MS-763: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Collection, 1930-2004.
Series I: Wexner Heritage Foundation, 1947-2004.
Subseries 1: General Files, 1949-2004.

Box	Folder
67	12

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Transcript and notes of Herbert A. Friedman interview. 1992-1996.

3101 Clifton Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
513.487.3000
AmericanJewishArchives.org

NAMUR – Father Andre

BAVARIA – R.C. Lib Jews in not of Ger.

HAGANAH

BERLIN – STETTIN

Kapo in Schlachtensee

Mark Shapiro

Martin Riesenburger – Weissensee – Torchs

KIELCE pogrom

PIUS XII – Castel Gandolfo

US Army Charter / Recognition

BABENHAUSEN B.G. – p. 5

TALMUD – p. 5

OFFENBACH – SCHOCKEN Books

RECHESH – Ehud Arriel

EXODUS

UN VOTE

patience

belief in Zionism

benevolent attitude of US Army

vigorous action of Haganah under B.G.

support of American Jewry + organizations

~~Five~~ ~~Four~~ factors — brought life out of the death

DP's Themselves —
faith and patience

US Army - marvelous

Ben Gurion's Aliyah Bet + Rochester

American Jewry + its organizations
—
Zionism as a basic belief
Homeland

1945-1948
3 most
fateful
years
in all our
history

Subjects for my videotaping (1)

ZIONIST YOUTH

DISMAYED BY AMERICAN JEWISH SILENCE OF 30's

RABBINICAL SCHOOL

DENVER

ARMY

NAMUR – Father Andre

BAVARIA – Wasserburg
Berchtesgaden
picking up refugees on roads
Edelweiss + piano wire
children running away from our truck
commandeering a building for DPs.

(2)

35,000 Jews alive on German soil.
year and half later ¼ million - 64 camps

Army - 2000 calories
Joint later - 1200 supplement
UNRRA administration
JDFP - teachers, social workers, spiritual providers

Central Committee of Liberated Jews
~~of~~ in Germany - NO
" - transit, temporary

BAD TOLZ - telephone call
Royal Moreau - Paris - Ruth Klueger
Ben Gurion & Haganah. - Moshe Sneh.
Aliyah Plan - east to west to south, back east to Palestine

(3)

BERLIN – STETTIN

Landsberg riot + trial
Abe Hyman
Phil Bernstein

---

3 Episodes
Kapo in Schlachtensee
Mark Shapiro
Martin Riessenberger – cemetery at weissensee – Torahs

KIELCE pogrom
Arthur Bliss Lane
P.M. Edward Osobka-Morawska
Augustus Cardinal Hlond
Jacob Berman
Our Report to McNarney
TRUMAN AGREED

(4)

September

PIUS XII in Castel Gondolfo
Jewish refugees in low n.

MORALE ~~Morale~~ of DPs – high in spite of all.
based on belief in our State

Sept^r Charter of Recognition for Central Comm.
by Army

October

Babenhausen – at train

Capt. Herman Dicker (rabbi)
Lt. Col. Edward Martin (catholic)
Lt-Gen. Keyes, Comm. of 3rd Army

2 months later — Ben Gurion
I have no certificates
I bring you only hope
Siy Hadikwah

The people of Bergen-Belsen finally understood that their unloved camp was not the end of the line, but a way station on the road to freedom. The distrust and bitterness I had faced that day in October gave way in December to patient hope.

Printing of the Talmud.

"This edition of the Talmud is dedicated to the U.S. Army. The Jewish DPs will never forget the generous impulses and unprecedented humanitarianism of the American forces, to whom they owe so much.

Saalfelden over the mountains.

---

(6)

December 31, 46

OFFENBACH DEPOT

Books - Prof. Gershom Scholem.

Jan 47

Whitehall - Bevin

Rechesh

Ehud Avriel -

SKODA - Prague

11 Messerschmidts

EXODUS turned the trick

Vote Nov. 29, 1947

majority of two. - partition

MORIAH FILMS

A DIVISION OF THE
SIMON WIESENTHAL
CENTER

April 15, 1996

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Avenue, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10022
Via Facsimile: 212/751-3739

Dear Rabbi Friedman,

I am delighted that you are going to be able to participate in our film and look forward to meeting you on April 26th.

Rick Trank said you wanted to know more specifically what subjects we were going to cover in our interview. Having listened to the three hours of tapes you made for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, I've been able to choose the areas which are particularly relevant to the film we are making. They are:

1. Your immediate impressions after liberation. The story you tell about finding the children who didn't remember their own names.
2. Being recruited by the Brichah.
3. Your activities for the Brichah. Bringing refugees into Germany from Poland.
4. Going to Poland with Rabbi Bernstein after the pogrom in Kielce.
5. Taking Ben-Gurion to the DP camps at Babenhausen.
6. Meeting Bevin in England with Rabbi Bernstein.
7. Your thoughts about the historical importance for the Jews of the three year period between 1945 and 1948.
8. Your thoughts about the Army's treatment of the DPs, the DPs themselves, and the work of the JDC.

And, of course, any other comments that you feel are relevant to understanding this period.

Per Rick Trank's discussion with your assistant Shelly, it would be appropriate for you to wear a suit and tie for the interview. If you have any questions, please feel free to call either me or Rick, who is the producer of the film. The best place to reach me is at home at (310)455-3814.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Harris
Writer/Director

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

2000 L Street, NW
Suite 717
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone (202) 822-6464
FAX (202) 861-0520

May 1, 1992

Rabbi Herbert Friedman
Wexner Heritage Foundation
551 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Rabbi Friedman:

Thank you for agreeing to a videotaped interview with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Your videotape will be an important contribution to our exhibitions, educational programs and scholarly archives.

Please bring with you any Holocaust-era photographs or memorabilia that you might have saved, so that we may show them on the videotape. We would also greatly appreciate it if you would consider donating them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. These "object survivors" add an important dimension to your story of survival that will help Museum visitors understand your experience.

Let me confirm our arrangements.

Date and place of interview: It is my understanding that you will arrive in Washington, D.C. at approximately 9:15 a.m., on Tuesday, May 19th. Please take a cab to Interface Video Studios, 1233 20th Street, NW, Washington, D.C., on the Lower Level, where you will meet me at approximately 9:30 a.m. In case of an emergency, my office telephone number is (202) 632-5184, and the telephone number for the studio is (202) 861-0500.

1980
United States
Holocaust Memorial Council

When you arrive at the studio, please tell the receptionist that you are with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. You will be shown to a comfortable "greenroom" where you will meet with me and with Dr. Berenbaum. We will ask you to sign a Release Form, giving the Museum permission to publicly use the tape. The Museum will provide you with a copy of your interview. The two hour interview will began at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Interview Process: Many people have asked us to explain the interview process in advance. The purpose of this interview is to learn about you and your personal experience during the Holocaust. The interview takes between one and two hours. The interviewer will ask only a few questions, and you should answer in your own way. Basically, we will ask you to tell us (1) Your name, and where and when you were born; (2) About your childhood and growing up, before the Holocaust (if you were an adult at the time); (3) How you became a member of the armed forces; (4) About your encounters with the Nazi concentration camps; (5) What you did upon your return to the United States.

Reimbursement for expenses: The Museum will reimburse you for those costs agreed upon by you and the Museum Staff. **To be reimbursed, you will need to provide the Museum with all receipts for agreed-upon expenses. These should be mailed to Colette Thayer, Oral History Department, at the address shown on the letterhead.** The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum can only reimburse you once we have received these receipts.

If you should have any questions or problems at any time, please do not hesitate to call me. I can be reached at (202) 632-5184.

I look forward to meeting you on May 19th.

Sincerely yours,

Holly Snyder
Archivist and Acting Director
of Oral History

cc: Michael Berenbaum

U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

* * * * *

INTERVIEW OF

RABBI HERBERT FRIEDMAN

* * * * *

JUNE 12, 1992

(This transcript was transcribed from tapes provided by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

INTERVIEWER: Okay, for the record give us your name and a little bit about your early background?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: My name is Herbert Friedman. And my early background is really very simple. I was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1918. My father had migrated to the States from Vilna, my mother from Riga, good stock. The two of them, they met and married in Connecticut I think it was, and that's where I grew up. I went to high school there, I went to university there, and graduated from Yale in 1938. Two brothers, both of whom are still living. A strong, tight, good Jewish family. Conservative congregation in town. Quite modern in those days, men and women sitting together, organ in the congregation.

The Rabbi, a wonderful person, himself Vilna-born, but took a Ph.D. at Yale, writing two volumes of the history of the Jews of Russia in English. I mean that was a man, good brain, good human being, and working in this small middle class

ordinary congregation, nothing famous about him, but very impressive to me.

INTERVIEWER: What was your awareness of the rise of Hitler as you were growing up?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, that's the whole story. The whole story of my life revolves around that question. In college between the years of 1934 to '38, formative years, fully cognizant of what was happening, as fully as anybody could be who watched carefully. The argument that people didn't know what was going on in those days has never never seemed valid to me because you could read it in the New York Times. I did. If I did, others did. But at any rate, it bothered me when I looked around '34, '35, '36, in '36 the Nuremberg laws were passed. It was quite clear what the intent was.

Hitler's book was out. He had been in jail in Landsberg, he wrote it there back in 1925. The book was available to be read. I read parts of it. It's turgid writing, it's not easy, "Mein Kampf," but never mind you've got the picture. So that I could not understand the silence of the whole American

Jewish Community around me. I did understand some of the politics. There was a difference quite clear in those days between the Ost Juden, i.e., the Russian-Polish Jews and the German Jews. The American Jewish Committee was in correspondence with people in Berlin who were advising them to be quiet, don't raise a fuss, you'll make it worse, don't organize protests, no, don't listen to Stephen Wise, don't have a parade down Fifth Avenue, and they were attracted by that kind of advice, they were even enchanted by it. It gave them a perfect rationalization.

Now, they (the A.J. Committee) were not the only villain in the piece, everybody latched on to that. So I don't want to be misunderstood about the American Jewish Committee only or specifically.

The mood was (a) we're not sure of what's happening, (b) it can't be as bad as some people are saying it is, (c) what can we do about it anyhow, and (d) the American Government isn't disturbed, and Franklin Roosevelt is a great friend of the Jews and he isn't upset. Nobody is upset. All of these factors seemed to me to be leading to a dreadful

conclusion. So on the specific point of how I was reacting in terms of what I saw around me, I was getting more and more furious, that's a worthwhile word, and frustrated and that was the condition that I felt I was in when I was 19 years old and had graduated from the university, okay.

INTERVIEWER: You graduated as a young man?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Young, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And then what did you decide to do?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, don't forget we were at the tail end of the Depression, and a man in New York by the name of Samuel Leidesdorf, a big accounting firm, and a major factor in the New York, UJA -- well, it wasn't the UJA then, it was the United Palestine Appeal. Leidesdorf said to me I'll give you a job as an accountant for $25.00 a week if you'll go to Columbia Business School and learn accounting. So, okay, $25.00 a week was a living wage for a single man, and I went to Columbia Graduate School of Business, stayed one year, couldn't stand it for

another day, couldn't dream of myself as being an accountant, so I quit.

INTERVIEWER: $25.00 --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: A week.

INTERVIEWER: -- was the equivalent today of what?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, gosh, I don't know. 30 times that amount, $700.00, $800.00 a week. A very good job.

INTERVIEWER: So it was a nice starting salary?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, yes, a nice starting salary, perfectly acceptable. Tuition was $450.00 at Yale. Today it's $23,500.00. So there I was, I was at the end, I owed money to Yale, I owed money to Columbia and it's now 1939, the war has not yet broken out in Europe but it's imminent, and America is in a totally isolationist mood, no thought of participating in it. Roosevelt was jockeying like mad to give the British some support and so he was making these funny deals called lend/lease, we will lend you some of our destroyers on lease, you will pay us rent for our

destroyers, but we're not going to get into your war. It was really so ambivalent and so confused and so costly in the long run.

At any rate my personal requirements were that I had better go and get a job. So I went back to New Haven and got a job in a factory working at a sewing machine making blankets. I worked two shifts, 16 hours a day, and I earned enough money to pay back all the debts. And I also did the most important thing at that stage in my life, I decided what I really wanted to do.

INTERVIEWER: Which was?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I tried to figure out during all those mindless hours at the machine where all you're trying to do is keep your hand away from the needle while you're feeding cloth through and it's robot work, and I said why should I continue being so frustrated. If the American Jewish Community isn't awake why don't I try to awaken them, but how do you do that. That's when I decided that I would become a rabbi, not because of any theological sudden insights, I had no epiphanies, I had no -- I conceived of myself

really as a civil servant. And if I had a platform from which to speak I would use that platform to try to wake people up. It was sort of simplistic, very idealistic, but satisfying to me. On the other hand, again I felt I'm stopping myself for at least three years of more study from getting into any action mode and yet I'd better do that or else I'll be frustrated the rest of my life.

So I finished with the factory, backed off, went to rabbinical seminary called The Jewish Institute of Religion, headed by Stephen Wise in New York, and we did four year's worth of work in three, no summer vacations, no nothing, 11-1/2 months you worked, two weeks off, and kept going that way.

