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Box 3, Folder 42, Oral History - Marc H. Tanenbaum, October-November 1980.



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Re: Tape(s) recorded on October 7, 19; November 13, 1980
Transcription of said tape(s)

Memoirist: Rabbi Marc ^{H.}Tanenbaum

Interviewer: Mimi Alperin

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Memoirist: Marc H. Tanenbaum

Date: May 18, 1990

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Q. This is Mimi Alperin interviewing Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, the Director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee. The date today is October 7, and we are conducting the interview in Rabbi Tanenbaum's office.

A. ---messy office.

Q. Messy office, just say anything so I can get your voice.

A. Well, she's the prettiest interviewer I have ever seen this week.

Q. This week, okay. Okay, let's begin by telling me something about your parents. You grew up in Baltimore?

A. Uhuh.

Q. Tell me something about your parents. Because I know they weren't born in this country.

A. No, my parents were born in the Ukraine. My father was born in a small village called Damedifeh (?) which nobody can spell, which was a bend in the road, a village about two or three hundred years and my mother was born in a similar large metropolis called Alika(?) in the Ukraine which is also a very small bend in the road. Everyone there was born into relatively poverty, in these European Jewish villages and they had differing kinds of backgrounds somewhat, I guess for a whole variety of reasons the images of my mother's background seem to be stronger than those of my father. My father was a marvelous storyteller and a consummate romantic. We had, well when my parents came to the United States they first landed in New York ---

Q. - - - together? They were together?

A. No, separately and then they met here. Married, at least my father, somewhat later in life. But my father started out in a sweatshop in New York and they met in Baltimore. The marriage was arranged by a family (?), the point is that after they married and had to make a living they opened up several small grocery stores or general stores or confectionary stores. I was born in our home in 1850 Light Street which was the only Jewish house in the neighborhood it was predominately a Christian neighborhood, ethnic neighborhood, Italians, Irish, German. The point I started to make about this is that my father would love to sit in the living room look out and watch the sun and watch the trains go by and tell stories about the old country. They are all marvelous recollections and but my mother used to tell very concrete definite experiences about how her mother had been a very strong woman in the family and her father who had been quite devout while he was often out in the synagogue studying, the mother used to go into the market and try to earn a living to support the family so the father could study. And she tells stories of how she would help her mother make what was called pollier (?), soda water. They would make soda water and sell that in the marketplace. And the family Avidoff (?), essentially what they did whatever they could scrape together. They would sell wood or lumber or clothing. My father used to sit... I loved him very much... he was almost impractical. My mother ran the business, ran him, took care of him. He wasn't terribly well. He eventually developed a series of heart attacks and my mother was incredible. She passed away in February of this year and I delivered the eulogy and the night before my brother, I have an older brother Ernie whose three years older than

I, and a younger sister Sima (?) who's just about three years younger than I. She's an artist and he is in the radio business or a version of it now, radio advertising. We sat up almost the whole night telling stories about our family life together and I made notes of that and in delivering the eulogy I just wanted to tell her story and give her the send-off she deserved. And my brother taped it and we have a tape of that. Anyway she was a dominant factor in our lives. I just tell you this because it's interesting in terms of the live memories we carry around and all of us carry this around. She---you know, we sit around and talk about her as if she's sitting with us in the living room now. She used to get us about six o'clock in the morning and go in open up the store, my father would eventually come around at seven o'clock or so. She'd get the store ready, the customers used to come in. They worked in the factories and businesses. Somehow between 6 and 7 o'clock while she was opening the store, she would manage every single morning to squeeze by hand three fresh glasses of orange juice and we woke up in the morning upstairs, she would come upstairs with the glass of orange juice next to our bed and wake us up to get ready to go to school. This used to start the day off right. And we were going to go to school and (someone comes into office and Mr. Tannenbaum is interrupted.....)....So, I guess we tended to take that for granted, in relection we took that as an extraordinary act of love. And by the time we would come downstairs, there was always a four to six course breakfast, she would not let us out of the house unless we had oatmeal, eggs and toast and milk and cakes and things like that. And we would stuff ourselves with things we could take out of the store. Then we would go out to school. I went to a Hebrew Parochial school. It was an orthodox school in East Baltimore. All the kids were

poor. They all came out of families whose fathers were rabbis or teachers or ran little stores, little shops. The Russian, Polish immigrant generation.

Q. But they lived in different neighborhoods, do you know why you lived in the neighborhood ?

A. Yes, this is when my parents - - - they had one store which apparently collapsed on them during the depression and this was the only thing they could afford to buy. It was available, it was cheap apparently and my uncle helped them. One of my uncles helped them buy it and they finally got themselves on their feet and they were able to send us through school by virtue of working very hard in the store. Just to finish off this image of what really shaped us and I have an enormous sense of indebtedness about that. Because it's a generation now which is gone and it's a lifestyle that will never be recreated in the same way. So we would go out to school, this hebrew school called the Jewish Parochial school in East Baltimore Street and it was both religious and secular studies and would start at 9 o'clock in the morning and I was never home before 6 o'clock. I would come home, there would be a hot dinner every night which she made while she was running the store during the day. And then after dinner, I'd sit down and do my homework and my mother was always there making sure that I did my homework. She was a mathematical wizard, it was unbelievable. She had almost no education but she used to put up a column of figures and zip like a computer and she would sit with each one of us. We could not go to bed at night unless we had done our homework and she was there checking on every single one of us. And there was always a

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basket of fruit and something to drink and when she just --- she invested her entire life in her kids and I ---you know, I've said it. I said it at the funeral, we really owe almost everything we have to her. My father was really in the background and it's the power of the Jewish mother. But it's also the power of an incredible amount of love and devotion and so, it's - - - she was also very driving, very achievement oriented.

Q. What were her ambitions for you?

A. Well, that's a crazy story, really crazy story. My father was determined that I become a doctor as for everybody else practically but we felt that especially, the depression was murder for us and my father used to say, "I want him to be a doctor," ----- so my father, when we had our family pow wows like every other hour, it was a running discussion, my father would say, "No, he's going to be a doctor because look we went through the depression and there will always be sick people, they will always make a living because there will always be sick people." My mother who was more religious than my father ... my father was observant but it was not the most important thing in the world to him. He was more interested in world affairs and the news of the world. Everyday he would, he would start the day off listening to the radio and find out what was going on in the world. He would read newspapers. My mother was not very interested in that. She was really more interested in making a living, taking care of the children, etc. But her ambition for me was to become a rabbi. Part of that had to do with, I later found out that her stepfather, her father died and her mother remarried. Her stepfather was a very fundamentalist orthodox Jew and he never felt that my mother was orthodox

enough for him. And she was very traditional, a kosher home and sabbath, and holiday observances and I think she had enormous guilt feelings that she was not religious enough for her stepfather. And she was going to show him that not only was she religious enough but she was going to have a son and make him a rabbi. That would show him. Well, the crazy thing, my parents worked out their conflict over my body. That is my father continuously pressed me to become a doctor and my mother continuously pressed for me to become a rabbi and I was very young. I started college when I was 14 1/2 years old. I had developed an interest in biology because my brother, my older brother whom I'd admired a great deal, he is tall and handsome and has a big shock of auburn hair and I was short, fat and pimply. And I always felt very inadequate next to him. He had very little interest in the religious field, he was much more interested in social life and girls and he couldn't wait to get out of Hebrew school to get to a secular school, High School with a swinging crowd. I always had the feeling that I was living a cloistered life while he was out in the big world. Well, he and I had the same bedroom and we had beds side by side and our room was filled with tanks of fish, snakes, chameleons, little lizards because he was interested in biology and so as a result of that, that was one of our strong bonds together. I developed a strong interest in that. Anyway, I was very young and I was sent off to college before I went to college we began to explore my going to premedical school in Baltimore. I had an uncle, a wonderful uncle, my mother's brother who loved us like kids. He had three daughters and he always wanted a son, never had a son, so we became his sons and he was something of a remarkable guy, he had - - - he was something of a politician. He had a heavy yiddish accent but he was

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an extraordinary politician and in our area. He began looking into trying to get me into medical school, premed school. So he went around with me to see if I could get a scholarship because I could not afford it otherwise and we found that as I began applying, University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins that I was

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there was a quota for Jews in medical schools.

You could start by taking biological sciences here but there was no hope for you getting in. It's - - - you know, they have five times as many Jews applying and they take them geographically. Well, that looked like a disaster area for me so the Principal of the Hebrew School I went to did not want to lose me. I was a good student in Hebrew School and he wanted me to become a rabbi. So he and my mother worked out a conspiracy where they got a scholarship for me to Yeshiva University in New York where I was assured I could go study premed, biological sciences and study for my Hebrew studies at the same time. I was resisting that because I was inclining toward wanting to give a serious try to premed. I took off maybe six months before I went to Yeshiva. I went to Johns Hopkins University and I took some courses there and I was also interested in literature at that time so I took some courses in Shakespeare there but I saw that I was getting nowhere and I was fooling around and I was avoiding making a decision. When the scholarship came through for Yeshiva so my parents took me up to Yeshiva and I came there 14 1/2 wearing knickers and my parents handed me over to the registrar and I cried like a baby. I was a baby. I just had no sense about living in this great big world and in any case, I found out that they had a very good biological sciences department. It later turned out that they had some highly recognized people in it, anatomy,

embryology, organic chemistry and I developed some very strong interests. I did very well. I got straight A's in some of the courses, the biological science courses. So I was following this two-track life of studying for ordination in the orthodox rabbinical schools Seminary at Yeshiva and studying at the same time my pre med studies. I had not resolved in my own mind what I was going to do.

