

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

William Helmreich Oral History Collection

**Interview with Jack Goldreich
August 20, 1989
RG-50.165*0034**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Jack Goldreich, conducted by William Helmreich on August 20, 1989 as research for his book *Against all odds: Holocaust survivors and the successful lives they made in America*. The interview was given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct. 30, 1992 and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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

JACK GOLDREICH

August 20, 1989

- JG: Do you know my brother-in-law from Yeshiva University, Sol Green? He was the Dean of the School of Social Work.
- WH: How did you come to the U.S.?
- JG: From Bremerhaven, on the Marine Marlin. I was in the Lodz Ghetto until 1944. We were sent to Auschwitz, then to Dachau and I was liberated in Kaufering, Camp Eight.
- WH: How old are you?
- JG: Around 70. I was born in 1919. After liberation I was in Landsberg. I was on the Council. I was a secretary and member of the Camp Committee (He shows me a letter of recommendation for an affidavit signed by William Korn, Director of UNRRWA. He then shows me another letter praising his work as a social worker.)
- WH: Were your parents very religious?
- JG: My father was a Ger Hasid. My mother was from Chechanov. (He knows the Geliebtters from Lodz. He has saved many original documents from the DP camp. These are his glory days. He has a complete set of newspapers that were published in Landsberg. He also gave a second set to YIVO.) (Like for Isaac Kowalski, whose glory days were his partisan activities in Lithuania.)
- WH: Did you think of going to Israel after the war?
- JG: We had four brothers and two sisters. And I had one brother who came to Israel in 1936. He lives here now. We were the only ones left. But I was knocked out. I wasn't prepared to go to Cyprus. And I had an affidavit to go to the U.S. and my brother said: "It doesn't cost you any money to go to the States. And then you can always come to the U.S." I made my first trip to visit my brother in 1953. When I first came to the U.S. I was helped by Leo Srole, the sociologist, who was a very nice man. I worked with him every day in Landsberg, where he was working for the American Government. I also met there my first cousin, Wolf Leslau, he's a Goldreich. You know, he wrote about the Falashas. When my wife and I came in 1953, we liked it. And then we came quite often, every Pesach, to visit. In those years, there were no robberies, no killings. But my wife had a large family and friends from school in the States. We came here in 1974. Because we came here we knew the way of life here. People here are friendly. You get together with people. I worked as a contractor and my wife was a bookkeeper. Then I worked here for half a day, just to kill time. The whole apartment here is an American-style apartment. The wallpaper is Sanitex.

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WH: Are you sorry in retrospect that you didn't come to Israel right away?

JG: No. First, I didn't have the strength to go then. Second, life here is very hard. It's best to first accumulate some money and then come.

WH: Why do you like it here so much now?

JG: I'm tied down here anyway. My second wife's child lives here. She lives here a long time. I wouldn't go back anyway for a million dollars. I like it here. I'm part of it. I'm part of Israel. I have many complaints, though. The people here are mostly materialistic.

WH: What do you think of politics here?

JG: I have no use for the left. I don't buy the Jerusalem Post anymore. And I don't think we should give back the territories.

WH: What achievement are you proudest of?

JG: I can't think of anything in the last 45 years.

WH: Well, you give charity.

JG: I don't consider this anything to be proud of. I consider it obligatory.

WH: Why do you think you survived?

JG: Luck, and I respected my parents.

WH: Do you think a Holocaust could happen again in America?

JG: Deep down, yes. I see it in Poland and in France and, in America, in the South.

WH: Do you think the religious Jews acted any differently in the camps?

JG: I didn't see any big differences.

WH: Do you see any jealousy because of money by Israeli survivors toward American survivors?

JG: I haven't seen it.

WH: Do you think survivors are different from American Jews?

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JG: It depends on the individual. Some survivors wanted so much to forget everything that they Americanized very quickly.

WH: Did you belong to any landsmanschaften in the U.S.?

JG: No, because they were basically left wing groups.

WH: Do you make decisions quickly in life?

JG: Slowly.

JG: Sometimes it's tough for my wife here and I ask her if she wants to go back and she doesn't, because the future is here.

Conclusion of Interview