INTERVIEWER: What was the mood in rabbinical school, were students preparing for a career, was there a sense of --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, Wise being the person he was and focused the way he was, every one of the students in the school became acutely sensitized to the current events around us. So, sure, everybody was preparing for a career, you needed to get a pulpit

or a job somewhere to earn your living, but an ideology was developing among this group different from the Hebrew Union College out in Cincinnati. The J.I.R. graduated about 220 reform rabbis, but reform rabbis of a totally different kind than Cincinnati was producing.

I sat for all those years next to a fellow by the name of Usher Kirschblum who later became the Chairman of the Mizrachi Zionist Organization, and he sat with his kippa and I sat without a kippa and the whole faculty liked it that way and Wise liked it that way, and the dean, Henry Slonimsky liked it that way. It was a school in which clal yisrael or pluralism or whatever word you want to use, which is so fashionable today, was really being practiced in the '30s and '40s, the only school in which it was being carried out as a definite ideological objective, and every student picked it up.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us a little bit about Stephen Wise, his school, what was his role in this, what was his role in the American Jewish Community at that time?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, his role in the American Jewish Community was superb. He was the leader of the protest, the ceaseless effort to try to persuade Roosevelt, to whom he had automatic access, Rabbi Stephen Wise was acceptable to Roosevelt at request, and saw him frequently. He failed to convince him of anything, but Wise was the pusher, Wise was the aggressor seeking to have a large protest meeting in Madison Square Garden, and we'll get 25,000 people there or 20,000 whatever the Garden holds. And he filled it every time, talking about the fact we must do something. He sounded -- he was the only one who sounded the toxin, the call, he was the bugle. Almost no response except in those of us who were listening to him very very carefully and very closely. I adored him, I admired him, I respected him.

The personal impact used to come on Thursday mornings. Thursday morning he had a class called problems of the ministry. A big round table, seminar table, 18, 12 students around the table. We thought problems of the ministry meant how do you conduct a wedding how do you conduct a funeral?

Nothing of the sort. Wise would go into his pocket, he would take out the latest telegram that he had gotten from the World Jewish Congress, Gerhardt Riegner in Geneva, concerning the slaughter going on. Not only was he a key player in the World Jewish Congress but he also started the American Jewish Congress. He believed in Democracy and he had hoped that those organizations would really be democratic in the sense that every member would vote for its officiers. It never happened that way in practice, but in theory it was at that time the most democratic, and still to this day the most liberal organization I think in existence in the panoply of our alphabet soup.

So he would take the telegram out and tell us what was the latest stuff going on in Europe in this camp or that camp, or this ghetto or another.

INTERVIEWER: So you were with him in the period of '39 through --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: '39 to '43. I left in '43. I graduated, I went out to Denver to take a --

INTERVIEWER: Did you know of the

existence of Riegner telegram?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Sure. We students knew it. He read it to us.

INTERVIEWER: And what was the its impact?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: On us?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Devastating and confirming. It confirmed us in our desire, because I wasn't the only one who felt this frustrated and who wanted to get out there and try to wake up the Jews -- so we were getting confirmation to our own personal feelings from him. And I think he felt that if he was failing to arouse the street, he was at least succeeding in arousing us. That was, I think, the greater of two contributions which he made.

And we were champing at the bit. And so many of us in those classes spent the one year which the Army required of us to go and be a rabbinical intern, that is by medical metaphor. The army said to young doctors - You graduated medical school, now be an intern in the hospital for a year, and then we will take you into the Army and we'll commission you as a

medical officer. The same with clergymen., go out, get your congregational experience, (what good that was going to do you in the Army I have no idea,) but that was their bureaucracy. And so each of us was impatient to get out, get the congregational job, spend the year and then get into the chaplaincy.

INTERVIEWER: Let me focus for a moment on the Riegner telegram. Do you remember when you heard the Riegner telegram --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, it was in '42.

INTERVIEWER: -- August of '42?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Aug. '42. I didn't remember which month exactly. Well, so then it would have been a week or two weeks thereafter. Remember I said school was continuous, there were no summer vacations. So let's call it -- yes, it was before Rosh Hashanah. Yes I remember it now. So I can't tell you the exact date, but we all used it in sermons that we made. I used it. I remember I used it. But who was listening to us. I mean we didn't make any ripples. Students make any ripples out in the big world? And if you were a student at -- where was I?

It was a place in Virginia. So you're talking to one group of people and you're reading this telegram to them and you're saying wake up, wake up. The impact was quite limited, quite personal.

And, you know, the Riegner telegram of 1942 became such a big sensation later as proof that we had evidence and everybody chose to bury it. Wyman in his book talks about the fact that the State Department didn't want it transmitted to anybody, they wanted it just kept secret. They were afraid of what impact it would make and so indeed it didn't make any for a long time.

But Wise had it. We his students had it. We tried to get it out. I don't know when it hit the press.

INTERVIEWER: How did Wise see his own role?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I don't think he stood still long enough to see his own role. He was in constant motion. He was in furious motion. And the fact that he would meet us every Thursday morning at 11:00 o'clock week after week after week, year after

year meant that that was a holy moment for him, a crucial moment. If you can transmit something to your students then at least your own mortality becomes less important. If you can't transmit anything to anybody and it's all bottled up in you, then it's dreadful that you are going to die with that. But he never had a sense of dying. He was vigorous and always moving, speaking out heedlessly. He was the prime spokesman to the non-Jewish world not just to the Jewish world.

In the first half of the 20th century every clergyman in this country knew the name of Rabbi Stephen Wise. And so his satisfactions came from that. Toward the end he developed cancer in the throat and died in '49 never having set foot on the sovereign soil of the State of Israel. At the very end I remember seeing him once and he said that was the greatest tragedy of his life. He spent his whole life working for the cause of Zionism and when it reached its fruition he never had the joy and the glory of setting foot on that soil.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to '42.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: You then finished -- this was the Jewish Institute of Religion?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. After Wise died, I think it was still Nelson Glueck who was the president out in Cincinnati, came and pushed for the merger. Some of us fought against the merger. We had a different conception of what the reform movement was than they did. Rabbi Morton Berman of Chicago, I remember, and Rabbi Philip Bernstein of Rochester, those were two of my very close friends. They were a few years ahead of me, a few years older than I was, but still we became very friendly. We fought the merger unsuccessfully. With Wise dead and no fund-raising going on -- he was the prime fund-raiser, he kept the school alive. So the merger took place.

We scattered. I left. I was graduated and went out to Denver in August '43. Wise said to me, you go to Denver. Wise used to think that if he could place a man in a pulpit somewhere that he would then have a right to go to that man and to do some

fund-raising in that congregation in support of the alma mater, the school you went to. So he was always desperately seeking good congregational placements. Well, this was a congregation out there that had a thousand family memberships in 1943. The congregation was older than the State of Colorado.

Colorado came into the Union in 1876, called the Centennial State. The congregation was established in 1874. It was started by Simon Guggenheim, later Senator Guggenheim, American Mining and Smelting Company, a powerful, big German classical reform leader. So Wise pushed me as, I guess one of his favorite sons, into that congregation. Stay there and we'll always then have a foot in the door.

INTERVIEWER: You went out to Denver, what happened then?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, I had a lovely year there, fighting hard with the congregation. Their previous rabbi, also named Friedman, (William S.), had been there for 50 years and taught then anti-Zionism, anti-Hebrew, anti-Bar Mitzvah, anti-Oriental ceremonials like putting on a hat, etcetera, etcetera.

50 years, two generations, I couldn't dream of upsetting that in one year, but I got close to it. I split the congregation. I said why don't you guys go off and be homogeneous in your anti-Zionism, I'm going to take this congregation and turn it around. If you stay, you're going to be listening to my idealogical stuff which is going to irritate you. And your oppositional presence out there in front is going to irritate me, so take a Sefer Torah and goodbye.

Today Denver has two big, big strong reform temples. The anti group has long since come back. So I think I did a good thing. That was my one year. And then I went to the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk for a little bit about the American Jewish Community at that point from the vantage point of Denver. You've already mentioned one division between Zionism and non Zionism.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And you've mentioned a second division between an activism that Wise was pushing for in a much more conservative environment of "don't rock the boat" or something like that. How did

you experience the division of the Denver Jewish Community during the year 1943 which after all was the height of the holocaust?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I'm not sure what you mean by "how did I experience the division." I exacerbated the division inside the temple by splitting it. And on the basis of this ideological definition of Zionism as being compatible with reformed Judaism, '43 was the crucial year in which the Central Conference of American Rabbis passed a vote on the resolution "Is reform Judaism compatible with Zionism?" That's the way the resolution was framed and the votes were taken, roll-call vote, name by name by name by name. You had to stand up, it was not a secret ballot. The vote was three to one in favor of that resolution: 300 to 100. And the 100 men went off and formed the American Council for Judaism, the anti-Zionist organization. The 300 guys controlled the future growth of the reform movement.

But it wasn't only on the Zionist issue. It was also on the issue of ritual. The old classical line was - what is a Bar Mitzvah? What a silly,

stupid thing. The boy isn't a man at the age of 13. We do not have Bar Mitzvahs, my old members said. Well, that was the practice out at N.U.C. in Cincinnati. That's the way those graduates were being taught. Our Stephen Wise graduates from J.I.R. were pushing for greater ritual observance, so we were accused of being Orthodox. Well, in order to validate that accusation which I thought was the ironic way to handle the whole thing, my best rabbinical friend in town was Manuel Lederman, the leading Orthodox rabbi in town.

It used to delight my supporters when they would see the two of us walking down the street together. It used to infuriate my enemies and gave them visible proof that I was a traitor to the reform movement. We were friends all our lives. And his son, Paul, who lives in Jerusalem now, I still see once in a while.

INTERVIEWER: In Denver was there a move at that point for political activism on behalf of the European Jews?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, there was a move on

behalf of Zionism. You know the accusation which is made against Ben Gurion himself and all the Palestinian-centered Zionist officials; namely, that they didn't pay much attention to the Holocaust, they didn't express their outrage at it, they didn't do very much except through the Haganah, the military arm of the Jewish Agency which tried to do something. The theories are that the Zionist leaders felt that the battle over saving Jewish life in Europe was lost, but that the battle for creating a state which would harbor whoever would be left alive had yet to be won. So of the two battles, why fight the one which is already hopeless, you must fight the one which contains the hope for the future.

Now that was pretty much Ben Gurion's philosophy. We talked about it many times and he wasn't cold, he wasn't calloused, his heart was as wounded as everybody's was, but he was an earnestly practical and pragmatic person. And he said I've got to concentrate on Zionism and building the state. I want a Jewish army. He was fighting for that as part of the Allied armies in order to stake a claim

afterwards to be able to sit at the peace table.

INTERVIEWER: Which period of time did you first meet Ben Gurion?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, I first met him in Paris in '45. So in '43 I didn't yet know him, but I knew the Zionist concept that concentrated instead on trying to persuade the as yet unconvinced American Jewish public that that's where the future lay. 1943 was only a year after the Biltmore Resolution was passed. The Zionists themselves never dared use the word "state" until 1942. They were also groping their way toward the definition of their own movement. Courage finally prevailed. The Zionist Organization held a big conference at the Biltmore Hotel, (hence the name of the resolution). Ben Gurion stood up and said we must pass a resolution stating clearly that we are trying to create a country, a state. This was quite revolutionary in '42.

In '43 in Denver we were all arguing about that. And I was preaching sermon after sermon about state and army, army and state, independence and sovereignty, these are the only answers to

powerlessness. We're powerless without these instuments.

INTERVIEWER: And why did you decide to leave Denver and join the Army?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well because the fight against Hitler was there. I mean the point is that I could continue arguing with those Jews in Denver, making tremendous strides with them and I knew I would win the fight or history would win the fight. But I wanted to be where the history was being made. So 365 days to the day, this prisoner (having scratched the nail on the cement wall of the cell) having completed his internship as required, enlisted in the Army. My old friend Rabbi Philip Bernstein, was the Executive Secretary of the Chaplaincy Commission of the Jewish Welfare Board. They certified to the Army that this rabbi was duly ordained, sane and in good health and they recommended that I be commissioned as First Lieutenant in the Chaplaincy Corps. I think the pay was $1,000.00 a month.

INTERVIEWER: That was $1,000.00 a month?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: $12,000.00 a year?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: In '45?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Sure. What do you think I was being paid in the congregation? $75.00 a week, $3,600.00 a year. So Army pay was fabulous, it was great. Once inducted, you had to go through chaplaincy school at Fort Devens in Massachusetts. Then I wasassigned to an infantry training regiment in Camp Blanding in Florida. And then you were assigned overseas. We sailed from Boston and were put into a replacement depot up in Belgium in a little town called Namur. And then I was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division which was part of the Third Army under the command of General George Patton.

The fighting was over in Germany. We were in this depot in Belgium. I mentioned Namur. I have to tell you a story. This was a small town in Belgium and we were in a big camp outside of town, thousands of officers being shuffled around and the paperwork taking weeks before everybody got sorted out. So one day I was walking through this little village, hardly

more than a village, and I saw a store front with a Magen David on the window.