Q. Where were you living at the age of 14 1/2 in a strange city ---

A. In a dormitory, which was the best part of it because there were wonderful guys there. My roommates, one was the son of a rabbi in Atlantic City...

Q. They must have been a lot older?

A. Yes, one of the guys was younger than me, Alan Mandelbaum, who would --- by all accounts, a genius. Alan was translating Italian poetry, Dante, at the age of 15 and --- but he was a New Yorker, and that's the way New Yorkers are (laughs) --- smart New Yorkers, they are born smartass, excuse the expression --- (laughs) But we developed, they really were a bunch of very wonderful, very bright, very gifted people and I had a real sense of community and family. So once I got over the shock of being thrown into this wholly different kind of world, I really caught hold of it and I became interested in a lot of extracurricular activities. I got on the newspaper and by the senior year I became editor of the newspaper. I became president of my class and I realized that I had a whole range of interests and that I was probably not going to be a congregational rabbi. I had some sense then. I began to feel by that time that while I liked some of my studies, especially I studied History, Jewish history and Biblical studies. I began feeling that some

of my Talmudic studies were really very remote at that time. We were studying about sacrifices and whether an egg is kosher or how do you pluck a chicker to find out what the viens are. What the hell has that got to do with real life? For very orthodox Jews it meant a great deal but I began having a sense then that I was not going to go in that direction. I never finally resolved it ...and then the things that really gave me the greatest satisfaction were the studies that I was interested in, especially historical studies, biblical studies and my extracurricular activity. I began to find, I didn't really know --- but in high school I was active in the debating societies and one of the debating clubs and but I didn't know - - - I never tested myself in terms of writing. I began to find and as I was editor of the newspaper, I was first a news editor and then the editor, that I had some talent in writing. So I finished school. I knew that I didn't want to be an orthodox rabbi. Why my senior year I realized that I was not really orthodox in my guts. That I was conforming by virtue of my birth and background. On top of that, the rabbinical school in Yeshiva was becoming increasingly repressive. It became increasingly fundamentalist, orthodox. They were bringing in some rabbis from Eastern Europe, Poland. They had one guy appointed who was the spiritual KGB. He was given the keys to open your room to look in and see what the boys were doing, whether people were shaving with a straight razor which was forbidden and that sort of thing. So I began to react against that kind of oppressiveness. I didn't act it out. I began writing editorials, angry editorials, not directly but about whether the school was going to be modern or whether it was going to create a synthesis for science or technology in the real world that we were living in. It was all

We produced this weekly newsletter, a limited circulation but a very kind of elitist jewish circulation in the United States and in Israel. The...but I knew that I was living then a fireadful life because I had no money, I was making \$35/week. I rented a room. It was a hole on 42nd Street and 8th Avenue, it turned out with a German couple who were probably Nazis.

Q. What year was this? Do you remember?

A. Yah, let's see, I went to Yeshiva '41 to '45. It was '45, '46, something like that and in '46, I went to the Seminary. The thing was, I would come home every night and I had this room that had a window facing a wall. It was always dark and this guy who had crutches used to beat his wife almost every night. I mean he would have a drinking party every night after dinner and they would start hollering and screaming and beating. And I would lock the door and lie in bed in terror at night until I fell asleep and I knew I just couldn't go on like that. In any case... but I took that room first of all because it was very cheap, it was \$10 bucks a week or something like that. I mean, I had nothing, no money, no support. And then the editors office was about 3 blocks up on Sixth Avenue and 42nd Street so it was convenient to walk back and forth. One day I was walking up Broadway, and one of my classmates in Yeshiva, a guy who was in my class in '45, Harold Shulweiss (?), who was now a very prominent rabbi in Oakland, California. We were all very good friends, Harold was in...we had a tremendous class in '45. I mean just sparkling, vital, incredible people, very...real jewish ethnics. And, so I ran into Harold and most of the guys in my class were in my similar condition. They come out of orthodox backgrounds that they were rebelling against. And they weren't going to continue at Yeshiva and they weren't going to become rabbis, what do you do with yourself?

I mean, work. So one guy went off to become a bio-chemist and another guy went off into advertising, so Harold Shulweiss was a philosophy major and we were walking and I bump into him on the street one day on Broadway and I said, whatcha' doing? He said, "I don't know what I'm going to do?" He said, "what do you do with A B.A. from Yeshiva? in Philosophy?" So he said, "I hear there are some entrance exams to the Jewish Theological Seminary." "And I think I'm going to take it." I said, "What are you going to do that for?" So he said, "Look, I need some place to sort myself out. I got to put myself together. I just don't know what's going to happen to me." "I got a lot of talents, but I have no other interest." So I said, "You know, I'm in the same condition, Let's go. I'm going to go with you." (laughs) That's how I made a decision to go to seminary. So I went with Harold, ~~We~~ took our entrance exams and we both got in. And I started the seminary in '46 and I stayed there through '50. And I repeated the same pattern. I went to seminary. I began studying. It was a very congenial atmosphere in many ways. It was free, intellectually free. There wasn't the same oppression. We go to services it was a volunteer thing to do. Nobody was going to hit you over the head if you didn't go. You weren't looked upon as an infidel. Well, you know, by some faculty members. But it was an atmosphere in which you had a chance to grow and find yourself. Although I'll never forget my first night. The first night in the seminary. Also they had nice living quarters, lovely apartments that 2 boys shared adjoining rooms with a common john. My first night there was spent... my first roommate was Harold Weisberg who was a brilliant philosophy major who

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turned out to be a radical socialist. He used to spend his spare time on boxes in Union Square preaching about socialism. And, I remember going into the bathroom the first years of the seminary and uh, he starts engaging me in a discussion to prove the existence of God. We stayed up till about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning screaming at each other ... how do you philosophically deal with this? ...if this is what seminary is going to be about, I'll never get any sleep. And I remember there was a visiting novelist, Irving Fineman (?) living next door to us who came in shouting, "Will you people please go to sleep, you are not going to solve that problem tonight in the john!" "Get the hell out of there, I want to go to sleep." (laughs). So in that seminary I really repeated the pattern of the Yeshiva, namely that I paid a great deal of attention to the things that I was really interested in. And I realized that I had a great interest in Jewish history, Jewish philosophy and Jewish literature and I was less interested in studies that I thought were remote from real life and real human needs. So I paid less attention to talmudic studies than I should have. I concentrated on historical studies, we also had a great professor, Alexander Marx (?) who wrote the classic textbook with Marx and Margolin, Jewish History. I did my Master's with him in Jewish history. While I began doing my studies at the seminary, I became interested in Eternal Light radio program. Morton Wishograd was then writer and he was a superb writer. And I became a research assistant to him and I began working on research and helping him to write scripts for the Eternal Light. So I knew that this writing thing, I had to deal with that and work that out of my system. So I spent 4 years working

with Morton Wishograd and then I began writing for jewish newspapers along New York the way and I became chief of the "bureau" of the "National Jewish Post".

It gave me entre to study jewish life and the important things that were happening and then I became friendly with one of the editors of Time magazine, Douglas Auchingloss (?) and he began calling on me to seve as a consultant for him especially when he was writing stories about jewish subjects and jews. Anyway, I went through the seminary. It was a very important growing time for me intellectually because there I really began studying deeply the things I really cared about and so I was ordained. I think some of the members of the faculty were not really crazy about me because they felt I should have devoted all my time in life to studying the talmud and rabbinic studies. One important influence in my life in the seminary was Rabbi Heschel (?), Abraham Joshua Heschel. We actually became friends after I left the seminary. But we became friends in rather a strange way. In those days - - - he had just come to the seminary and he was all tied up in knots in his own life. He was not a very good teacher, he was very defensive and somehow I didn't connect with him as a teacher. But I will never forget him for the fact that in my senior year my father became terribly ill and had a series of thrombosis, heart attacks and my mother began going beserk, I mean she was just overwhelmed. She was taking care of the store, taking care of my father, my brother had left, my sister was alone in Baltimore and my mother and sister were carrying the full burden of this. I used to go down whenever I had a chance, the weekends, to try to help out but one day I was riding the elevator in the seminary and I talk - - - my mother called me that morning that my father just had a heart attack and I was ashen. I was

crushed, filled with guilt at leaving my mother alone to handle this. And Heschel turned to me and he said, "There is something troubling you." "Come into my office." So I went into the office with Heschel and two - two and one-half hours we sat and having poured my heart out and he was like a father to me after that. I cried like a baby, I was filled with anguish with exams coming up ---while we were together he picked up the phone and called my mother and if you knew what that meant to my mother. It was like God calling. And I fell in love with him. One - -- when I was ordained - - I don't know if you want to get into all that detail - - -?

