forgive it. Any time when I'm-- I read, every day, the newspaper. And I see the agreement between Israel and PLO. I saw the handshake. I cannot forgive the handshake.

I am not-- I remember Ma'alot. Do you know what happened in Ma'alot? The terrorist go to the kindergarten school over the window. And they kill kids for two or three years, innocent kids.

Why? Who can forget this? Somebody want to forget, to say enough is enough. Maybe enough is enough. I don't know. But I cannot forget this. For me, Ma'alot is like a bad dream. Somebody want to forget Shimon Peres. If he can forget, maybe then he will be in his grave. Somebody will push him back. I don't know.

Is there anything you wanted to add about your experience during the war that we haven't talked about? Any other--

My experience during the war is in every country and every people, there are good people and bad people. Maybe the good people, they are fewer than the bad people. But everywhere is good people and bad people.

I meet-- then, I was a young boy. And the school, I meet good friends, good family friends and bad family friends. And our generation is coming little by little to our end. The new generation have to don't forget something. They have to fight to don't come back.

Because somebody said that history is repeating every 40, 50 years. Don't let the history to come back in the next 50 years. Enough is enough. We go to bad time, 1940, '45. With other word, after, immediately after the year 2000, we have to go, no. Fight. Stay strong. And don't let nobody to come back to the old time. Thank you.

It's a good note to end it on. Thank you very much. This concludes the interview with Mr. Ionel Ghelman, which took place on May 9, 1996 in Silver Spring, Maryland. And it was conducted by Dale Schwartz on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.