INTERVIEWER: Jewish star?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. A Star of David, yes. Well, okay, wow, what's this! I went past it a number of times until one day I saw that it was open and there were people inside. I walked in and in the second room, in the back, visible to the street, I realized that this was a synagogue. There was a little Ark and over the Ark there was a picture of a Catholic priest with a collar and no name, no designation. So I found one old man there who was sort of the caretaker and he told me the story.

Well, said the shamash, his name is Father Andre and we respect him because he saved so many Jewish lives. The Gestapo headquarters in Namur was in a building that was right next to the church, and in the back of the church was where the priest was living and he had his bedroom and he had a kitchen, and the Gestapo officers, many of whom were Catholic, (as was half the population of Germany) and many of whom used to come to sit and drink wine with the

priest. The priest figured that his bedroom next door to this kitchen was the safest place to hide Jews. He was one of the network of an underground railroad that was passing Jews through town trying to get them to the ultimate safest destination which was Portugal, a neutral country, so the movement was always southward.

Two Jews, four Jews in his bed, under his bed, in the big wardrobe. Four Gestapo officers, five meters, fifteen feet away. Risky! I mean that is the material that moving pictures are made out of. Not a single Jew was caught. Crazy things would happen. Four kids would show up at the back door. He had to excuse himself, run, take them, push them under the bed, go back to the Gestapo guys. Never a problem, never a failure, never a death. Hundreds of Jews were saved going through his bedroom. When it was all over -- the few remaining Jews in town wanted to give him a present so they bought him a new bed to replace his bed which had gotten so badly smashed in, although he had never slept in it for two years. And they put his picture up over the Ark.

And that was the first time I ever learned

about Chasidei Umot Ha-olam, the righteous Gentiles of the world. And more and more today we're beginning to hear about them, and he was one.

INTERVIEWER: What did you know of the Holocaust in '43, '44, '45?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Auschwitz was at its height in '44 and '45, trains bringing thousands per day from all over Europe. Treblinka was 70 km. from Warsaw, receiving 7-8,000 per day from the Warsaw Ghetto. Treblinka was at its height '42, and early '43. Sobibor, Maidanak, all of them. '43, '44, '45, they were at the height of production. So when you say what did I know about it, I knew those facts. I knew the facts that the Americans had refused and the British had refused bombing Auschwitz even though both Air Forces were over-flying Auschwitz on the way to the Ploesti oil fields in Rumania. And they were using the excuse that they did not want to jeopardize Allied equipment and manpower. But it was an excuse, they were already flying over Auschwitz; they could have bombed the death factory.

This just increased the sense of

powerlessness. We couldn't convince anybody so we were going to have to take fate into our own hands. And this required a firm determination to get the state and get back into a situation of power over our own destiny. But there was nothing that could be done about it, at the moment, except prepare for the ultimate battle, which finally came three years later, in 1948.

INTERVIEWER: You were a chaplain, when did you first encounter the survivors of the Holocaust?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Dachau was liberated. I say Dachau because the Ninth Infantry division was down in southern Germany. We were at that time posted in a little town called Wasserburg am Inn which was between Munich and Salzburg. Dachau was right outside of Munich. Dachau was liberated by the 42nd Division, I would say about May of '45.

INTERVIEWER: April 29th.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: April 29th, okay. It's good to have a real expert here. Now, the first encounter I had with refugees was shortly thereafter,

some matter of days or weeks. From Munich south, all through Bavaria were a whole network of underground German factories that were producing goods for the Army, everything from simple bullets to very complicated howitzers. It was all done with slave labor. These people emerged above ground. They were wandering around the roads and forests and the lakes. It's heavily wooded area, and heavily infiltrated with lots of small lakes.

I used to take trucks out of the motor pool, and start driving on these small country roads looking for people and determining that they were Jews. The process is very simple, you just drop their trousers and that's that. And putting them into the trucks and trying to find a place where I could gather them and (a) let them be safe, and (b) get some food in and get some DDT powder and get some simple medicines. Penicillin had just been invented but it was ferociously expensive and available only for curing syphilis.

I remember an episode where we were driving around and we had about a half load of people

when we saw two children on the side of the road. I jumped out and I wanted to talk to the children. You talk to them in a combination of German or Yiddish or Hebrew. You find one of those three languages would work. But the kids were frightened. They saw a soldier in a uniform and they started to run across the field, a little boy and a little girl, holding hands, running and stumbling.

I didn't want to threaten them by running faster than they were, so I kind of followed them and they were gasping and they were crying, and finally they ran out of steam and they stopped, and so I stopped. After I got my arms around them, and tried to explain to them that I was a Jewish soldier and I pointed to the chaplain's insignia on my uniform which contained a Star of David and the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, they quieted down. I scooped up the two kids, they were about 10 or 11 years old, and put them in the truck.

But the fear was so palpable. And whatever experience they had been through was so utterly real that they were shocked out of any

knowledge of their own names, where they came from, what they were doing there. It was like total amnesia. It was the anonymity of those two survivors, they didn't know who they were, what happened to them, where they came from, that really impacted me. I was shocked.

I find it hard to comprehend six million victims and I don't understand what one and a half million dead children mean, but two children that's real, that's real. And I said to myself, every single one such as these, we have to try to save and rescue. What's dead is dead. It's all gone. It's ashes, and it's blown off in the wind. But what's living we can't leave wandering around Europe. And that's what I did for the next two and a half years. So I still remember it. That was the first encounter.

And when the truck was full with 50 or so people, then the trick was to find some structure with four walls and a roof. So I remember once we found a barn that had three walls, and once we found an abandoned airfield with a hangar. You would find something. I remember once I found a city hall in a

small German town. It was a beautiful building in perfect shape, fully occupied by German clerks, all busy working at the typewriters, and I said hey this is a great building.

Well, a Colt .45 is a heavy piece of equipment. You turn it around and hit the butt on the table and you can break the table. So a few knocks like that got the attention of the Burgermeister. It was a city hall so he's there, upstairs, second floor. And in nice German I told him this house was now beschlagenamt, this was requisitioned in the name of the United States Army. I had no more authority to do, than you would have, but the uniform was its own authority and the .45 was it's own authority. So I said that I wanted this place empty and I wanted it clean and I wanted it tomorrow morning, with everybody out, because I am bringing in some Fluchtlinge, refugees. He didn't have to know who they were. And, you know, sure enough tomorrow morning it was clean, it was empty, it was available, it was warm. He had some wood in the back for a wood stove, and 50 Jews had a place. This was called a camp. I mean you've

got to designate it. You've got a location for it, you give it a name, it's got a population. It becomes another D.P. (Displaced Person) camp.

And to cut a long story short, by the time we got all through collecting Jews on German soil, and bringing in others from eastern Europe, there were 64 locations in Germany, another six or eight in Austria, and even two in Italy. All together, under the jurisdiction of the American Army and the safety of the American flag there were living a quarter of a million Jewish survivors.

The starting number that I was aware of when Dachau was liberated, was 35,000 Jews alive on German soil either in camp, liberated from camps or from slave labor in German factories, 35,000. That number was determined by a fellow chaplain named Abraham Klausner, who was with the forces that got into Dachau right after the camp was liberated.

INTERVIEWER: You used the word "we," who is we? So far you've only described operating really on your own intuition.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: When did it get organized?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay. It got organized somewhere in a higher echelon, unbeknownst to me, probably three or four years earlier, because the Haganah organized it and it was called Aliyah Bet. Aliyah Bet meant --

INTERVIEWER: Haganah was?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Haganah was the military arm of the Jewish Agency, the underground Jewish self-government while the British were in mandatory control of Palestine. You had an underground government administering the affairs of the population, 600,000 Jews in the Yishuv, and that underground government had an underground army. At its height the Haganah had about 25,000 men and women. Just so you should compare it to the other two underground organizations, the Irgun which was Begin's organization had about 3,000 people, and the Stern Gang, which was Shamir's organization had about 300 people. So that gives you a scale.

Now, the Haganah organized two departments to work outside of Palestine. One was called Aliyah

Bet, which obviously was different, from Aliyah Aleph. Aliyah means migration to Israel or Palestine. Aleph is number 1, Bet is number 2. Number 1 is legitimate, legal. It's what the British permitted. The British permitted 1,500 Jews per month to receive certificates to enter Palestine. Well, at 1,500 a month we were going to be many, many, many decades cleaning up the quarter-million D.P.'s in Europe.

Therefore Aliyah Bet, method number 2, illegal, was organized. This involved Jews from Palestine going into Europe, organizing groups of refugees, sending ships in to try to take these people to Palestine against the wishes of the British or anybody else who might try to stop them, including the Nazis. Aliyah Bet started even while the war was going on. They were taking ships out of a Rumanian port, Constanza on the Black Sea, in '41, and in '42. These were efforts that were so desperate and so futile, a few hundred here, a few hundred there, and so sad in the ending because many of those ships sunk, many of the people drowned. But many thousand also got through.

So that was the start of the whole thing. When the war ended in '45 the Haganah personnel came in to Europe in force, maybe as many as 100, and it might have been 150, I'm never sure of the whole number, and they recruited me. That's the "we."

INTERVIEWER: Well, how did they recruit you?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, it's a crazy story. I was in a little town down in Bavaria called Bad Tolz and the telephone rang and there was a lady on the phone, and I was 27 years old, unmarried, and this lady invites me to come to see her in her hotel room in the Royal Monceau Hotel in Paris. So wouldn't you go, I mean under those conditions?

When we finally met face to face I was quickly disabused of all such ulterior motives on my part and we got back to good old idealism. She said that she had heard what I was doing in Bavaria with my trucks and she wanted me to come to meet her and she wanted me to -- she wanted to talk to me. That was the phone conversation. I agreed. I got orders and went to Paris a few days later.

The British flag was hanging from the front of that hotel. It was right near the Etoile, on Avenue Hoche. I wondered what the British flag was doing on this hotel? She answered the door, keeping me waiting out in the hall. She asked, "Will you work for us?" Will you work for us? Who is us? She replied: "the Haganah".

Now, sometimes in life you make decisions on the basis of careful evaluation of all the facts involved. There were no facts here and you had to operate purely on intuition. Something told me to say yes and I said yes and it changed my life.

I was still out in the hall, but I can see that she went to the door at the far end of the living room. A short white-haired man came out, walking toward me. She said to him, "Friedman will work for us." He came over, shook hands with me, said thank you, turns around and walked back to his room. I didn't see him again until a year later. She never introduced him to I had no idea who he was. She then said, "That's Mr. David Ben Gurion", and I said, "Who is he?" I didn't connect in my mind that this was the

Ben Gurion who was the head of the Jewish Agency. He was supposed to be in Jerusalem or in jail in Rhodesia somewhere where they scooped up everybody when the British did that Black Shabbat. No, no she said, that's Mr. Ben Gurion. I asked what he was doing here in a British hotel? And she said: "Did you never read Poe?" The purloined letter is right under your nose, and that's the safest place to put it. Beautiful.

Then she invited me in, sat me down and gave me a cup of coffee while I took off my coat, and asked to what had I committed myself? She said that what I had been doing down in the woods in southern Bavaria was fine, but now they needed me for a bigger assignment. You've got to go to Berlin, get yourself settled there. Find a big house, which is almost impossible in that totally bombed city, with a backyard large enough to hold six trucks. Then get enough gas tickets for a year. You're going to run the route from Stettin, way up on the Polish border, north almost up to the Baltic, down to Berlin. I said that's all Russian territory.

Berlin is an island in the middle of the

Russian zone of Germany. She said that's right. I said we're supposed to run trucks across the Polish-Russian border and drive 150 miles through the Russian zone, to Berlin. She said that's it, that's what you're going to do. I said that's what I'm going to do. She said well, we'll send you some soldiers from the Palestine Brigade who are on bivouac right now in Belgium. The British don't want them to go back to Palestine. These were 30,000 guys, well armed and well experienced in infantry warfare, whom the British by no means wanted to allow in Palestine. The British were keeping them in Belgium doing nothing. We will send you 12 fellows and they'll ride the trucks with you back and forth.

INTERVIEWER: Let me see if I understand this for a moment. You are at this point a soldier in the United States Army?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: A captain in the United States Army, yes sir.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you move to Berlin and what do you do?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: When I started to explain

to her the difficulties involved in carrying out her orders, she said I don't care how you do it, it's not my business, you get yourself transferred to Berlin. If you don't know any of the ropes of your own Army by now, then what good are you going to be to us. I mean she was sort of mocking even. She said don't bother me with such details. I was supposed to get myself transferred to Berlin Headquarters Command. There was one stroke of luck. There was a chaplain occupying that post who was ready to be de-mobilized and go back to the U.S. His name was Joseph Shubow, an Orthodox Rabbi from Boston. So I put in a request to take his place, because we didn't need a chaplain in the 9th Infantry Division anymore. We needed somebody up in Berlin Headquarters Command. Personnel department agreed, so I was officially transferred to Berlin.

Now, as far as a house is concerned, we found in Dahlem, a very lovely residential section of Berlin, a nice big house relatively undestroyed. The big holes in the roof, we got them repaired. One whole back wall knocked out, we fixed it up. This is easy, you know. You pick up craftsmen and bricks and

cement all inside your own Army headquarters. And I stole the trucks from the motor pool, that's relatively easy if you want to take the risk. And I stole the gas tickets, that's easy if you want to take the risk. And I called her in Paris and I said okay send me the Palestine Brigade men -- and they lived in the house. It was called the Jewish Chaplain's Center. At that time there were 2,000 Jewish troops in the city of Berlin, in four armies.