A. Yes I do. I would stop you - - -

Q. Okay. When I was ordained, I left the seminary. I still had not resolved what I wanted to do. I was still unclear as to whether I wanted to be a congregational rabbi. I really began to have very serious doubts, theologically, religiously and real concerns about the relevance of the ritualistic part of the traditions. As a matter of fact, I wrote a paper on sacrifices that upset one of my professors terribly. And I ended up talking about it and in those kind of cynical days I asked questions like is this really essential to the faith this primitive stage of development we had to pass through. And they had the feeling that they were raising a heretic and it is better to take care of him beforehand. And Rabbi Finkelstein used to call me in occasionally to give me long lectures about the importance of religious observance and being a religious leader to your people and all that and in any case I left the seminary in 1950. I worked for about a year for Time magazine in the religion department and I worked on several cover stories. One of them was about Rabbi Finkelstein and he liked it. Some things that troubled him, some things cut too close to the bone. It was not

orthodox? not orthodox? My conflicts about what my future is going to be. A lot of things happened in my class. A number of guys went through the same thing. There was a kind of embarrassment of riches. There were guys there with an enormous amount of creative talent and didn't know how to handle it. They didn't know how to manage them. This could not focus clearly on one objective. There were some guys that did. One guy knew biochemistry from the day he was born apparently. He knew he was going to be a biochemist, researcher. Some of us who were kind of...this humanistic, artistic, literary world really took a lot longer time to find our way. Also because of me---I just started too young. I mean I was always tagging on to an older class and an older community. And I always had the sense of having to define myself in relationship to guys who had much more stabilized - - - some of them were even married at the time we were in school together in seminary. Anyhow - - -

Q. Most of your classmates from seminary go to congregations? You were one of the few who didn't - - - ?

A. I think so. Well, one of my closest buddies Wolf (?) Kellman is now Executive Vice President of Rabbinical Assembly of America. Well Wolf took this kind of professional civil servant job. Although he's in the middle of the rabbinic world there, I think most of them in fact became congregational rabbis. Shulweis became one, Yank Rosenberg who was in one of my classes and I think a large majority of them did. For that was a professional rabbinic school for which you came for that. Now, there was a period of time after I left...I wanted to write a novel. I thought I had a novel in my belly and I took off a year and went off for summer. My brother got me a shack at the side of a mountain in Western Maryland.

) From a farmer we knew. He said yeah, we got this shack here so I went over there, drove over there one summer and no water, no electricity. We were awakened in the morning by cows who come around the shack and nibble at the straw. And I sat down and started working on a novel which really was autobiographical in many ways about my whole childhood experiences, which were very rich in Baltimore. And we lived in this poor neighborhood, surrounded by incredible stimuli. There was, down the street, there was an

(?) where cows were killed and was filled with smells and stinks and rich experiences. Cows used to come--they used to bring cows, down in the morning, four, five o'clock in the morning, down the street in front of us and we would come down and watch them chase the cows. About a mile away there was a port, it was a very major port in Baltimore, and ships from all over the world used to come there. And my father with his great romantic love used to take us to go visit these ships and we used to climb up on top a Russian ship. My father spoke Russian and the captain greeted him. We were kids and an enormous, a rich, excitement, about that, an incredible amount of imagery. And then there was a cherry orchard not too far away, an apple orchard, and my brother and I used to go there. So that-- Any case-- In that area of South Baltimore which had this, it was almost like a kind of cannery row, Tortilla Flat, and I was struck by what was happening to people, these Irish, Italian, German Christians, many of whom had come from farms, to move into the city. Across the street from us was a very large bucket manufacturing factory and the sons used to go to work in that factory and I watched the transformation of those families. I mean, the impact of this

assemblyline existence on them. I want to write a book about about, you know, what happens to people who come to the city to find their fortune and become atomized, dehumanized, and became attachments in this assembly line and the effect on their lives was devastating. The family began getting drunk and families began falling apart and-- Anyway, I developed a kind of social protest outlook. My brother got this shack for me and I went up there, drove up in a car, and began writing every day. I realized after my first week or so I had no money. So I began writing short stories. I'd start the morning off, every morning, I would go down to the bottom of the hill get a bucket of water out of the stream and have to go to the john, had to walk like a mile down to go to the gasoline station and it was crazy but I was determined. I thought I needed that privacy but I was spending like twenty-five percent, thirty percent, of my time just surviving and maintaining myself. In any case, I used to start off the day writing, I began writing literally a short story a day and began sending it off hoping that, you know, in the turnover I would make enough money to keep myself going. And I have a very good collection of rejection slips from the best, New Yorker-- In fact when I was in seminary I had a roommate once, he and I were both writing together, we started writing stories together, and we got-- both of us got an extraordinary collection of rejection slips-- Harper's, New Yorker and-- So we decided one morning just so it shouldn't be a total waste, we took a fruit box and we took all the rejection slips and made a montage and put a coat of shellac on top and in the evening we'd come back from our classes and sit around and have a glass of sherry over our--and celebrate

Q. Do you still have those stories?

A. Some of them. I have a couple of them around. Actually I began looking at the novel again not too long ago, I never published it because by the time I finished it I felt that-- I just was not confident that it was serious enough a piece of work. I looked at it, it's not bad. There's a lot of very rich episodes in it and I may some day come back, take a look at it, and re-work it. I'm working on other things from that side, it's sort of the past. So I spent that summer, roughly about two, two and a half, months, laying out the novel and I began writing a good part of it, go I started. When I realized I just couldn't hold out there any longer, the living conditions were impossible, and it served its purpose of enabling me to sort of shake myself down, to get a sense of where I was. So I came back to Baltimore, I got a job teaching in a Hebrew school so I could finish working on the novel. After I pretty much finished it I came back to New York and I got a job with a publisher, Henry Schuman (?) and Schuman was a marvelous character, an original, was a violinist and he ran this very exquisite, elite publishing house and he had a marvelous wife, Ida, whom I loved, she was a great friend, and she really was running the business, she was like my mother. She was an elegant woman but -- They had a brownstone on E. 70th Street. So I worked with him as an editor and a public relations consultant. And Henry used to love to publish very good books and publish them with quality publishing, the covers were exquisite, and the art was-- He would spend fortunes getting artists--then he would forget about them. He didn't care about selling, that was crass materialism.

Q. That was your job?

A. Well, in part. His wife called me and to put him in touch with the real world. I had developed a whole series of life-science library and books by Gaster (?). The big thing that happened there was that one day Rabbi Herschel called me, I was working for Henry Schuman (?), and he asked me if I would take a look at a manuscript, a book called "The Earth is the Lords," which was a love poem for the Jews of Eastern Europe. He wanted to capture the essence of life in Eastern Europe. And it was a beautiful, moving book, excessive, you know, idealized the words and the poverty and all but he was from the spiritual richness of that world, its inter-life, its great devotion to learning. It was stunning and I read it and I stayed up all night, I just couldn't sleep after that. And I came back the next day and I said to Schuman "You're publishing this book, Henry." So he read it and he fell in love with it, too. So, I then worked with Schuman and Rabbi Heschel (?) and we got a magnificent artist craftsman, (?) did (?) woodcuts for it which are classics. Anyway they should not be lost, they should be made into cards or something. They had been at one time, illustrating that life. Anyway, I made that my major project and--cause I knew we had a gem and also I loved Heschel, I felt that the (?) he would be my father. My father, by this time, had died, and we developed a father-son relationship and I used to see him almost every day. So I went around and I got

(Tape Ends)

working with the Synagogue Council, which then was in shambles, it was supposed to be the coordinating body of the orthodox-conservative-reform groups, both the rabbinic bodies and the congregational bodies. He was getting ready to go to Israel, make aliya, and the organization had nothing. I mean, it had no program and he had a budget of \$12,000 and a deficit of \$18,000. They were supposed to represent the Jews to the world and one time it had a program under the forties, fifties, and then it collapsed, the director left. So he asked me if I'd come and help him with some programming. So I said, yeah, part-time I could do that. I'm busy now, I've got these editorial projects I'm working on. So I came over and I started giving a few hours a week and little by little, you know, I began to look at the station-head, the letterhead, you know, potentially it had real possibilities and this is the one group where all the religious branches came together, the rabbis and the lay leadership, and I felt, you know, it's really worth something that I ought to give it a try. So-- and this guy was not interested. He felt the whole thing was a waste of time and it was just a job for him. He used to spend half his day studying. He'd sit in the office and read the Talmud or Rabbi ic Sources or-- So he used to ask me to do more and more. So I began poking around and I somehow met somebody at the National Council of Churches, (?). We became friendly and I told him I was working part-time at the Synagogue Council and I said something to him about "Is there anything we can do together?" He said "Sure, let's sit down and talk." So I organized the first meeting of the Synagogue Council and the National Council of Churches. He had a mar--

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There was some underground, secret ties between the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in those days it was called the National Catholic Welfare Conference, it was a Monsignore Carroll who had some connection, but it was always very quiet. So I began-- I took the job at Synagogue Council and I walked away from the publishing thing and I devoted myself full-time to it. I spent ten years there and I must say it is a resurrection from the dead. It began developing and, you know, these things begin building cumulatively. We did some programs on the National Council. In those days we were getting into questions of Israel and Jerusalem that sometimes are like deja vu, the same discussions all over again, some of the same problems. Then I remember in '57 I helped organize the White House Conference on foreign aid and trade, which was my big shot cause by that time we began putting relationships together and a whole network of connections and it became a major meeting. The president of the Synagogue Council, an orthodox rabbi was to speak, Archbishop Fulton Sheen was to speak, and a Protestant Alder, Dr. Edward Alberg (?) of the National Council of Churches, And I began writing the speech for Rabbi Adams and so there I became friendly with Fulton Sheen and we just hit it off and became very good friends. He asked me to have dinner with him, lunch with him, and realizing that there's a big world here that's unattended, potentially a great many friends for Jews. And the Jews had an obligation to really move in and be present as a major force in American life. Otherwise it's always Christian America and Jews just don't figure with this kind of presence. And in fact everything I began moving into we became a factor and an enormous respect began to develop for Jews.

in these situations. Now this is-- They had been doing other things, I'm sure that are things going on in the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue but there were no national things going on. So by--

Q. Also you had the support of the organizations behind you in these efforts or was there ever any suspicion of your relationships with Christian leaders on the part of--?