INTERVIEWER: The American, the British, the French?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: American, British, French, Russian. Did you ever see that old movie "Four Men in a Jeep?" The patrolling of the city was done by jeeps, each carrying four soldiers of the four Allied Armies. It was called the Alierte Commandatura, the Allied Command.

The reason we knew the Jewish troop strength was because, as the Passover Seder came, the first Seder after liberation, we wound up having 2,000 persons in the Schoneberg Rathaus for Seder, the first Seder in freedom. That was the same building from

which Kennedy came in later years and spoke from the balcony, Ich Bin Berliner." That's why we called it the Jewish Chaplain's Center for the Allied Command of Berlin. It was just the Americans, providing services and programs for all Jewish personnel, since there were no Jewish chaplains in the three other allied forces.

INTERVIEWER: These soldiers, your groups that you were able to draw from, clearly cooperated. How did Jewish soldiers feel being in Germany, what was going through the minds of some of the people you were dealing with on a professional basis in the military life?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, how did they feel about being in Germany? Those who were consciously Jewish, and that was not all of them by any means, you'd be surprised. You know, we talk about assimilation today, 1992, let me tell you something, assimilation was already beginning to take its toll in 1945. People who were not denying that they were Jews, but not consciously caring Jews. They didn't have any feeling. You see, Germans to them were the

enemy. Nazis were the enemy. Germans were exploitable. A carton of cigarettes cost 70 cents in the PX, no tax. A carton of cigarettes would buy you a Leica camera from a German.

INTERVIEWER: What about the Jews who were consciously Jews?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: They were distraught - very upset. They knew what had happened because the Army newspaper Stars and Stripes was printing the whole story of all the Nazi camps and genocide. Eisenhower himself visited a concentration camp with his chief of staff, Walter Biddle Smith, that was on the front page of Stars and Stripes. Eisenhower said this is shocking and this is awful, and there was a long story, with ghastly photos of emaciated bodies lying around. The guys who cared, read those stories and they were constantly in the Army indoctrination lectures that were given once every week. They heard everything, they knew it. And the ones who cared were distraught.

I used to try to turn their thinking away from the negative and on to the positive because they

didn't yet make the connection. And I found that the way that you got them to understand was to demand something of them. If you don't demand anything of people they don't respond. Nobody lines up, at the window, to volunteer. When you do demand, when you ask, people suddenly realize there's a sense of discipline somewhere. Somewhere somebody is planning something and needs your help. And that always evokes a response.

INTERVIEWER: Let's use this perfect to break and change tapes.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: They recruited some people from left field.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, I'm glad you're here.

INTERVIEWER: That's why I pushed on the Riegner thing and on the Wise thing.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Good, good, good.

INTERVIEWER: Because now we have -- I mean I already see how it's usable.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Wonderful.

INTERVIEWER: So we'll go with that.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Let me just catch you up before we begin. Yes, okay, let's catch up for one second. We're talking about now your double life, you were demanding things of the troops.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What did you demand of them?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Of the troops?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The specific thing that I needed in order to keep that operation going, the operation of bringing survivors across from Stettin down to Berlin, the specific thing I needed was cigarettes. Cigarettes were the currency of the black market, it was the currency of choice. A package of cigarettes was worth $15.00. A carton, ten packs, worth $150.00.

INTERVIEWER: And you were buying it for what?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I wasn't buying it. How would you possibly buy it? That's what it was worth.

If you paid 70 cents in the PX for a carton of cigarettes and you could sell it for $150.00, and I came along and I said to someone, "Soldier, I need a carton of cigarettes. It costs me one carton per Jew. Now, I'm running six trucks every night, 50 people on a truck, that's 300 people."

INTERVIEWER: You sold this to soldiers?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Certainly. To the ones who cared. I was moving 300 people a night. I had to pay 300 cartons of cigarettes, $150.00 a carton, that's $45,000.00 worth of cigarettes every single night, every single night. We used to leave Berlin at dusk. It took about until midnight to get up to Stettin, that 150 miles. We loaded in about ten minutes. The Aliyah Bet guys of the Haganah on the Polish side of the line had their people all ready, 300 people. If we had 320 we took 320. If we had to throw away the baggage, the poor crumbling pieces, suitcase, a valise, that mostly had in it things like photographs, diaries, what did you carry? You didn't carry an extra pair of socks or underwear. We used to throw the baggage overboard to get three more people

on. Kind of ruthless. And then leaving there at about midnight, getting back into Berlin by dawn, so this was an operation that took place at night totally.

I said now this is what I need, and so you've got to give me a carton of cigarettes. I've got to get 300 cartons a night. I need thousands of cartons of cigarettes. So the G.I. paid 70 cents for the carton, but he was giving me $150.00 because if he took and sold that on the black market even for currency, not for a Leica or a set of china, but sold it for currency, he could go right over to the Army post office, buy a money order in U.S. Dollars, send that money order home to his wife or his mother or whatever to put it in the bank for him, every single week if he didn't smoke he was saving $150.00. So for him to give that to me was an authentic large gift. He was making a big contribution to help save Jewish lives.

My father used to send me thousands of cartons of cigarettes a week which he collected from members of his synagogue, B'nai Jacob, in New Haven.

And I had the postal inspectors on my doorstep at the Chaplain's Center almost every week because this was cash and they wanted to know what I was doing with all those cigarettes. And I'd say if you inspectors find me doing anything illegal, then you arrest me. Until that time do me a favor and don't worry about it. Well, you know there's a certain power of the cloth, you know, that works, and so I took advantage of it.

INTERVIEWER: Clearly people knew about it?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I didn't get the question?

INTERVIEWER: Clearly people knew, people knew what you were doing.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Of course.

INTERVIEWER: You couldn't keep an operation like this concealed.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, no, no. I always adopted the policy of telling the top echelon, the very top of any given Army unit, because if the officer at the top knows and if he decides to be mean about it, he can shut you down. And if he decides to

be permisssive about it he just passes word down the line to leave you alone. Any army is absolutely the most rigid hierarchy in the world and you can turn that to your use.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about walking into a general and telling him you were working for an underground organization to save Jewish lives?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I never said underground. That word wasn't necessary.

INTERVIEWER: Talk about the conversation, tell me about the conversation?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, the conversation by the way was not only with him in Berlin, I'll jump ahead and say later on down in Frankfurt it was with General Joseph T. McNarney who succeeded Eisenhower, and it was with General Lucius D. Clay who succeeded McNarney. So I always went to the top. How do you do it? General, you know about the problem of what Hitler did to the Jews? Yes. You know about the fact that there is a remnant of refugees, wanderers, survivors here in Europe?

INTERVIEWER: You were using the language

roughly Jews. Were survivors introduced at that point?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Sure, people who survived Hitler, people who survived Hitler. Every camp that was liberated. There were a lot of dead corpses around, but there were people who walked out of there alive and they survived. So we used the word then, sure. As a matter of fact I used to teach them the Hebrew "She'erit Hapletah," "the surviving remnant". Now, these people want to go home. The General says yes, well all these displaced persons they all got to go home. There were 10 million of them and the Army is repatriating all of them. Right, General, the Army is repatriating all of them, but there is one group that the Army doesn't know what to do with and that's the Jews because they have no home. They're not going to go back to Poland, or Hungary or Rumania or anywhere in eastern Europe. If you say that you're going to repatriate people according to their citizenship, if it's a Belgium slave laborer or a French or a Norwegian or a Dane or anybody who has been conquered by the Nazis, held as a slave laborer,

you repatriate him back to his original home. Jews are not going back to their original homes, all of which are cemeteries. So the Army isn't going to repatriate Jews to remain in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, where do all these people want to go?

So sometimes the Army general knows enough to say well, I understand they all want to go to Palestine. And if he doesn't know that he says, well where do they want to go. So you tell him, and then you go off on the Zionist story.

The American Army didn't have any more sympathy for the British Army than Britons had for Americans. So you painted the British as the bad guys who were trying to prevent these wretched survivors from going home, and you depict home as something that every Bible-loving American understands - namely, The Holy Land. You are talking to Protestants and Catholics. And so you've got his sympathy. I never once ran into an inimical officer of high rank, never once. I've run into lower ranks where you can hear a sort of profane kind of vulgar anti-semitism, but I

always discounted that. It didn't bother me.

INTERVIEWER: So you tell the higher ranks about the Jews wanting to go home?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: And therefore, and therefore we are gathering them. Who is we? Well, there's an organization of Palestinians that's doing the collecting. They're moving people from the east to the west. Don't forget that the Russians took hundreds of thousands of Jews eastward as the Nazi armies moved eastward. The Russians did this for their own reasons, not altruistic, but practical, Stalin didn't love Jews, but this was a manpower pool of perhaps a half million to a million, whom he used as labor out beyond the Urals in Central Asia, cutting timber, digging mines, and other crucial manual labor.

Well, okay, once the war is over, three quarters of them are dead of starvation and hunger and over-work, but there is a good chunk of hundreds of thousands surviving. How can they be brought from as far out as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and other such placces? So I explained that there was an organization of Palestinians that was trying to round

up these people and bring them together because if you get them all collected someplace you can handle them more easily. And the movement was toward the west, toward the American zone of Germany, where they would be safe and could wait until a political solution could be found for them.

So I said they've come as far west as the border of Germany and a bunch of them are up in a town called Stettin, that's the collecting point, and at that point these Palestinian guys can't come into the Russian zone of Germany or the American zone of Germany, so there are some of us here who are helping them. Now, if the officer I'm talking to wants to be really very tough, he would ask if I were doing this at the expense of my Army duties? And I would reply, No, sir. No, sir. I'm running my services, I've got 700, 800 soldiers coming every Friday night, every Saturday morning. Why don't you come over, General, and listen to the reading of the Torah portion of the week. And he would say - okay, okay, you keep doing a good job. So what are you telling me all this for? I said I think you ought to know it because the

movement is happening in your command, in your territory for which you are responsible. There might come an episode where the Russians will raise hell with a truckload of refugees, and you don't want to be caught short not knowing what's going on. He would say - Right, good, thanks. I love a guy who keeps me informed. Again, this was straight Army mentality.

That policy always paid off. It paid off in hundreds of ways. It paid off with 2,000 calories per day from the Army to every DP in every camp in Germany and Austria. And the JDC Joint Distribution Committee brought in supplementary rations of 1,200 so the DP who had been starved for years, the displaced person, is eating now 3,200 calories a day, great. Most of it Army food.

And so every night we'd run up there and take our load and --

INTERVIEWER: You would go with them every night?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, no. I couldn't go every night, but once a week. Because most of the time I was hustling for the cigarettes.

INTERVIEWER: Who would be your drivers?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The Palestinian guys, the Chayalim, (Hebrew word for soldiers) with one driver and one guy riding shotgun. So it's two fellows on each truck. She had said get six trucks. So I have six trucks and 12 guys and they were on duty every night. Every once in a while I would get some really gung-ho American sergeant, Jewish guy, and he'd say hey I want to ride the truck. I'd say listen, you know, it's your tuchus, and I'm not going to translate that.

INTERVIEWER: The exterior.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, your exterior, anything happens, buddy, I can't help you. So he'd come on board, you know, with his carbine or his M-1 and he'd feel that he was doing something important - and he was, he was guarding 50 people. We had wonderful, wonderful cooperation from Jewish guys in the Motor Pool. They were all good drivers. Enough good drivers so that it was a delight to have them.

Well, you know, you run 300 people a night, night after night, month after month - well we

ran almost 100,000 people through Berlin that way.

When you bring them in, you've got a problem what to do with them. And not only how do you handle them, but eventually you've got to get them out of the city because Berlin is an island don't forget. So that was all part of the game. We opened two camps in Berlin. One was at Schlachtensee out near Wannsee, southwestern part of the city, and one was at Tempelhof Airdrome, right on the airfield. We had 10,000 people in the Schlachtensee camp and 5,000 people in the Tempelhof camp, so I had places for 15,000 people.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you getting 300 cartons of cigarettes a night?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I'm getting it from the GIs, I'm getting it from my father, but the bulk finally came in from the JDC. The first port in Europe that opened up where you could get massive shipments in --

INTERVIEWER: The JDC is the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: American Jewish Joint

Distribution Committee, that's a long name, but the short name is "the Joint," the Joint. A marvelous organization, 75 or so years old. It goes back to World War I. Brilliant professionalism. If I were asked to describe it in two words "Brilliant professionalism." No ego gets in the way. No politics get in the way. Just plain what is the task, how shall we do it most efficiently and most cheaply, and don't use the excuse that you haven't got the money. Define the task, figure out the methodology, figure out the cost and the UJA supplies the JDC with the money. And there never was an insufficiency, there never was an argument.

INTERVIEWER: So the Joint shipped in the cigarettes?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Car loads, freight car loads. Then I began to feel relief. Antwerp opened up as a usuable port. Ships came into Antwerp. Goods were transferred to trains, from Bremerhaven down to Berlin. And I got all the cigarettes I needed. And that's what kept it going. My improvisation was at the beginning. But when Antwerp opened and I got in

touch with the Joint and they immediately responded.