A. Synagogue Council was a nightmare because in a sense I snuggle that program, it would never happen otherwise. The orthodox representatives would veto anything that the reform would want to do. The reform would veto whatever the orthodox would want to do. They had a policy that we were never to discuss religion or theology, not only with all the Christians, with all the Jews. So that I had to say, of course, I understand the policy and then I'd go off and arrange a meeting and I'd invite individual orthodox rabbis and they'd come and they'd be the first one who'd want to tell the goyim what it's all about and they'd want to talk theology and religion but they didn't call it that. They'd call it sociology but it was always religion. So I began developing, I mean, this kind of--really it was a school of diplomacy, of statesmanship, you know, how do you keep this thing together and keep a league of fiction going of a collaborative enterprise in which they didn't want to collaborate on anything serious. They would collaborate on the girl scouts, the boy scouts, we would have committees for that. That they would work at. If there was a chance to deliver a prayer at some major event, an inauguration or something, or the Senate or House, it meant the possibility of publicity for some rabbi, we'll do that. But they didn't pay any money, I had to raise money and by the time

I finished, I brought a guy in to help me fundraise, he was liquidating the deficit. In any case, I did that for about ten years and then John Slausen^{W O} called me. Morris Kurtzer (?) was resigning and John called me and it was a breath of fresh air for me because I just got tired of the politics. I couldn't make a move without clearing with six agencies, agencies that really had paid only lip service to this common effort. It was backbreaking to get them to pay a thousand dollars a year dues. By that time we had developed a budget of \$75-85,000. I began trying to build up a staff, etc. and I had to raise all the money myself, with minimal help. I got a guy, Mike Nicholson (?) whose a genius in raising funds and part-time he helped me put together a dinner and one year we raised \$100,000. We just liquidated the budget, we gave ourselves-- that's what I left the organization with, \$100,000. Assets and a vibrant program. In 1960, by that time I began developping contacts in Washington and I was named vice-president of the White House Conference on children and youth and I felt that it was a chance, too, for Jews to really make an impact on a very broad network, there were 1,700 people who came there. And I prevailed on Rabbi Heschel to deliver a paper "Children and Youth () the Jewish Tradition." It had an astounding impact. He's got a penetrating way at getting at issues, especially values, ideals, morals, the cultural condition, what Jews have to contribute to try help humanize life, moralize society. And so I knew then that we were moving into the big leagues in terms-- and also it was a chance for Jews to be understood that we're not just 3% of the population, we are one-third of the major religious communities of America. Catholics

some things for Abba Eban and some of the Israeli leaders who came here and have them have some impact on the Christian world. Now I think, though, in those days, part of it had to do with my own sense of--of-- which has really been a basic pattern with me. On the one hand containing, trying to contain, hostility, anti-Semitism toward Jews, on the other hand to try to continue to build up an understanding of Jews at their best, Jewish values at its best, Jewish culture at its best, create experiences where people would be exposed to our best minds or to have people come to a seminary or to a museum or to go to Israel. And I think some of that pattern, the basic pattern, was set there. It's taken some new forms for me now in AJC in recent years but I think that really in some ways I had the feeling that it was nothing terribly new about it, that was really the experience of exile for two thousand years. Jews were always defending themselves against the hostile world, that anti-Semitism was endemic in Western--

Q. Did you personally feel that way in your first--feel that anti-Semitism and that hostility in your first contacts with clergy, with Christian clergy?

A. The first couple I met they were remarkable human beings. I mean this fellow Roswell Barns and Kenneth Maxwell, who was in charge of foreign affairs, were people, Presbyterians, who had a very deep affection for Judaism really because of their own Calvinist training. The old testament is a source of--holds a place of great honor in that tradition and also they were very sensitive people then. This was not too long after the Nazi holocaust and they had a sense of horror of what anti-Semitism

A. Oh, yeah. The orthodox community thinks that, and parts of the organization, thinks I've sold out. And some of that has to do with the simple anti-goy, just anti-Christian mentality. There's a lot of anti-Christian bias, especially from Jews who come from Eastern Europe who suffered terribly. And I understand that, I appreciate that. Some of them, and this is a legitimate criticism, worry that the images of Jews and Christians being very good friends, doing television with them and speaking on first name terms, tends to weaken the sense of difference between Jews and Christians and in the popular Jewish mind is taken to be a sanction for intermarriage. And I recognize that that is potentially a problem but I have to weigh that against the very large needs of the Jewish community and Jewish security. Our priority concerns are the security and survival of Israel and Israel would not survive a week if there were not, literally, millions of Christians in America who cared about Israel. And that's the basis of political support for Israel. There isn't a president who hasn't known that thirty, forty, fifty million evangelicals who cared--(Tape interrupted) But I, what I've begun to find is that in talking with orthodox friends there's an ambivalence. On the one hand they know that somebody has got to talk to the Christians and keep up lines of friendship.

Q. It might as well be you (laugh).

A. And it might as well be you. Actually I had a very interesting moment which I've never recorded before. During the Vatican Council when we were preparing documents to submit to Cardinal Bayer (?) I insisted that every item we prepared be shared with a major Jewish religious personality so that we would

and he said "Look, there are certain things you have to do. But I support what you did. You had to do what you had to do and I had to do this because of these circumstances. But I want you to know I'm behind you." And I said, "But you know you placed an impossible situation." He said, "I understand, but that's

(?) we're in the diaspora and that's the madness of living in the exile." So, I mean, but that's typical of the kind of response you get in the orthodox community today. And I get that everywhere I go. I ran into somebody from the Agudas Yisrael an orthodox rabbi, and it was a White House observance honoring Simon Wiesenthal and I just came over and said hello to him and afterwards I was outside on the telephone and he comes over to me and says "You don't know me but I know you. I listen to you regular on WINS. I don't disagree with everything you say but you did a broadcast on the (?) year, it was a kiddush hashem, you sanctified God's name, it was marvelous." So I said "You have no idea how much that means to me."

Q. That's very nice.

A. So, I made up my mind a long time ago that, and this really is something I learned at AJC, a central question for us is to be effective. And in order to be effective you've got to be serious and you've got to do your homework first, you've got to study your problem and to know what has to be done to bring about a certain result that you think is going to be good for Jews and for America, whatever you value. Once you know that you've considered all the options and that's the way to go then you go ahead and do it and worry about the politics, the reactions afterward. Along the way you've got to keep things from exploding

in your face. But, I've been operating that way ever since I've been here and this is my twentieth year at AJC and we started out with the Vatican Council. Nobody wanted to touch it, nobody.

Q. Did you have to convince the Committee, John ^{Slauson} Slausen, those lay leaders to get involved or--?

A. No, to John Slausen's credit, I had just come into AJC so the Vatican Council began in '62, the first announcements were in '61, it's John Slausen's credit and the late David Danzig (?), Danzig was our program director, who was brilliant. Danzig had a feel, even though he was personally secular in many ways in terms of his ideology and his training, he had an understanding of the importance of religion as a factor in culture, as a factor in politics, and when he heard about the Vatican Council he already began saying we ought to look into that, to do something about that, when I just had come into the scene. And John Slausen also had that sense. It sounds like it's important. We'd better pay attention to it. And so John had called Jack Shyster (?), in my presence, had Jack go to Rome to look into it. So Jack came back and he says potentially it's of historic importance. It's going to be a major event, the first time in our lifetime something like this will happen. We'd better get to it. And when I'd been at the Synagogue Council the year before there and I'd put on the agenda the Vatican Council and that the Jewish religious community should respond to it, we should find out about it and see whether we ought to relate to it. It was vetoed. The orthodox community said, and I respect this judgment, I think it was a wrong judgment but it was their judgment, it's an internal Christian meeting, we're to have nothing to do with it. Never

mind what they say about Jews. That's their problem, it's not our problem. So I was prevented from making any entrees to the Vatican Council then. And that got--was part of my own feeling that when Slausen came to me and said "I want to offer you this job at the Committee." I began-- I was really filled with enormous frustration there. I couldn't move anywhere. I was constantly being undercut by these kind of theological bands to move. And here was a breath of fresh air with the freedom I had not only freedom but leadership and support. And Slausen used to tell me very early the important thing is to know what you're doing and once you're clear about what is required and we have approval of it go ahead and do it and I'll back you. And I've had that, for twenty years. With John and then with Burt Gold. And we really have broken ground in almost every field in Jewish-Christian relations in this country and abroad. The Vatican Council, ADL didn't come in until almost the end of it, the second session of the Council. The World Jewish Congress didn't come in. They all submitted a two-page memorandum. We did the first systematic study on the textbook which documented the problem of anti-semitism in the Catholic teaching. Cardinal Bayer (?) had our study translated into six languages, sent around to all of the bishops who were involved, and he said based on that evidence we have got to adopt a declaration to put an end to anti-semitism. It's no question this is what we're teaching about Jews. We did the study on liturgy the same way and the story on the crucifixion and it became decisive. I mean it just changed the whole mentality. And when Bayer came here in March of 1963 we arranged this meeting at A.J.C. with all of the top

Jewish leadership, religious leadership, and that's when the thing was clinched. He took out the preliminary text that nobody had seen before and we discussed it there. There were written questions and answers. And that became the turning point. Well, it changed the whole world. I mean there's been an explosion since 1965 with the Catholic world. They've changed the textbooks and liturgy, and teacher training institutes with nuns, the sister Anglans (?), the Rose (?), Father Flanary's, Polokofsky's (?). I mean all of that was made possible by the Vatican thing. And it's been one of the historic contributions of AJC to the improvement of attitudes toward Jews here and elsewhere. The same thing happened with the evangelicals. You know in 1965 who would talk to Billy Graham? I mean the Jewish community would be run out of town. They would be regarded as selling out the Jewish people.