INTERVIEWER: And they knew what you were doing?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The director of the Joint was a fellow by the name of Schwartz, Doctor Joseph Schwartz, and he was working hand in glove with the Haganah, also helping to pay for the Aliyah Bet operation. It wasn't just this one little bit of the cigarettes. The Joint was also financing much of the DP maintenance. They were providing 1,200 additional calories per person per day in all the camps. In the UJA campaign in the United States, during 1946, and 1947, more UJA money was being given to the Joint for use in the European camps than was being given to the Jewish Agency for work in Palestine, because the greater need was there in Europe in those two years. By 1948 it shifted and the greater share of the money was going to the Palestine operation, then Israel.

So that was Berlin and that was the camp at Schlachtensee and that was the camp at Templehof. Then the trick became to organize trainloads to go out of Berlin southward through the Russian zone and come

down to Frankfurt which was in the American zone. There the DP's went into one of the 64 permanent camps set up in the American zone. And then the Haganah could catch its breath and sort out whom they wanted to send further south to the Mediterranean to the French and Italian Riviera, whence, the Haganah ships came in to take aboard the people who were willing to run the risk of the British gauntlet. Most of the ships were caught out on the high seas in contravention of international law. But that didn't make any difference. The people were put by the British on the island of Cyprus which became an end goal in itself because it was only eight hours to Haifa.

So the people are on Cyprus and the ship is being collected and lined up in the port of Haifa. Now, I never saw the following sight in actuality, but I did see a photographshowing 57 vessels caught by the British lined up in Haifa harbor. They were old tramp steamers, Greek ships and Turkish ships, many from other Mediterranean ports, a few from Europe and the United States.

INTERVIEWER: How many of your colleagues, did you speak to other chaplains, were some of your colleagues involved, did you do any recruiting for the Haganah yourself?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, I didn't do any recruiting. And the answer is yes I did speak. There were only a few. There was a fellow who was subsequently a rabbi for a long time, in Washington, Eugene Lipman, a good guy. He was in on it with us. He worked over on the Czechoslovak border, on what we call the southern route. Stettin to Berlin, was the northern route. The southern route was from a town in lower Silesia, part of Poland, called Nachod, across the border to a town called Klotzk in Czechoslovakia, westward to Prague, back eastward to Bratislava in Hungary, back westward to Vienna, across the border to Munich. That was the southern route. Lipman worked the southern route. He was wonderful.

Who else was? There was a fellow by the name of Meyer Abramowitz, a conservative rabbi, now retired in Miami. He followed me in Berlin. We had closed the route down by then. He didn't have much of

an inflow, but he maintained the large camp populations, and later moved down to Italy to work in camps for the JDC. He married a DP lady from a camp in Italy. So Mike was in. Abe Klausner was in it at the beginning, not for long, but for a few months.

There were another dozen ex-chaplians, whose names I don't remember, who had been demobilized, were back in the U.S., whom we re-recruited to come back into uniform. On that southern route, which I described, we wanted to put a chaplain on every train of 1,000 people. A Jewish chaplain riding that train from Prague to Bratislava, to Vienna to Munich was very helpful. All kinds of episodes occurred, all kinds of interferences, all kinds of problems, all kinds of strikes from the people themselves, personal problems. One authoritative American Army officer on the train in uniform with his chaplain's insignia had a very calming effect on the nervous passengers and a very salutary affect on nervous border guards.

While we wanted a chaplain on every train, we didn't have the manpower in Europe. At Rabbi

Bernstein's request, the Army called back to active duty a dozen chaplains for a half year and we had the advantage of their services on that southern route. I'm sorry not to remember names.

No, I didn't recruit because there were two fellows whose names I shall not mention, who, when I told them that we could use their help and asked them if they wanted to participate, they gave me such a chicken answer, "we are here to serve the Army and we're not going to do anything else, we're not going to get mixed up in this business, this is political," that I didn't want to make any more cold requests.

INTERVIEWER: And you felt no incompatibility between your Army service and this work?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, it was a delightful synergy. It was wonderful. First of all it was good cover, and secondly every time I involved GIs in this thing, I was teaching a bunch of Jews about their responsibility. Come on, it was great. What was I going to do, give soldiers lectures about VD - or go visit them in the stockade. I never was very good at

that pastoral work, anyhow.

INTERVIEWER: Did you visit the DP camps themselves?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, come on. I visited scores of camps. I was asked, after the Berlin episode, by Rabbi Philip Bernstein, the new Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the Commanding General, to come to Frankfurt to serve as his deputy. The commanding general in the European theatre, beginning with Eisenhower himself, realized that he had to have at his disposal a person of high stature in the Jewish community to serve as his advisor on Jewish affairs.

Because the Army was accumulating tens of thousands of Jewish people, problems were going to develop. The Army commander hollered for help, so to speak. He wanted somebody who could help him, to whom he could pass on some of these problems. He didn't want to have the Army get into an adversarial position with these DPs.

So there was a consultative arrangement agreed upon among five major Jewish organizations in the United States and the Department of War that

whomever they would designate as a candidate whom they all agreed upon, the Army would accept that person, give him the simulated rank of a Two-Star General although he was a civilian and remained in civilian clothes, but for purposes of logistics in the Army such high rank gave him certain privileges. He could buy two cartons of whiskey a month from the PX, and you get a certain kind of car, and you have a permanent driver. He could call up anybody, give his rank and name, stating that he was advisor to General McNarney or General Clay, and anyone would listen to him.

Bernstein was brilliant. The first advisor was a chaplain, a major by the name of Judah Nadich, a conservative rabbi in New York. He remained with Eisenhower for about three months. Eisenhower went home, Nadich went home. That's when the Army decided it better institutionalize this thing. Bernstein came and stayed, a year and a half or something like that. Bernstein was assigned to Army Headquarters which were in Frankfurt in the IG Farben building, a great German industrial combine.

Frankfurt was bombed to pieces yet this particluar building didn't have a window broken because it was designated as future HQ and the U.S. Air Force was informed not to touch it, right?

Bernstein's office was two offices away from General Clay. I mean literally, couldn't be closer. Bernstein called me in Berlin and said "hey listen, I don't know anything about the Army. I am a Major-General (simulated rank) that doesn't mean anything to me, I am entitled to a military aid, I need you, will you come down to Frankfurt and be my military aid. And I said I will be happy to on one condition, that he understood that I have Haganah responsibilities.

INTERVIEWER: And you were able to say that directly over the phone and clearly?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, all Army, at his level, all phones are what are called secure. They're constantly tested electronically for taps and you didn't have the kind of surveillance by satellite where today you listen to every long distance phone conversation in the entire world. The NSA here

listens to every single long distance phone conversation it wants to.

So he said "well I don't know what that means but, you know, come on down and tell me." So I came down because I really liked him. We were intellectually close and spiritually close, we were on the same wavelength. That guy was as Zionist as I was from the day he was born.

I came down to Frankfurt and explained it to him and he said "well that's fine, I'm all in favor of that, just don't tell me about it." Because the theory always is that it is preferable for the superior officer not to know if he doesn't have to. It works on the principle which is called "The need to know." Phil said, I have no need to know so don't tell me, so then I can't be guilty of making any mistakes and I won't have to lie or anything. Very good, good arrangement. But anything that was to help Palestine or Israel or the DP cause was fine with him. And so, yes, we were in DP camps all the time.

Bernstein felt that the DP population should have an authoritative, authorized base. What

does that mean? There was an organization in existence which was born right after the war called the Central Committee of Liberated Jews, and then there was a huge fight regarding the preposition. Liberated Jews of Germany or Liberated Jews in Germany. Those two words tell the whole ideological difference. So the fight raged and finally they settled on "in Germany," because that indicated the temporary nature of their residence, rather than the more permanent implication that they were "of" Germany.

We then arranged a ceremony for a charter of recognition to be granted by the United States Army to the Central Committee. The ceremony was held at Headquarters, Farben building with a half a dozen of the DPs who were the chief officers of the Central Committee and half a dozen Major-Generals and so forth, and the photograph exists where General McNarney and Rabbi Philip Bernstein are side by side signing the charter of recognition.

Now, that meant that the officials of the Central Committee could travel on Army vehicles, carry

Army I.D. It meant that they move move around and organize a national life for quarter of a million Jews in the camps.

INTERVIEWER: Were you with Ben Gurion when he visited a DP camp?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, I was. I took him into one camp. He was on his way to the 1st Zionist Congress that was being held after the war and he remembered me from the first episode in the Paris hotel even though I didn't know him at that time. So again I got a call from Paris from his bodyguard, a fellow by the name of Mordechai Cirkus, who said Mr. Ben Gurion wants to come into Germany and will you get him the necessary pass etcetera, and he wants to visit a camp and you decide where.

We had had a very terrible episode at a camp called Babenhausen which was near Stuttgart. A trainload of more than a thousand Jews passed through Munich, came up to Stuttgart and the people were going to be put in a D.P. camp. Now, what was this camp? It was a former Russian POW, prisoner of war, camp maintained by the German army. As a prisoner of war

camp the Nazis didn't care how they treated the Russians so there were no beds, no bunks, only concrete floors with straw thrown on them. The camp was totally encircled by a heavy chain link fence, barbed wire, guard towers, heavy search lights, the whole apparatus looked like a bloody extermination camp. I'll never forget it.

The train came around the curve, many cars, freight cars, the same kind of freight cars that were used to transport Jews to concentration camps. They've been on the train now three days, which was bad enough. And they knew they were being taken to a DP camp in Germany, with a totally uncertain future awaiting. They also knew if you had patience someday the future was going to be solved, but meanwhile you had to keep your hope up. So they were not resisting the idea of going into a DP camp, but they resisted the idea of going into this particular camp which looked to them like an extermination camp. The U.S. army had slipped up somehow. The officer who had been told to tear down the barbed wire, take down the guard towers, get some cots in there and some mattresses,

none of it had been done. It was a typical bureaucratic slip-up, okay. It happens.

INTERVIEWER: Not malice, just --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, not malice, just ineffeciency. The people saw the barbed wire and immediately made a sit down strike on the train. We're not going to get off these cars. There were enough agitators among them, exercising the right of freedom for the first time to talk about their own fate and they said we're not getting off, and alles ist Kuput. It didn't take three minutes before the mood froze.

I was there, for I liked to be present when a new camp was inaugurated, in case there were problems. Well, in this case the problem was major. We set up a microphone alongside the track and tried to talk to the people. Nothing doing.

INTERVIEWER: In what language, Yiddish?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yiddish. Yes, Yiddish. I learned German in high school and in college. By the time my parents were married in 1918, English was the language in the house. So I didn't know any

Yiddish, but I knew good German. And so every time I would appear before the DPs I would use German.

One fine day an episode occurred which taught me a lesson. In a camp, at a meeting, there was a little fellow sitting in the front row and he folds his arms like this across his chest and I can see he's annoyed. And I can hear him say in a low voice (speaking Yiddish), "Don't speak German." I keep speaking German. A little bit louder he says (speaking Yiddish), "I'm demanding a word from you in Yiddish." I don't pay any attention to him. Finally he stands up and he shouts (in Yiddish), "Either you're going to talk Yiddish or I'm going to run out of here." So that taught me a lesson. And I started to twist my German around and ultimately I learned Yiddish.

So, yes, I talked on the microphone to the people on the train in Yiddish, but nothing doing. They wouldn't budge. General Keyes, a Lieutenant-General, Three-Star Commander of the Third Army, Patton's successor, came out to the track. He speaks in English, I translate for him, and the people see

all the stars and all the fruit salad on the uniform and they know who he is. I've told them who he is. It doesn't make the slightest difference. They were polite, but...

Colonel Ed Martin, the Catholic Chief Chaplain of the Third Army, comes out to speak. Nothing doing. Abe Hyman, a Major, the lawyer on Rabbi Bernstein's staff, pleaded with them to disembark. Nothing doing. Okay, the first night they sleep in the train. By the second day they're getting a little hungry. We pass food up and down the train and bring out a whole bunch of Army field kitchens to feed them. When the Army wants to cooperate it's easy.

After enormous efforts in which the people saw whole bunches of soldiers coming out with wire cutters cutting the barbed wire off, knocking down the towers, they saw it physically with their own eyes, and they realized they were not going into any kind of a trap, they dismounted from the train. That was the beginning of Camp Babenhausen. Such a beginning is not designed to create good strong morale thereafter.

That was the camp to which I decided to take Ben Gurion. So I said, Cirkus, you want me to take Ben Gurion to one camp, I'm going to take him to Babenhausen, but you have to tell him that it's a very problematic place. The episode of the initial strike took place some months earlier, but the mood in the camp was still lousy, it never did get repaired. Cirkus said okay, it's all right, the old man has been in tough situations before.

We come in, there are about 5,000 people in the camp, there is no auditorium, there is no place for 5,000 people to sit, they're standing in what was the stable where the horses were kept, a huge room like an airplane hangar. There's a microphone, there is a wooden platform. Abe Hyman and I climb up on the platform with the Old Man and he stands there, and we introduce him. And there is a loud, cheerful, happy welcome because he, you know, he was a figure.

And the camp chairman came up and said we want to tell you how we feel and started to talk about the fact that life here is not physically dangerous, but life here doesn't have any meaning, what are we

doing here, what are we doing here? We are trying to teach the children in the school and we are trying to take care of the sick people and we try to build a life and we have now our own camp police. They had bicycles and they had whistles and they had arm bands, they kept order. It was a sign of independence. We're doing everything we can, but it's all nothing. And so you're coming here today brings us the greatest hope in the world and we hope you have something to tell us.

Ben Gurion stood up and started to talk about what he was trying to build in Palestine and what efforts were being made on the international political scene with the British and American Commission of Inquiry, and somebody else, the UNSCOP Commission, another Commission of Inquiry, who needs it. You know, we got a little heckling from the audience. But B.G. continued to explain that there was a major push on to get a state created and a free government to which they could come. But he wasn't going to offer them any immediate panacea, and he wasn't going to offer them any immediate results

because he would be kidding them. He talked firmly, he talked beautifully, he talked honestly because that was his method, his forte. He wasn't a manipulative politician. He was an ideologue. He had his own ideology, but he never tried to say anything to give people false illusions, false hopes.

When he got through there was silence, no applause. And finally he said "Listen, I have no certificates in my pocket for you, don't you understand that? But I am telling you that I do bring you hope. Now, let's sing the song of hope. I want to hear Hatikva." He had a monotone and he couldn't sing. I have a monotone, I couldn't help him. The crowd slowly started kind of a crackling, crack, off key, but it began to build, it began to build some momentum and then it came out into full burst and there was a big singing of Hatikva by which time he was crying. And that was the end of the meeting and he walked off and he was shaking his head. And we got outside, got in the car, he said "My God, I don't know what's worse, people being burned up in the death camps or people waiting in these camps without hope.

I don't know how to say which is worse."

Years later I read in his voluminous diaries, and I want to read here, just one paragraph. This is what he wrote: "The people of Babenhausen finally understood that their unloved camp was not the end of the line, but a way station on the road to freedom. The distrust and bitterness I had faced that day in October gave way in December to patient hope." December was the Zionist Congress in Basel in 1946. So he sensed the mistrust, he sensed the bitterness, he sensed everything, he understood it, but he said he believed that he gave them hope that their stay there was a way station on the road, it was not the end of the road.

For years after that, he and I saw each other very often in the course of my whole UJA career and the course of the years that we lived in Israel after that, and every once in a while he would get a glint in his eye and he would say let's talk about Babenhausen. Sort of a symbol to him, the way station.

So, yes, we used to go to visit lots of

the camps and there were lots of problems and riots and Jews breaking out of camps.

INTERVIEWER: When you look back on this period what do you see from the outside was happening to the survivors in their journey? You mentioned hope.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, that's what we concentrated on. We tried to concentrate, we tried to build up a sense that (a) there was a large group of institutions and individuals who cared for them; there was somebody looking after their welfare, there was somebody trying to take care of their immediate daily needs, and somebody trying to build a future for them. And that was the basic message and we reinforced it all the time by active conduct.

The Jewish Agency would send us a singer or a piano player or some other type of artist. I remember a lady, Paula Padani, a great pianist. We put her on the circuit and sent her through 30, 40, 50 camps, as much time as she could give us. We did all kinds of things. The Agency sent over about a hundred school teachers. And we put these Palestinian school

teachers in the schools which were organized in each camp to keep the kids busy. You did everything you could and you kept publicizing through the camp newspaper network every time an illegal ship would sail so that hope was kept alive. Speaking of ships, there was a dreadful instrument called the Va'ad Aliyah, the Committee on Immigration, I call it dreadful because it was operated according to the Zionist political key.

INTERVIEWER: The Maftayach?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: You know, okay. This Maftayach, the key. Depending on --

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to be flip about it because our people listening to this are not going to. This is a very important story. Let's go back and --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: And with every reason to be flip about it or to be more than sarcastic. I called it dreadful. It was not a humane way of handling the DP's, it was a purely political way. This committee had on it representatives of every Zionist political party. The committee fought

ferociously over the passenger load. If a ship had room for 600 people each political party fought for its share of the 600 berths. No consideration of women and children first. That doesn't go anyway because you don't want to separate families. No consideration for family need. I mean we knew the populations in each camp so intimately. We never treated them as a mass, we always treated them as much individually as possible.

So it would be very easy to say if there are 600 places, give us the 600 neediest people in camp A, or give us 100 people each from six different camps so you'll build morale in six camps that indeed the ships are going and maybe someday each person would get on a ship. There would be ways of doing it. No, only the political key operated. Namely, each party argued what it's relative strength was and demanded the number of berths on that ship according to its strength. Each party representative would say, my party is X percent of the Jewish people, I want X percent of the seats. If you ask him who he cares about, he didn't care about the individuals, give me

X percent of the seats because when they get to Palestine they're going to be voters for my party because my party took them out of Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back for a moment, you say you knew the people intimately in that real sensing their needs. What were the needs?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The needs were simply spiritual and non material. They were psychological, spiritual and psychological. The people needed to believe that they would not be in these camps forever, that this wouldn't be the end, that there was a different end. Now, they knew that they could always be repatriated back to their original land of citizenship. All they had to do was say to the Army, I'm Hungarian so send me back to Hungary. That's not what they wanted. So they were waiting, waiting, waiting. Now, they're not hungry, they're not in danger, their medical needs are cared for, so what do they need? They need an uplifting of the spirit. They need belief and confidence that there would be a successful end.

INTERVIEWER: Did they want to come to

America?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Well, there was always some number who wanted that. And HIAS at that time, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, was responsible for taking to America those who wanted. Some small number went to America. I don't know how to quantify it. Every few months, there would be a ship and the trans-Atlantic vessels always had room for 1,200 or 1,500 people. So I don't know, if there was a ship a month you were talking about 15, or 20,000 people per year compared to the large number who were waiting for Palestine.

INTERVIEWER: What of Palestine representatives?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, Palestine. Listen, if you talk about Palestine, it's like reciting the Shmoneh Esreh every day. If you do, then you're talking about rebuilding Zion and rebuilding Jerusalem. I mean it was bred into the bone with these people who came out of the small towns and villages of Eastern Europe. Even the sophisticated ones from the bigger cities had some memory of that

tradition. I'm not saying that there was a lot of religiosity in the formal sense of that word. Yes, there was a synagogue in every camp and there was a rabbi in every camp, and he took care of second marriages which were very frequent, people who had lost spouses, and found others during those three and a half years in the camps, but you're not talking about a devout population. If anything, you're talking about skeptics as far as religion is concerned. Where was God, when the crematorium fires were burning. But the ethnic and the folk traditions, the memories of holidays and the memories of food and the memories of basic prayers - all were oriented toward rebuilding Zion.

If you recited the blessing after meals, in the blessing after every meal, if you said it, is the Oseh Shalom bimromor, "in our day quickly." So that was their orientation.

There was a camp outside of Frankfurt called Zeilsheim and Eleanor Roosevelt came to visit. She stood up there, she was kind of a passionate speaker, and she was trying to get the crowd to

respond to her. She tried to awaken the crowd out of its lethargy. That's the way she explained it to me later, when we became friendly. She said tauntingly, "Perhaps you do not want to go to Palestine, perhaps it takes too long, perhaps the British don't let you, perhaps you'll lose confidence, you'll lose faith in it. Do you really want to go to Palestine?" You know, the way the question was phrased and intoned was intended to evoke a massive roar, which is what she got. But she couldn't have evoked it if they didn't feel it. They were homogeneously, unanimously zeroed in to the belief that Palestine was the only future they had.

INTERVIEWER: When did you leave Europe?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Leave Europe, let me think. Let's see, there was the Exodus. No, no, I left before the Exodus. The Exodus sailed in, I think it was September, I'm not sure, but I think it was September '47, so right before that, August, July, summer of '47.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you go home?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Why did I go home? A

very interesting story. Professor Scholem, Gershom Scholem from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem had come to Germany. We got a pass for him.

INTERVIEWER: He's the great authority on Jewish mysticism?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes, a German Jew by origin, intellect to the nth degree, a warm Jew, loved to be in Israel, emigrated long before statehood. He came to Germany on a mission, in the uniform of UNRRA, United Nationals Relief and Rehabilitation. He had a 90-day permit to work in a warehouse in Offenbach across the river from Frankfurt where Alfred Rosenberg, the philosopher of the Nazi movement had collected several million volumes of Judaica.

INTERVIEWER: We're going to break here only because it's too precious a conversation to lose. We have to change a tape.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay, another tape, right.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to lose this.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: This is a great story.

INTERVIEWER: No, I don't want you to go

any further.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: I know part of the story.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: So is this hour even worth it?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: The other thing besides the Talmud story is the story of the Kielce Pogrom, that's a very crucial story.

INTERVIEWER: -- that's from the --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Crucial story. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: But we're past it in point of view of time.

INTERVIEWER: Go ahead please.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Tell us a little bit about Gersham Scholem's visit?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: He received permission to come into Germany to visit and work in the Offenbach depot of approximately 3,000,000 volumes which Alfred Rosenberg had collected. The intent of the collection

was to form a basic library of Judaica which German scholars would study and find in the very Jewish sources the words with which to condemn the Jewish people as being parasites and destroyers and anti-Christ and everything else so that you would condemn the Jewish people out of their very own mouths. Some scholar would be found to collate the material and synthesize it into one simple volume that then would become the property of every single decent person on earth. The Nazi plan was that after they had killed all the Jewish bodies, they would then also kill the Jewish soul and spirit. This was the intention of Alfred Rosenberg and this was the process.

Now, what was collected, literally actually collected physically, in that warehouse were mostly K'ley Kodesh and repetitious forms of the same prayer book in different languages.

INTERVIEWER: By K'ley Kodesh you mean the holy books?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes - and also silver Torah ornaments. But among that mass of 3 million fairly unimportant volumes, from Scholem's point of

view, there were 1,300 priceless incunabula, manuscripts handwritten from early Middle Ages. Scholem worked for 90 days like a beaver, slept in that same warehouse, sorting out 3 million volumes and winnowed out these 1,300 precious, priceless, irreplaceable items. He packed them into five large wooden packing crates, each five feet by five feet, not impossible to handle, not gigantic, and labeled them.

And that's where the fear started. Because a couple of days before his time ran out he came to me, almost in tears, with a terrible problem. He explained that he had applied for permission to take these to the Hebrew University, but the Monuments and Fine Arts section of American Military Government in Germany had refused him permission. He said, "They're the ones who allowed me in the first place to come and do the sorting. They now refuse me permission to take these to Palestine. And at first they wouldn't give me an explanation for that refusal, but when I pushed, I finally got it." The Jewish Theological Seminary, in New York protested that there

was no reason why all of these precious manuscripts should go to Palestine. All of them or some of them should be placed in their library, the greatest Jewish library in New York, a city with the greatest Jewish population in the world.

This is a clear reflection of the non-Zionist, I don't want to say anti-Zionist, position of the seminary at that time. Perhaps my remark can be interpreted as a condemnation. I'm not trying to condemn anybody. All I'm trying to say is that the Monuments of Fine Arts Section of the Army had a letter from the Jewish Theological Seminary saying that the Army should not send all these documents to Palestine. They had been collected from all the locations in Europe whose descendants are either dead or have migrated to the new world. So that was their sort of cool, cold objective reasoning.

The Army didn't want to get into an internecine Jewish fight so it put a hold on Prof. Scholem. And he was distraught because his time was up, could not be renewed, and he didn't know what to do. Here he's got the manuscript in five packing

cases and what does he do with them? Once again I had to make a decision at a certain moment in time without much opportunity for reflection. I said: "Professor, go home, relax, don't worry about it, I'll steal them, I'll get them out of the warehouse and I'll get them to you, and don't ask me how because I don't know yet myself." I was sorry that he had labeled them because what was happening in Germany at the time was a very active black market in old manuscripts. Pages of Beethoven and pages of Mozart, were selling for tens of thousands of dollars.

Much later on when the story finally broke on the front page of the Stars and Stripes, and I can show you the issue which I have kept to this day, it listed the value of this treasure as $5 million.

He went home. What I did very simply was: on New Year's Eve, when everybody was off duty or drunk, I took a JDC ambulance, drove it to the back loading dock of the Offenbach warehouse. There was a Jewish captain in command of the warehouse, his name was Benkovich, he was from some place in Texas. I said listen turn your head the other way, I'm going to

sign for these five boxes as though I am a JDC officer by the name of Koppel Pinson (who was no longer in Germany, he had gone home four months earlier).

INTERVIEWER: Koppel Pinson was the professor of Queens College, a very distinguished historian?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Right. And he worked for the JDC, the Joint, and he had permission to draw from that warehouse in Offenbach books to be distributed throughout the camps to any children's school or camp libraries that wanted any of these books so long as the officer in charge of the warehouse certified that they were not irreplaceable, that they were just common ordinary books. So Pinson had the authority to sign to draw stuff out. I signed his name, put my initials underneath his name. He hadn't been in Germany for four months already. Benkovich concurred with me, conspired jointly with me, and I said turn your head the other way and I'm going to take the boxes. So I took them out in the ambulance, they just fit. And I hid the ambulance until such time as I could get the boxes on to a freight train to Paris

where I intended to go to 135 Avenue, Wagram, which was the Office of the Jewish Agency, give them the boxes and say, deliver to Scholem. They refused to take them. They wouldn't have anything to do with it.