Q. How could you do it when other people couldn't do it?

A. Well, by that time I'd had, you know, about four years of very good apprenticeship in an agency that was really a very great agency. And we had a staff at that time that was like a post-graduate faculty at a university. Marshall Sklar, Lucy Davidowitz, David Danzig, Ed Lukas, it was an extraordinary gifted group and our morning discussions about issues, in fact they used to be sometimes too abstract, too intellectual. Somehow we'd never get around to what are you supposed to do about it. That was Danzig's weakness, he would love to talk. But he was an incredible--

Q. How often would these take place? And is this a continuing--?

A. Yeah, we have it now, Monday morning (?) meetings. We have good discussions now. They're much more practically oriented now. Also I think we have many more concrete problems to deal with. The (?) luxury of--with a staff capital meeting was much more of that kind of thing. We sat back and took a kind of a world view look and (?) that sort of a thing. But the point is that over that period of 1961-65 by then I began to really grab hold of the issues and having been to Rome several times on the Vatican Council with Zach I began having some mastery over the field and I began to feel that there's going beyond what I had done before. I mean I came in with a substantial background by that time but this was, I had the sense it was possible to push out now to the outer limits and be effective. So, when I came back and after we got a lot of the Catholic programming going and institutes and seminars and textbook studies I had begun travelling a little bit around the country then and I had begun seeing what was going on in the south and I realized that the we had no understanding of what was going on, the Jewish Committee had no understanding. I mean the south was now developing economically in incredible ways, there was massive population movements to the south and our image was still of Crackers and Bible-thumpers. And I began talking with some of the Baptist churches and I said MyGod, this is a whole new world. I mean it's like the Vatican Council all over again. There's a whole empire here to be developed and explored. So, as things began to develop I began looking into how I could relate to the Southern Baptist Convention. I brought a guy in my staff, Jerry Strober (?) who I thought at that time was an

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evangelical Christian. He was born of Jewish parents, had become an Evangelical Christian, I didn't know about his Jewish background at all. He was working on a study project of the NCCJ that we were doing jointly on Protestant textbooks and when that expired I took him on and we began looking together at the whole evangelical field. And then we opened up our first conference in '68. Actually I began my own conversation with Billy Graham in '66 and when the six-day war broke out Graham called me one day and he said "I'm very worried about reaction to Israel. There seems to be a growth of anti-semitism. There's been so much silence on the part of the Protestants toward Israel." And felt there was a kind of negative back-lash developing. Whereas as some people had cried in Israel's development there was an awful lot of feeling that these Jews were destroying these Arabs. So he said, "I want to do something. I want to do a film about Israel." I said, "That's wonderful." He said, "I'd like your help." "Sure." So he had Kenneth Bliss, and I just got a letter from him today, in fact, I'm still working on projects like that, call me and I helped him with a script called "His Land". And he did this marvelous film about Israel. He invested a half a million dollars in this love poem for Israel, one of the most beautiful pictures about Israel as the land of the bible. And then we helped him promote it. We'd presented it at an AJC meeting, at a board meeting, at an annual meeting, and we got it around the country in many churches. So little by little began developing a trust relationship and a lot of correspondence. And over a period of time he proved to be one of our most trustworthy friends, for Israel. Soviet Jewry. anti-semitism. Eastern Europe.

He helped me get three families out of the Soviet Union who could not be gotten out. It's an incredibly beautiful story of--

Q. How did he do it?

A. Well, I'll tell you briefly. There was a woman named Rifka Alexandrovitch whose daughter, Ruth, was put into Putmel (?) prison, a slave labor camp. She had been a nurse; she suffered from asthma and arthritis. Her mother was terrified she was going to die. She was thrown into prison because she was found buying a bible on the black market and the KGB-- It was a pretext because she was part of this whole dissident group, but that was a pretext for throwing her in jail. And Rifka was in a state of panic, she was sure that unless she got her daughter out shortly that it would be the end of her. She came from first Riga, Latvia then Moscow where she was an English teacher, she spoke perfect English, and then she went to Israel and she came here. We invited her to speak at an annual AJC meeting. As soon as she got off the plane she spoke at the annual meeting and after that session she went over to me and she said, "I want to speak to you. There's only one person who can get my daughter out of prison." "Who's that?" "That's the number one man in the United States." "You mean Nixon?" "Yes. And you know Billy Graham." "How do you know that?" She said, "I know in Israel that you know Billy Graham and he can get her out." So I said, "Okay, we'll try." She told her story and she was just overwhelming. She was very dramatic and very moving, mother and her daughter, it was a very gripping story. So we first arranged for her to speak before the general assembly of the United Presbyterian church in Rochester and it's the first time they ever had a Soviet Jew do that. She

had a standing ovation. She was dynamite. She was a small woman like this, a powerhouse. There was a little of my mother in her, too, which I think grabbed me which is I was doing it not for her but also for my mother. In any case, I called Billy Graham after that Presbyterian meeting and I said, "Billy, this is an important woman and I need your help." He was getting ready to get on a plane with Nixon to go to Austin, Texas to dedicate the LBJ library and it was on a Friday. And he said, "Look, I'll do what I can to help. I will be in Chicago on Sunday, this coming Sunday. If you will come with Mrs. Alexandrovitch I'll talk to you and we'll see what we can do to help." I said, "All right, what time?" "Four o'clock." "Where?" "Conrad Hilton." "I'll be there under a pseudonym." He gave me his name. Four o'clock the following Sunday Rivka Alexandrovitch and I went to Chicago. We were there in Chicago. Came up to the hotel room, just an incredible image. Rivka Alexandrovitch, I guess she was like five by five, I mean, that was the sense she gave like this kind of packed person and Billy Graham was like six foot four. We walk in, Graham and I embrace and he walks over to Rivka, he bends down and kisses her and she began getting tears in her eyes. We sit down, he says "Mrs. Alexandrovitch, tell me your story." She said, "Dr. Graham, when I first came to the United States you know what hit me, what had the greatest impact on me?" He said, "No." She said, "I stayed at the Holiday Inn and I walked in the Holiday Inn and the first thing I see is a Bible open. And I walked over and I read it and I kissed it. Do you know what it means to find an open Bible in a room? It's because of that bible that my daughter is in prison." She knew who she

was talking to. Graham began getting tears in his eyes. She told him, she said, "She wanted to study the bible. It was forbidden. So we had to go out in the black market. She spent fifty rubles to buy a bible and the KGB put her in prison because of that." So Graham then turned to me and says "Marc, will you lead us in prayer?" And we reached out and held hands together and I suddenly remember the prayer for the (?) of the captives, not all of it but part of it, so I said that prayer and we were all crying like babies. It was an incredible emotional moment. Graham gets up and says "All right, I'm going to make a phone call." He takes out his telephone book, dials a number, it's in Florida, Key Biscayne. "Hello, Henry, this is Billy. I want to talk to you about a very important matter. It's a terrible story and I'd like your help. And I'm personally interested in this. There's a Mrs. Alexandrovitch, her daughter's in prison, Rabbi Tanenbaum's with me, he has all the information about it." Kissinger says to him, "Alright, put Tanenbaum on the phone." I get on the phone, Henry Kissinger, he was on vacation in Key Biscayne. And he says, "I'm seeing Ambassador Dobrynin on Wednesday. I will put this on the top of my list as a matter of national interest to the United States government. Send me a telegram at once with all the information, with her prison number how long she's been there, exactly what cell she's in, what her condition is in, and send it to me at the State Department. And I promise you I'll do everything I can." I got and I wrote him a telegram and sent him immediately from Chicago and we talked a little bit more and Graham said, "I'll keep after it and call me in a couple of days. He'll wait till after he sees Dobrynin."

Wednesday and I'll probably hear from him by then." In about a month she was out of prison. She had been in prison three years, couldn't get a visa from the Ovear (?) and Kissinger, via Billy Graham, sprung her out of prison. She got out of prison and came to Israel. Got married and got divorced, unfortunately, and had a child. And the most poignant thing for me about all of that, two things happened subsequently, she came back again to get some help for another family because there had been another person then. She brought a samovar that she had taken with her out of Moscow and asked me to bring it to Graham. And I did. When I went to see Graham at his home I brought it down to him. He was very moved by it. And then, subsequently, her daughter, Ruth, came to the United States and I was not here and she left a folder for me, a little leather thing, and Dear Marc, thank you for saving my life. Ruth. It's a very simple folder, it's one of the most beautiful things I've got and I kept it. Then Rivka, (Tape interruption)

Q. You were talking about Ruth getting back to you. She left a package here when you were gone.

A. Oh, Rivka Alexandrovitch went back to Israel to teach in a high school, teach English in a high school, and she made a project of having the students take to do a verbal history of the redemption of Ruth. She had them gather all the newspaper clippings, all of the letters, all of the telegrams we sent, and she had a book like this. It was incredible. I mean, letters to the president, to the (?) and it became a record of the saving of a single life, of her daughter. It was a very moving document and--but it shows how much goes into. in a case like that

of just bringing out one family and we've been doing it with dozens of families. And every one of them is that kind of life story, in different ways. George Bush did something like that for us. We got a couple of people out through him. Quite dramatic stories. And we became very close friends as a result of that. He was superb.

Q. Was it with the help of Billy Graham?

A. No, he did it on his own, did it on his own. And some day I'll have to find a way of putting that down but-- He made-- He literally violated protocol with the State Department. There was a young Jew named Gabriel Shapiro who was a dissident, a leader in the dissident movement, and the Soviets were out to really punish him. And he had a girlfriend here named Judy Silver, a very big, heavy woman, who used to literally camp in my office to try to get him out. And we thought it was a whole group of dissidents who were going to be involved in his fate so we decided, I decided, to do what I could to help. So I went to George Bush one day and--

Q. How did you happen to chose George Bush? Is he someone you know?

A. No, I just called him up. I figured at that point, he was at the United Nations--No, we

(End of Tape 1)

Q. And I'm on the date today is October 29th and we're resuming the interview in Rabbin Marc Tanenbaum's office at the American Jewish Committee. Last time you were talking about an incident in which you called George Bush and to help get the release of someone in the Soviet Union. Can you begin in the beginning of that story because I think we stopped in the middle.

A. Yah, there were several episodes but this one had to do with a leader in the Soviet Jewish dissident movement, his name was Gabriel, Gabriel Shapiro. He was a young man, I think his middle twenties, who (?) and there was a whole cluster of dissidents around him. A youngish, American, Jewish woman whose name was Judy Silver, she was a granddaughter of a rather prominent orthodox rabbi in Cincinnati, came to my office, I don't know, it was five, six years ago, I don't remember the date but I could check it out. She came to my office and asked me to help her to get Gabriel out. She had been to Russia with a delegation of American Jews the year before and had met Gabriel and fell in love with him, but also had enormous respect for him as a key personality in the whole dissident movement. And the Russians were especially oppressive because he played such an important leadership role. So, she had been trying to get a visa for Shapiro to get him out to Israel and kept running up against a brick wall. The Soviets kept saying an enemy of the State, there's no circumstances he'll be allowed to get out. So one day I called Ambassador Bush, who was then the American ambassador to the United Nations, and asked if I could come down to see him and they had me come down and I

brought Miss Silver with me and we told him the story. And he responded immediately, with very deep feeling, and "Gee, that's terrible." Actually I had established the contact, as I think about it now, with George Bush before. I once did a broadcast for WINS on the Syrian repression of Jews and the Syrian ambassador get up at the United Nations the day after I did a broadcast, on Sunday, and condemned me as a Zionist, propagandist agent and George Bush told me that morning, he said, "You've just been attacked by the Syrian ambassador." He said, "Exactly, what the hell did you say on the radio?" So, I said, "I just told the truth which is that they have been denying Jews their civil and political rights, they don't let Jews leave the country and this is in violation of the United Nations covenant of human rights." He said, "That doesn't sound terrible. Let me see the script." So I sent the script down to him by messenger. He called me in the afternoon and he said, "There's absolutely nothing in that script which is unacceptable. I mean there's nothing there that's not true. We know it from our own American sources. And that guy misrepresented you and I'm going to defend you." So he got up in the United Nations that afternoon at 4:30 and delivered a speech defending the case that I was making against the Syrian ambassador. So I called the next day to thank him and that he really went out of his way and he really (?) something because I was defending a Jewish organization--

Q. He did mention the American Jewish Committee?

A. He read the script. He read my script. He said, "I just received the script from Rabbi Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee. I've read the script. He had been misrepresented by

the Syrian ambassador. We owe Rabbi Tanenbaum an apology for misquoting him and the other charges are certainly without foundation. And my government defends the right of the Syrian Jewish people () their human rights." So I developed a very warm feeling for him as a result of that episode. He didn't have to do it but he did. He went out of his way to make a case of. So then when the Judy Silver episode started I called him and we came down to see him. Judy Silver told the story. She was a rather, I must say a very large woman, a young woman, she probably weighed about 250 pounds. She'd come up to my office and eat Pepperidge Farm cookies (laugh), for her diet. She was a tough dame to deal with and I say that by way of telling another part of the George Bush story. Anyway, we came to see George Bush and Bush was very much touched by the plight of Gabriel Shapiro and he said to me, "Look, I'm going to do something I'm not supposed to do. I'm going to violate State Department protocol. But there was a time factor involved. We had to get through to the Soviet Union within a matter of a week because they were preparing to sentence him and probably send him to Siberia. It was an effort to really kill the whole dissident movement. And I approached him on an urgent basis. So he put through a call to the American ambassador in Moscow. He was not allowed to do that. He had to first clear it with the State Department and get clearance from the policy to do that. So he had a feeling of the urgency of this and that possibly a person's life was at stake and probably other dissidents were at stake. So, it just so happened that the American ambassador in Moscow at that time was Jacob Veen () and Veen was a classmate of his

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at Yale and they were very good friends, they were Jake and George. So he called Jacob Veen from his office and the U.S. Mission to the U.N. and said this is a personal call and that cleared it with the State Department as being a personal, humanitarian basis, and he told him something about Gabriel Shapiro and he said, "Look, you've got to go down to the police tomorrow and ask to visit Shapiro so that they know that the United States government has got their eye on him. And please tell them that it's a matter of very high national interest in our government. And we expect them to behave in a responsible fashion and not railroad this guy out. There'll be hell to pay. There'll be rallies all over America and (?)." And he did that. And in a matter of a couple of weeks Shapiro got his visa. He's gotten out of prison. But they made him get out of the country very quickly, almost overnight, and he went to Israel. In the meantime then they went after some of the other dissidents who were very close to him including Mark Nashovitz (?) who was a dentist, studying to be a dentist, and he didn't get away. They sent him off to a labor camp and the problem was there was nobody around. Almost in every case when you have somebody advocating, like Judy Silver was advocating in this case, and another case Rivka Alexandrovitch was advocating for her daughter, and this lifted up her cause and it came to a personality. There was nobody here for Mark Nashkovitz and we tried and brought a lot of pressure to bear but he was sent away. In any case, Gabriel Shapiro was brought to Israel. This woman, Judy Silver, went to Israel and married him. They were married for less than a month or so.

back to the States, which is what she told us, which reminded me of the good old days of waging the enormous struggle. Part of the thing I was getting at with Gabriel Shapiro, Judy Silver-Shapiro, she said it was numb (?), she married Gabriel, was that during the fight of the campaign, after, a week after he made his call, before Gabriel got his visa, I got a call from Tom Lias (?) who was Rich Shapiro's (?) administrative aide, and he says "Something terrible is going on. Ambassador Bush is meeting with a group of journalists, twelve, fifteen people, and Judy Silver is out front of the U.S. Mission with a couple dozen kids and she has a bullhorn and she's screaming that George Bush is an anti-semite."

Q. How long after?

A. This was a week after.

Q. A week after?

A. A week or ten days after that. But it was after we had seen Bush and he had made the telephone call. She had a lot of anxiety that if Gabriel wasn't gotten out of prison in two days they were going to send him off to Siberia. And, of course, he was not released in a matter of two days, she felt that somehow Bush had betrayed her and magically

(?), you know a fantasy

(?). So got together this little (?) of kids and the Students Struggle for Soviet Jewry among others, we knew that, and Bush was besides himself. Here he was sitting trying to reach a whole bunch of American and foreign correspondents on some important questions and she was calling him an anti-semite.

Q. How did you feel?

A. Well, I was sitting at a meeting here when the Bush guy called me and I said "That's a scandal." If anybody went out of his way and really risked some things, he had gotten a serious reprimand from the State Department, and the very least she owed was gratitude. So I told Lias I'll be right down. So I broke up the meeting I had, I grabbed a cab and I ran down to the U.S. Mission to the U.N. and I came over to Judy Silver and I grabbed her by the shoulders and I said, "What the Hell is the matter with you? Have you gone out of your mind? Do you always try to destroy your friends, the people who try to help you? You were there when he made the telephone call. You know how he did it for you. He didn't have to do that. He did it out of the goodness of his heart and your voiding his decency by trying to undermine him." And I said, "If you don't stop this immediately and break up this riot don't you ever call me again for anything and I will run you out of the Jewish community." I just threw everything at her because she was a hysterical woman and I knew she had to be reached in a way she would understand. Well, she got the message and she turned around she said (?) to JDL and the others and they broke it up and went away. So I walked to the side door and George Bush came out, he was taking these guys to lunch up on Second Ave., and he came out and embraced me and thanked me and said "You've saved my life. That's all I needed with all these correspondents being called an anti-semite. George Bush being called anti-semite." He said he was on his way to the White House and the State Department. But I think that's simply a matter of just basic, elementary fairness. After that episode we became fast

friends. He would call me about all kinds of things. If Jewish officials came to see him and he didn't know who they were he'd call me up and say, "Should I see these people? Who are they? What are they all about?" I had two other cases that he helped me get people out, much (?), and some of them very poignant cases. A young, beautiful Russian Jewish woman who was pregnant, six, seven months, and they let her go but kept her husband back and (?).