But they gave me a tip that did turn out to be useful. They said that Chaim Weizmann's library was being shipped from England to Palestine and the vessel was stopping at the port of Antwerp and I could get my boxes of books on to the ship and mix them in with his boxes of books. They would get in to Palestine probably without being recognized. The British didn't care about this. This was Weizmann's library and Scholem's name is a professor, it was on the outside of the boxes so it would go okay.

INTERVIEWER: And Chaim Weizmann was the leader of the World Zionist Movement and later became president of that --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: That's the same gentleman. He lived in England for decades and had accumulated a marvelous library there and at this point in his life decided that he wanted to get his books shipped over to Palestine, prior to his eventual

move himself. So the thing was neatly executed, neatly done, and I went off on a short leave to Denmark because I wanted to see Hamlet's castle.

A few days later I came back and found two CID guys sitting in my office waiting for me. CID, Criminal Investigation Division of the United States Army. Very nice, sympathetic, friendly guys, not threatening, but very firm. And they said listen, Chaplain, you are now under investigation seriously. This will lead to a general court martial. We would just like to tell you that we have you dead to rights. What we really do is we need your confession, that's all.

Now, here is your signature on the paper your signed to draw the boxes out. Here is the number of the ambulance of the JDC which you used as transport. Here is the number of the freight car on which you loaded them and on which you slept overnight from Frankfurt to Paris in the freight car with the boxes. Here is the number of the truck you used to go from Paris to Antwerp. So, you know --

INTERVIEWER: They had done their

homework.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: -- I stalled them and I said well listen, come on fellows, you know, I mean this is like a bombshell, I don't know what you're talking about, I haven't got any idea what this is all about, so let me try to grok it and sleep on it and, you know, I'll meet you tomorrow.

I went to Rabbi Bernstein and I said you remember our principle of need to know, well I think this one you need to know, and I told him. Without any more ado he picked up the phone and he called General Clay. We're two offices away. He says General, I've got to come in and see you about something, and Clay always took him in immediately. He told Clay and then he brought me in and Clay looked at me and said why did you do it? I said because I didn't want the stuff to get stolen and lost a second time. Those boxes wouldn't be secure in that warehouse. Somebody would rip them open. Somebody would see the stuff, somebody would recognize it. An antiquarian would be approached, the stuff has value. It was stolen once by the Nazis. It's owners are

gone. The Jewish people collectively is concentrating in Palestine. Palestine will be free one fine day. These should be in the National Jewish Library in Palestine, that's the successor, inheritor of all this stuff. That's why I did it.

He said I have to ask you a formal question, did you have any intention ever of diverting any of this to your own use and selling it for your own profit? I said no. He said I believe you. He knew me reasonably well. He said well, all right then here is what I'm going to do. I am going to order that the boxes be brought back here because I am not going to get into a fight with the Seminary in New York, and I am going to let the Monuments and Fine Arts section decide on the distribution and that's the Army way.

I said, sir, for God's sake don't do that. Don't subject them to another voyage. An airplane can go down, a ship can go down. They are irreplaceable. Don't do it. There is an inventory, Professor Scholem has it, he knows what he put in the boxes, there are 1,300 items. Have the boxes opened in Israel in the

presence of any authority you trust. There's an American Consul, there attached to the British Headquarters. Take somebody, an American, a military or non military, have your person stand there as the boxes are opened, check the inventory, and leave them there. If you want to decide on for future eventual distribution, fine. I'm not going to argue with you about that, but leave the material there, don't move it.

So he looks at me, he says yes, possession is 9/10ths of the law isn't it? Once it's there it's there, isn't it? I said, sir, don't get me into that discussion. So immediately we had an understanding. He said okay, it's a very reasonable suggestion. So ordered, and I will so organize it.

"Now, he asked, what do we do about you?" I mean this is a long answer to the question about what provoked my leaving Germany. Gen. Clay picked up the phone, called head of the CID, said, "I want you to kill the court-martial, that's out and over, I'm sending this officer back to the ZI," back to the zone of the interior. That's what the United States was

called as far as the Army overseas was concerned. The United States is the interior. So this officer is being dismissed from my command and will be discharged from the Army and so you kill the court-martial.

Finished just like that. He came back from the phone and said, and "The boxes will remain there, are you happy?" he said. "Perfectly satisfied," I replied. "Now, it's between Scholem and your surrogate, whoever your person is over there, and I'm satisfied that it will work out the way we hope it will."

So I was given orders to go back to the U.S. and be discharged. I went to Fort Dix in New Jersey and the customary procedure there is that when you're being discharged they ask you a bunch of questions, have you returned your gas mask, have you returned your rifle, blah, blah, blah. And one of the questions is, do you wish to remain in the United States Army Reserve Corps retaining your commission and advancing in rank. So the Sergeant who is reading all of this to me, you know, he's doing it by rote. All of a sudden he stops himself, do you wish to

remain ...." oops, that doesn't apply to you. There is a note here that you are not authorized to remain in the Reserves, you are out." That's how that ended. That was after being four days in the stockade for a whole other story because of Morgenthau.

Henry Morgenthau, who was the head of the UJA, said "I need you to go around with me making speeches in America and you've got stories to tell that will help raise a lot of money." And I said but I have to go to Fort Dix and be discharged. And he said well, I'll call the Secretary of War and I said no, sir, call the 1st sergeant at the separation center and he said I don't deal with sergeants, I deal with cabinet members. So I said well then get something in writing. He did indeed call Secretary of War Patterson, who told him over the phone o.k. you want to keep this chaplain with you 30 days, in uniform on detached service to you, I'll write the orders. I never got a copy of the orders, Fort Dix never got a copy of the orders. I reported to Fort Dix 30 days later and was arrested at the gate for being AWOL, absent without leave, and the Chaplain of

all people to be absent without leave, I mean how can you do this. It took me four days to convince them to give me a dime and let me make a phone call.

And then the commanding officer, a one-star general, was told by Morgenthau, yes I had the chaplain on duty with me and I will get you a telex from Secretary Patterson and you'll have it in ten minutes. The general came back to me in the cell, gives me a cigar and says don't hold anything against me. I said come on, come on, you don't think I know the racket well enough. No, of course it's not against you, it's against Mr. Secretary Morgenthau, he didn't get me anything in writing, the Army goes by what's on paper.

Here is the end of the manuscript story. In Palestine the American officer witnessed the opening of the boxes, agreed that not a piece was missing. They nailed the boxes up again and took them up to Mount Scopus to the library. We are talking about 1947, okay. In the War of Independence in 1948 we lost Mount Scopus, didn't we? So the boxes are up there now in Jordanian hands, once again in jeopardy.

INTERVIEWER: Mount Scopus was that section of east Jerusalem that the Hebrew University was built on?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Originally.

INTERVIEWER: That the Hebrew University was built on originally, and during the '48 war between Israel and Jordan --

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Was lost to Jordan.

INTERVIEWER: -- was lost to Jordan, but an Israeli contingent remained on Mount Scopus but there was no access to them.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Okay, so this Israeli contingent, 140 men, was allowed to inhabit a trench between the Augusta Victoria Hospital on the one side and some other marker on the other side which was on the apex of the hill on the top of the ridge. And these 140 guys were a symbolic Israeli presence to validate Israel's previous ownership, and hopefully ultimate future ownership, and it was one of those cockamamie arrangements that was part of the armistice treaty and this group of 140 men sat up there for two weeks and played cards and twiddled their thumbs,

couldn't do any training, couldn't do anything. They were in the trench. It was dreadful duty. You could only keep them up there two weeks.

Every two weeks they came down under supervision of a UN convoy team which escorted them down the hill to the UN truck at the bottom which took them away and replaced them with 140 other guys who stayed up there for two weeks, so there was a rotation.

The end of the story is that it took several years for the 1,300 items to come down, one by one by one, tucked under the shirts and jackets of the rotating platoon. And every piece came down finally to Israeli hands. At the end of the story Prof. Scholem had the privilege of putting all the manuscripts in the rare book room of the new campus at Givat Ram, in West Jerusalem.

The last time I saw Scholem was a few years ago before he died, and I said to myself I have to make sure. I told him that I had seen a story once in the Jerusalem Post by Abraham Rabinovitz who wrote the story telling about the bringing down. I asked

Scholem: "did it all work out? Did you really get them all in the end?" He said: "every last one." And we shook hands and that was the end of the story and it was the last time I ever saw him. So that's what happened to the Offenbach manuscripts.

INTERVIEWER: Then you went on a national barnstorming tour on behalf of UJA?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. I went back to Denver, the original congregation. I went barnstorming with Morgenthau who was the chairman, and then again I went with Edward Warburg, the next chairman. For the next eight years, I was a volunteer chairman of the Speakers Bureau for the National UJA and I was out three or four days a week, Monday through Thursday. I got home for the weekend, Shabbat. Anybody in my congregation who wants to get married, we collect all the people and do it on Sunday. Anybody wants to die, better do it on Sunday. By Monday I'm off again and running. And eight years. Twice in that interim they came and asked me if I would become the professional director of the UJA and I turned it down.

But then after a while Mr. Warburg and Mr. Rosenwald who were the two ranking chairman of the UJA, both from those aristocratic families, seriously said, "Look, you must do this, there is nobody like you, nobody has your background, nobody has your experience in the United States, not only what you did in Germany, but also what you have done here, the public knows you now in every city in the country and you know the leading big givers in every city in the country. You've been talking to them as a volunteer, now become our professional head." At the same time there was a problem between the newly created Isael Bond Organization, of which I was one of the founders didn't see why there should be any fight in any community between the UJA and the Bonds. That was a very precious attitude to have because so few people had it at the beginning. At the beginning there was dreadful fear and competition.

One lay leader sticks in my mind as a man who rose above it and that was Joseph Meyerhoff of Baltimore. He was marvelous, and said: "The way I will prove that there should be harmony is that I will

be the chairman of the UJA drive in Baltimore and I will also be the chairman of the Bond drive in Baltimore and I will do them both in the same year and I will separate them in time so that they don't impinge on each other." He was role model number one of what a good lay leader should be. He and I trotted around the country together for years, thereafter. His son now is the Chairman of the Council of the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

So the Bond organization needed somebody to run it, and the UJA organization needed somebody to run it, and the politica leaders in Israel became involved because this whole matter involved heavy money. Levi Eshkol got into the act, and so did Nahum Goldmann.

INTERVIEWER: Eshkol was the Finance Minister and later Prime Minister?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Yes. And Nahum Goldmann was President of the World Zionist Congress following Chaim Weizmann. So when the heavy weights got in and came pressing on me I really couldn't say no. I had shifted in the interim from being the congregation in

Denver to being the rabbi in Milwaukee. Messrs. Warberg and Rosenwald came to Milwaukee, spoke to the board and said you've got to release this man. The Board agreed, as did I, and that was it. So I switched over from being a volunteer to being the executive, the CEO, of the UJA, and did that until the '70s when we left and moved over to live in Israel for a period of years, with every intention of remaining. We were diverted because of some family illness and wound up back in the U.S.

INTERVIEWER: Let me touch on two issues we haven't touched on, on the European experience. What was the attitude of the DP population toward the Germans, and what was it like for them to live in Germany? And let's start with that for a moment.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: It's really a serious question and it's easily answered. The DPs lived mostly in camps. There were no machine guns aimed at them and there were no guards at the gates, but they were in an encircled area, they were in a camp. A few of them were out in the towns, living freely in rented quarters among the German population. They were

comfortable doing that, but 95 percent were in camps. They used to look through the wire around the camps and they used to see Germans going on buses, carrying little briefcases, going to work. The town was working and everybody was living a normal existence except they. They hated the Germans. They resented them. They just would like to have torn every German apart if they could get their hands on them. Now, they could because as I said they were not confined, they went out into the towns near which these camps were located. They bought goods in the German stores. They learned to speak German, many of them did. But you could see the look in their eye and they hated every German.

Every once in a while some episode would flare up and you would see the expression of it in a physical form of rebellion. And I'll just tell you one story which illustrates many many similar things that happened. It was in the camp at Landsberg. Landsberg was the town where Hitler was in prison. In that very same German Army barracks in which he was imprisoned in 1925, when he wrote "Mein Kampf," are

now living Jewish displaced persons. So you can imagine what an irony that was.

Okay, in this camp at Landsberg one day a rumor spread through the camp that a Jewish child had been kidnapped and killed by the Germans. Immediately a riot started through the whole camp, and a wave of people gushed out of gates of the camp into town and started to break store windows, start buildings on fire, over-turn buses, attack and pummel any German passerby. Quickly the town turned into an armed camp. The purpose of the Army was to keep law and order. Here it was breaking down between Jews and Germans. That's dynamite, that's incendiary.