So I came down to see Bush and this is after the Silver episode, and he acted as if the Judy Silver episode never took place and did some of the same kinds of things all over again. And he got her husband out in a short period of time. He did the same thing with Ruth Alexandrovitch, her daughter-- Rivka Alexandrovitch was the mother and her daughter was put in prison and was very seriously ill and he did some very strong things although the real person who helped me get her out was Billy Graham.

Q. You told that story, it's a wonderful story. So much of what you do depends upon your personal contacts with leaders of all kinds, both religious leaders and government leaders. Have you ever been disappointed when you contacted someone and asked for their help in any way? Have you been turned down? Is there any instance you can think of?

A. Sure. This is not all fun and games, and--

Q. Success stories

A. Peaches and cream, success stories. There are a great many disappointments and I have frequently (?).

We've had some very great disappointments with the Vatican. We've had some perfectly marvelous meetings with some of the

right things about the spiritual relationship between the Catholic church and the Jewish people and then the Vatican Secretary of State turns around and spouts policies. For a very good example his last statement of the internationalization of Jerusalem. They betrayed the Israel Embassy in Rome. They assured the Embassy in London that nothing was going to happen in Jerusalem and if something was going to happen on Jerusalem they would let them know first. They dropped the statement like a time bomb on the United Nations on the internationalization of the city of Jerusalem. That's a moral outrage! And I was fit to be tied. A number of years before, in fact, during Pope Paul's VI reign, I happened to be very close to the Pope's representative in the United Nations, a monsignor Signonetti (?) and he one day came and asked to have lunch (?) have lunch with (?) and me for the sole purpose of telling us that he had a direct message from the Pope Vatican on the (?) Secretary of State to assure us that the Vatican had given up permanently any proposal for the internationalization of the city of Jerusalem. All they were interested in were free access to the holy places. And they know they have that now under Israel better than ever before and all they wanted was some kind of international statute to confirm what is already in place there. And I, you know was (?) to that in that there was one front hostility toward Israel that was dissolved. So little by little we got to the end of the 1970's this identification X (?) for the Secretary of State of the third world line, the PLO and the Arabs. We were (Hussein saw him) overwhelming the Vatican and a month ago he was saying so. And after that a representative from Sadat saw him and he (?) then right after that King Hassan All of them saw him from Morocco. ~~XXXXXX~~ bringing pressure to bear for some kind of

internationalization of the city of Jerusalem. The Egyptians did not do that but all the Arabs and Muslims did. The Jordanians have a special understanding they want () to be turned over to Jordan. I don't know you can read in () the Vatican now for almost a decade, they have very deep feelings

() it's a very disappointing business.

() hope that out of these relationships, it is very restrained that they will not try to do something to intimidate them. But this last act was one of intimidation. And that was outrageous.

Q. How did you respond or did the committee respond?

A. Well, we have joint international committee now of all the major Jewish organizations and we register. We have a meeting on October 21 in Rome () our people's () representing AIC at which we registered a formal protest about what was said and how it was done and we've asked for a meeting for the () Secretary of State and we're in the process of setting that up and there we plan to do whatever we can. It's a very difficult problem. Because on one hand the Vatican is aligning itself with the European Economic community () The European countries now want to capitulate to the PLO and to the Arabs. They'll buy off their opposition and maintain indefinite flow to the (). And the Vatican since its power base rests first of all in Western Europe, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal... a very large constituency. And the policies of those governments is let's buy out the Arabs. Recognize the PLO. They want to impose the peace in order to assure free access () and the Vatican City conforms to that. And the United States has nothing terribly helpful? X() to that....the White House and they ~~can't~~ get mixed signals

(?) and so it's a massive, massive problem. A great challenge is how to find the right conception of how to cope with that and it's not easy. ...force of history, but go ahead and try to do it. I have now illusions about that. (?) inhibit their going very public and pressing aggressively (?) The National Council of Church (?) United Nations dominated by Arab Christians who sit in on all their 9(?) who write all their statements about (?) about Israel. We just had a meeting in Crakow the end of August, we walked into the meeting and there is a resolution on Jerusalem contending that Israel is one sided, unfair, unjust resolution written by --- and I know the guy who wrote it and the guy happens to be a (?) for the PLO. And he was told by Arab (?) this is what I want you to (?) so they (?) C so we had this meeting AND I led off the discussion and I (?) I got very tough because I felt who am I playing games with? (?) discuss theology and (?) and moral values while these people are out there undermining Jewish existence (?) I started by saying that you're making....you're --- I don't know (?) this relationship at all but if you are (?) on display it might be impossible to continue. You are doubtless enemies of the Jewish people. People who are out to destroy us. And we're not going to make any pretense about it. We have good good relationships and dialogues going when year after year you adopt positions which are threatening the very existence of Israel and of Jerusalem. Then a few others joined in including Professor (?) of Jerusalem and by the time we finished the Christians in that room were beside themselves. A bunch of these were Western Christians (?) and then they had a private caucus. And

they adopted a statement supporting our point of view and demanding that the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches hear a delegation of Jews and Israelis to make our case on Jerusalem and ask them to repeal the statement. It's not going to happen but at least something happened there ~~that~~ with that group and it was a unanimous position of all the Christians or the Christian Committee of the Jewish people. But it's a minor victory because the positions have been adopted and we have to continue the battle. In that sense part of this work where you are dealing with in a sense the religious side of political positions, it's like Sis^{ph}us (?), you keep pushing the rock of the mountain and you have very little hope that you will get close to the top of the mountain before the rock of (?) falls down. And you sit there 9 (?) You know that you are going into this minefield. And that the mines are all pointing at you and you still go out and try to detonate as much as you can. Defuse as many as you can. And it's just plain percentages, you'll never make any ultimate difference. But that's part of the job. Compensation comes with meeting with many Christians within the United States, it's the kind of this Daily Smith episode (?) thing like friendship with Billy Graham and ---- (?) and you know a lot of people are horrified about that. The important thing that happened, more important than the statement he made was the response and I have really filed the letters and telegrams, resolutions adopted by Southern Baptists Evangelists condemning him (?) their love for Jews and Judaism. There's a marvelous cartoon we have in the latest newsletter of an angel sitting at the switchboard in heaven called the Celestial Telephone Company and the caption on it was the angel says, "I'm sorry Doctor Smith, you'll have to wait a few more minutes, he's talking to a Rabbi now."

Q. (laughs)

A. But that's been an encouragement. That's the product of more than twenty years of working with evangelicals. Which the American Jewish Committee did because nobody else wanted to talk to them. In fact there was a time when I started talking to Billy Graham that people thought I was going bananas.

Q. Here at the Committee? Did you have criticism when you began that?

A. No, the marvelous thing about the Committee was that while people may have personal reservations, there is a certain respect that ---assumption that --- they thought I knew what I was doing ---my staff knew what we were doing. They let us do it though they thought it was a waste of time, fobbliness, nonsense. And then if it worked, it's marvelous...you're a dancing girl. I operate very strongly---the basis approach you have in this work is first to study very carefully while we are working. I spend a great deal of time since we study this whole area and I read probably everything I can get my hands on in terms of Southern style, Southern culture, Southern religion, politics and I have a sense of some vast churning going on, some churning. I read a great deal of Billy Grahams material and I saw there were insights there, a kind of openness in certain places and that it had to be tested whether it could be with all of them. And so I moved in that direction when I felt that there was a probability of change and it worked. I saw that it could work and it did. And when we saw what happened when Graham came to the AJC meeting in Atlanta in a spectacular speech. We had people who didn't want to come. We had people who cancelled their reservations when we were inviting Graham, when we were inviting these primitive, or fundamentalists, anti-semites. In the popular mind the cliché was that evangelicals were all anti-semitic.

Well, that's not the case at all. There are millions of Babtists, Southern Babtists, who love Jews, who see Jews as brothers and sisters under the skin, that both of us have suffered terrible persecution for freedom of conscience, for religious liberty. Babtists suffered terribly in America. In Virginia they were thrown into prison, they were arrested, they were shot for demanding the right to carry out Babtist worship. The Anglican church was the established church and they wouldn't allow them to preach. The Babtists who've gone through that history know that history. They were the foremost champions of religious liberty in America and their greatest contribution was pluralism. Their intuitive feelings about that were Jews is powerful and whenever we sit and meet with them that comes out immediately. They see us as their greatest allies and we see them as very great allies in that field (?). So all of that history as well as their appreciation of the bible, and they feel great indebtedness to Jews for the bible, it's through us that their greatest treasure has come, that their very strong (?)

and we have been building relationships all over the United States. We have the most extensive program with Southern Babtists and Southern Presbyterians of any Jewish group in America.