So the Army pushed the Jews back into the camp and closed the gates and padlocked them. Okay, now you have U.S. troops ringed around and a couple of .50 caliber machine guns are set up and a tank is hovering delicately, in the background but present, visibly present. And so the Jews start yelling "Amerikanische SS, you American soldiers are acting like the SS. Amerikanische are Nazis." Well, now the lieutenant in charge of this platoon says whoa, whoa,

we're not Nazis and we're not here to hurt you, but you can't come and tear up the town, and the dialogue goes and the Jews boom!, burst out of the padlocked camp once more and break the gates. Then the scuffle starts between American troops and Jewish DPs and Germans ringing around looking at it with great pleasure.

INTERVIEWER: Now you guys have your Jewish problems.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: 19 young fellows get arrested. They were the ones at the front of the crowd. So they were the activists, and one of them has a knife in his pocket. Later when they're arrested and they are brought into the police station and one of them has got a piece of lead pipe in his pocket, and one of them has got a hammer in his pocket, and anything that could be used as a weapon, okay. So they are charged with, I don't know what the technicality of the charge is, but it's disturbing the peace and it's inciting to riot. Nobody was murdered and nobody was killed.

By then incidentally it is discovered that

the little boy who was missing was not dead, that there was a hole in the fence at the back of the camp going right into the woods, and he had gone out there and he had wanted to do whatever, maybe he wanted to smoke a cigarette, nobody knows, but nothing had happened to the kid and the kid had come back in. And so the rumor that had started the whole thing was of course inaccurate. But by now you've got 19 young Jewish fellows in the stockade.

Word of this gets back to the United States. There was a Congressman from Illinois by the name of Adolph Sabath, an old guy, he was about 80 years old. He informed the press and the Department of War that he intended to go to Germany himself to make sure that these Jews got an honest and fair treatment from the American Army and the American Army wasn't going to treat them like the Nazis did. And he's shaking his fist in everybody's face.

Of course word of this gets back to General Clay and this is exactly what he needs his advisor for, so General Clay talks to Rabbi Bernstein, who says to me, you go down to Landsberg, you sort

this thing out, you make sure that these guys get a proper defense. They're in front of a court-martial of seven officers, so it's going to have to be a military officer who will have to defend them and there will be a military prosecutor, and I want you there as my personal representative, which means General Clay's representative. You have all of my authority and you report to the commanding officer that you are there on my behalf so he knows who you are and you follow this thing every step of the way because this is dynamite.

Okay, the end of the story very quickly, I went to the Judge Advocate General and I asked him for the best lawyer he had in the United States Army. And he tells me that the men who handles all death sentences given by court-martial for murder, rape, all the felony-one kind is a captain by the name of Abraham Hyman, and I say fine, I want him.

Hyman said if I get mixed up in this DP business I'll never get home for five years. I'm due to be demobilized. I said Abe, come on, come on, come on. And to make a long story short he came on and he

came down and he was the defense attorney and he defended them brilliantly.

INTERVIEWER: And he didn't get home for five years?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: He did not. He wound up as the last, the final advisor when Foehrenwald, the final camp, closed in 1950 Hyman, the last advisor, went home finally in 1950. Abe Hyman, dedicated, intelligent, passionate, faithful, was one of the strong pillars upon whom the fate of thousands rested. He has lived the past quarter century in Israel, loyal to his ideals.

So anyhow, the trial ended. They were given three months which was, you know, the admonitory slap on the wrist with time off for good behavior. So they probably might have served, you know, three weeks, four weeks, something like that. However, Hyman pleaded and obtained for them the right that they should not be put in a prison with Germans, they should not be put in a prison with American soldiers in the stockade, they should be put in some separate place where the Army can have a few guards and watch

over them. We found an old abandoned castle nearby, quite nearby, so their families could come and visit them, and within four weeks we had all 19 of them out and on their way through the Aliyah Bet and they were taken off Marseilles to a ship to Palestine and that was the end of that.

INTERVIEWER: Let's touch on one more question which is really more a historical question, but also part of your own experience. July 4th 1946--

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Oh, Kielce, the Kielce Pogrom, is that the one you're referring to? Oh, that was a bitter one, bitter, bitter, bitter. 42 Jews were killed that day and the bodies were laid around the fountain in the center of this little medieval looking village, a beautiful little village, and the bodies were like cord wood in a circle around the fountain.

A ripple went through all of Europe, and of course it reached Germany and Army Headquarters. General McNarney who was the commander at that moment said to Rabbi Bernstein, take my airplane, go over to

Warsaw, go to wherever you have to go, find out what's going on there, find out what caused it, find out what it's implications are, and what the consequences might be, if any, for us here in Germany. Because he knew, he was sophisticated enough to know that this was going to trigger off another flood of people leaving the east and trying to cross the border into Germany where they would be safe.

We did, we went. Unbelievable. We went to see the American Ambassador whose name was Arthur Bliss Lane. There was only one hotel in Warsaw, the Polonia, and it was half smashed. He had two rooms, the American Ambassador had two rooms in this hotel. That's all he had. No embassy. And he had gout and his foot was up on a hassock and he was mean and he was miserable. And he said listen, this has nothing to do with me, don't talk to me about these Jews and what happened in Kielce. It's not an American problem, it's not an embassy problem, it doesn't involve anything, it doesn't involve a consular division, it doesn't involve reparations, nothing. And probably whatever happened to them they damn well

deserved. That was his parting shot. Thank you, sir, Mr. Ambassador, very much.

We went to see the Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Osubka Moravska. Quite bland. He said: Really, you know, there is some latent anti-semitism among the Polish people, everybody knows that, that's historic fact, I don't know what triggered if off, I don't know what caused it, but it will die down the way it always does. And I mean there is nothing that the Polish government will or can or should do about this. There are no culprits, we can't find anybody.

We went to see the Cardinal, Augustus Cardinal Hlond, H-L-O-N-D, a bull-necked man, cropped hair, tough as nails. He never asked us to sit down, the whole interview was standing. And his attitude was very simple. "These Jews brought Communism here. The head of the Communist party running this country is a Jew by the name of Yacob Berman. Whatever the Polish people of the town of Kielce did to those Jews, they did out of anger and fury and rage because the Jews have put this anchor around our necks. And the

church will do nothing." We tried and we asked him if he would write a pastoral letter which should be read in every church and this would kind of put a blanket on the fire. He wouldn't do it.

So our fourth visit we went to Mr. Berman, and Yacob Berman said, "If the Jews are guilty of having brought Communism here to Poland it's the best thing that we could ever do for this country and I will take whatever consequences. And furthermore, if the consequences are that a few Jews get killed, well a few Jews get killed. It's just a few more. We are fighting for a whole new world. He was a Communist ideologue and he believed it and he preached it. And we're fighting for a whole new world means for everybody and for a larger number of Jews, and even if there were a few casualties there always are in war.

And the last point I want to make with you gentlemen is that the Jews should remain here. If you came from Germany from the American commander to find out if the Jews here are going to flee, if I have anything to do with it I will see to it that they will leave this country naket und borbus, they will go out

naked and barefoot because they shouldn't go out. They should stay here in Polan to build a socialist fatherland.

Well, you know, this was zero for four. We had seen four people, the Ambassador, the Prime Minister, the Cardinal, and then the Communist leader, and got no sympathy from any of them. But then when we started to go around and we began to talk to the Haganah guys who were working in the towns and we began to talk to ordinary Jews whom we were recommended to, we got the picture that masses were packing and leaving.

And we returned and we wrote the report to McNarney that he could expect, that the military command in Germany could expect over the period of the next year to a year and a half approximately 150,000 people to come flooding in from the east to the west. And the Army had better gear up for it and prepare for it, and the Army would have a political decision to make, not a military one as to whether the borders should be closed or opened. And if you want to close the borders and you want to try to prevent these Jews

from coming in then you're going to have to do it by armed force or setting up barriers and blockades.

McNarney looked at that and said well, whoa, this is way over my head. Rabbi Bernstein, go to Washington please and talk to the President. A decision about whether the border of Germany is open or closed to 150,000 refugees is not for me to make.

So Phil did, he flew to Washington and talked to Truman. It took about 15 minutes. He got an immediate green light, and came right back. Okay, McNarney has got a green light from the President, the borders are open. So Eugene Lipman is on the Czechoslovak border and the borders are all manned with our Haganah people and that is what raised the ultimate total to 250,000 people. It's just as simple as that.

That was the final result of the Kielce Pogrom. Those 42 victims triggered off a major demographic shift. And the accumulation of that many people in the camps in Germany itself became a fact of the political weight. The episode of the Exodus finally produced that vote in the United Nations on

November 29, 1947.

INTERVIEWER: Let me push this phase to the close by asking a question. Where were you on May 14th 1948, or where were you on November 29th '47?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: I was in Denver November 29th '47. May 15th '48 I was shuttling between Denver, New York and Wilmington, Delaware. Wilmington, Delaware had to do with DuPont. New York had to do with the Haganah headquarters in the United States which was in a hotel, 14th East 60th Street. Next door to the Copacabana nightclub.

The director of the Haganah in the United States was Mr. Teddy Kollek, now the Mayor of Jerusalem, a world famous figure. So Teddy had reminded me, when I returned to the States, that I was still in the Haganah and never mind I was running around making speeches for the UJA, that's kid stuff. As far as the Haganah is concerned he wanted me, contrary to the embargo laws of the United States Government, to buy, pack, ship out of the United States all the dynamite, brick production, of DuPont in Wilmington, Delaware. A brick is a brick, the size

of a brick, the size and shape of a brick, but this brick is a piece of dynamite.

Now you take three of them, stack them up one on top of each other, and take three more, one on top of each other, and wire the six of them together and attach the wire, whatever length you want, to a detonator and you blow up that package. We called it a satchel charge because you took the six bricks, put them inside of a knapsack, you know, a canvas GI knapsack, it looked like a little satchel, it should have been called a knapsack charge more accurately, and it will blow a hole in a stone wall or it will blow a hole through an iron gate. And that was the main artillery that the Israel Armed Forces had. It didn't have any big artillery, heavy mortars or howitzers.

So I was buying the dynamite, shipping it to myself in Denver, trans-shipping it down to Tampico in Mexico, buying vessels, getting the stuff on board in cardboard cartons that said "Del Monte peaches, fruit salad, pineapples." We stole the cartons from Del Monte, California. And the ships were manifested

to the Far East, but when they went out of Tampico they didn't turn and go through the Panama Canal to the Far East. They went to the Mid East, in the other direction.

So that's where I was all through '48. '48 was a hell of a year with me and the FBI. But everything came out okay. No charges, no nothing, and a happy ending to the story.

INTERVIEWER: Herb, is there anything we haven't touched?

RABBI FRIEDMAN: No, Michael. No, I think we've covered the main things. But the summary of the whole business is that you had a DP population that had the patience and the stamina to overcome all of the evil and the agony they had been through, all the losses they had suffered, and who had the hope and the faith in something they believed in that represented their future. So the patience and the stamina, the faith and hope characterized that DP population. With all the hatred boiling in them, with all of the stuff that many of them have never gotten out of their systems for their whole lives, that's one element.

Then you've got the other supporting elements. You've got the group, you've got the United States Army, benevolent, friendly, cooperative. I can't compliment them enough.

Number two, you've got the group of American Jewish organizations that came in with money and support.

Number three, you've got the Palestinian personalities beginning with Ben Gurion himself and the whole mechanism of the Haganah and their support that they provided.

And then lastly you have won over world public opinion so that you get that great ringing majority vote of two when the resolution was finally passed in November of '47. It won by two. The two countries were the Philippines and Guatemala, great big Democratic powers that pushed the ball over the line.

But that was the combination. Now, we've talked about the DPs themselves and we've talked about the Army and we've talked about the JDC and the great organizations. We've talked about the Haganah and the

Israelis. The world conscieuce, feeble as it was, did its trick and the State was created.

And I sum that whole thing up when I think of myself and my life and where I am now and what did it all mean, I really believe the following statement, and it may sound strange to you, those three years from 1945 when the war ended until 1948 when the State was established, those three years I think are the most important single group of any three years in the entire history of the Jewish people, I include every single thing I can think of that the Jewish people has been through since Abraham, I don't think there is another period of three years which has ever been so determinative. Because we came out of the death into the life and those are the two extremes, death and life. There aren't any others. There is nothing similar.

Persecution and inquisition of this one or that one, or running from one country, running from another country, that's all blips on the screen. But this is the definitive thing. We could have passed off the stage of history. There's no doubt in my mind

about it. One third of the people dead in Europe, one third of the people paralyzed and ineffective in America during the crucial years, almost another third of the people lost behind the Iron Curtain, you couldn't get to them, they couldn't be useful or helpful. The Jewish people almost died, I mean totally and finally and irrevocably.

And out of that, three short years later you find you're back into vibrancy and action and you're winning a war. That's a miracle. I don't know any other miracle, and I'm even talking about the crossing of the Red Sea, and I'm talking about anything else you want to mention, I don't know of anything else that's comparable to it. So if I had the z'chut, the merit, to live through those three years, work my way through those three years, add something, well then it was a life worth living. And that's how I sum it up.

INTERVIEWER: A story worth telling.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: And a story worth telling.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.

RABBI FRIEDMAN: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the proceedings in the above-entitled matter were concluded.)