Q. Are these the same people who make up the moral majority and --?

A. Not really. The moral majority is the right wing fundamentalist wing of the evangelical community (?). It's a very diverse group. The core of the Evangelical Christians is the Southern Babtists who number about thirteen million people. And there are Southern Presbyterians who probably number about

five, six million people. And there are Southern Methodists who are part of the Methodist Church, the Methodist Church itself has about ten or eleven million people. A good core a good part of that are Evangelical Christians. Then there are a great many independent Baptist churches, there are some thirty independent Baptist (?) . All together they number forty, fifty million people. Now the Fundamentalists are the ultra-Conservative wing of the Evangelical community who have very little to do with other-Evangelicals. They being the fact that they're heretical, as it is now. So our work with the moral majority group has been, on the one hand, to expose the ideology of the moral majority, which we think is threatening to American democracy and pluralism and that's why I moved ahead with that meeting with Jerry Fallwell (?). Now at first a standard conversation with him about what you're doing, you better understand what you're doing, at least in my perspective, and I must say that his response was phenomenal. He was sitting in the chair that you're sitting in, in fact. But he really got in touch with the rest of America. He was contrasted, for example, with somebody like Dr. Jimmy Allen, who's the former president of the Southern Baptists, who's a moderate, very committed to social justice, very committed to human rights, has been a very great friend of Israel and on Soviet Jewry, and the Israel government were holding hearings on the law dealing with religious liberty and missionaries they invited him to testify as a friend of the court. And he came and gave very great testimony and the orthodox Jews David Glass, expressed his deepest appreciation for him. So there are Baptists and there are Baptists. There are white

Babtists and there are black Babtists.

Q. Have you had any contact with these Fundamentalists groups at all before?

A. Yeah, but by and large negative. (Interruption) Yeah, my first experiences were disastrous with them. In 1969 we organized a conference with the Evangelical Theological Society in Santa Barbara, California. They were holding their annual meeting. And these were all of the major Evangelical Theologians. (Interruption) So we had this meeting with the Evangelical Theological Society, it was our first major conference with them, we brought together a group of Jewish scholars in Santa Barbara, and it was a very nervous, anxious meeting because these were ultra-conservative theologians and they were struggling to find ways of talking to Jews with respect to Jews and at the same time to tell them that we're not saved that to be saved -- (Interruption) So, well we had this meeting and it's polite and pleasant and everybody's trying to be as nice as we could to each other and we were trying to warm up and it was like a first blind date. And-- But it begins warming up and we have Jewish scholars present papers, very impressive papers, the Evangelical scholars present very impressive papers and then, by the end of the second day, an Evangelical Hebrew Christian, I'll never forget his name, Dr. Louis Feinberg, gets up on the floor and he's a very Fundamentalist guy and he says "This meeting is a fraud. It is an act of hypocrisy because I have heard noone here testify to the fact that noone is saved except that he accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Only by the blood of Jesus is our solemn sins forgiven." Well it was like the BIC

coming into a meeting a dropping a hand grenade and the damn thing just began to explode. And the Jews felt put upon, as if we had been invited to their seminary and they suddenly decided that they were taking us hostage, spiritual hostage. That was a very touchy moment and they were embarrassed. The Christians were more embarrassed than we were, especially the more sensitive among them. Well, one of our scholars, Samson Levey, was standing at the microphone and he was infuriated by this and he got up and he delivered a speech, just in reaction to this in anger, in which he began going after what he took (?) to give the irrationalities of Christian theology. Jesus crucifixion was nothing other than human sacrifice, the regression to barbarism (?). I mean he began giving it on the level where all of his guts were spilled out. It was a nightmare. So I finally got up when I saw it was getting out of hand and I tried calmer words and I remember saying something pacifying, some placebo, and I just tried to move the meeting to the point where we finally declared the meeting adjourned. I said there were some very good things here, some important things here, and we shouldn't let that be washed out. But this is an indication of what happens when you get a fanatic with extreme position which are beyond discussion and when you insist having only your own way. And when you insist having only your own way then you get somebody who insists on having only their own way on the other side and you have disaster. So that was the meeting with Fundamentalists, a major group. I thought we began making some progress with them, they began seeing Jews as people for the first time, but this one guy threw his time bomb and that did it. Anyway, there have been several things

like that. I mean I've had experiences in speaking in a synagogue in Florida and a guy got up and said almost the same thing. It's like a kid that throws a tantrum at the end of the meeting because the meeting-- because there were no conversions at that meeting, no decisions for Christ, it was useless. Well, that's around, it's all around it's all over the country and you have to now anticipate it. But this is a different thing, though, the whole moral majority alliance with ultra-conservative politicians is a different reality because now you've got a mixture of religion and political organization and an ideology of the Christians

(?) there's a whole different kind of chemistry and the responsibility is to, one of my friends (?)unpack it, you've got to unpack the elements to understand what's here. Unpack the politics from religion and then deal with it each in their own way.

Q. Is this a concern, the concern with the moral majority and how to combat what's happening, just something that you are doing in the Committee or is it something that the whole Committee is involved in and how do you work with other departments to attack an issue such as this which might cross the boundaries of a department?

A. It's an agency-wide concern and we've had a number of major staff discussions. We had one at the Staff Cabinet meeting at which we discussed it in terms of a whole range of components. This deals with one side of it. The (?) Evangelicals deals primarily with the role the Evangelical churches, far less with the political component on it although it keeps spilling over. Then there is the right-wing lunatic fringe as the term

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has been used that of the KKK and the American Nazi Party which is part of the atmospherics, though, this ultra-conservative atmosphere that exploit in the anxiety that those things emerge. So Milton Haller and his staff have done a marvelous, a really excellent job, first of all in getting data and then by a written superb memorandum that was used by the NEC. No, it's an inter-departmental concern. It's just that the thing that has happened is because the electronic features I deal with are so media conscious that they're called media freaks that in confronting them and responding to them so you tend to hook into their media attention. It's because we take them on-- Now, I don't know what would happen if we took on the KKK, if we did something in relations-- Well, actually I did yesterday with Suffolk County the Daily News picked up a quotation about that, too. But our other work which is serious and extensive has not gotten as much attention. But I do think that's because of the fact that the electronic creatures (?) have got much more attention than politicians. But it's a major agency concern. That's why the NEC meeting now, when we put that discussion together we had Allen Crawford who did a political analysis of the conservative right wing and Dr. Jammy Allen did a religious side of it. All of that was part of our whole agency approach.

Q. Do you have personal-- You seem to get a lot of media attention and you do a lot of travelling and public speaking, do you ever feel sometimes that the policy of the Committee, which is to do things behind the scenes, is-- hampers you in the way you do things?

A. No, --

Q. Or are you really free to do--?

A. No, actually whatever I do-- I haven't taken a single position on any of the major issues without consulting standing AJC policy or getting clearance with Bert Gold or Selma Hirsch. I sometimes have some differing interpretations of our positions and I'm very careful about not pushing those too far but sometimes it becomes essential when I'm put on the line that I have to declare my personal views which may be--

Q. Can you--?

A. Give a case in point?

Q. Give a case of where you differ.

A. I tend to feel that we have got to be more forthcoming and communicate to the Catholic community, as well as the orthodox Jewish community, that we care about the education crisis that they face in the private school system, in the parochial school system. I think it's not enough simply to say that they're violating church and state in parochial schools. I uphold the separation of church and state and I don't think there ought to be any government funds for the support of religious instruction in schools. But I do think there are aspects of the parochial school problem, really crisis. They need some help. For example, I sat down with Murray Friedman from our Philadelphia office, to talk through whether it's possible to support auxiliary aid for remedial, therapeutic services for children in school without violating church and state. And we consulted with some of our lawyers who said yes, they felt it was not a violation. It could become a borderline case and I

encourage that we try to find every constructive way to relieve some of the pressure. You know middle class, blue collar people who're sending kids ethnics, Jewish parents, orthodox, who're sending their kids to parochial school, to yeshivas, people earning twelve, thirteen thousand dollars a year, fifteen thousand dollars a year, are sending three, four kids through school and have to pay tuition four, five hundred, eight hundred dollars a year. And they're suffering. I mean, they are hurting very badly. And I say that if you care about inter-group relations you have to pay attention to that. So I have tended to take a very positive attitude to let Catholics know that we care about their children, about parents who are hurting, that we're not simply saying nyet to everything they're asking for but that we're going to try to find constructive alternatives, within the constitutional principle, and we're going to work at it actively. There's a great sense of appreciation for that in the Catholic community. They're not asking us to violate the law, they just want to know that you care. Just as I think Jews know that it's important for us that there are many Catholics and Protestants who care about us about things that hurt us. Who are going to be there when we're hurting on anti-semitism, who are going to be there on Israel, who are going to be there on Jerusalem, who are going to be there on Soviet Jewry. And it's a two-way street. You can't have it when you-- You know I say this at some meetings with Jews who feel that you can say anything you want, you can be as negative and critical and hostile, and Christians are still going to come and give a crack at your door when you want them. I mean that's, first of all. it's incredibly

arrogant and it's a fantasy life, there's no sense of realism. In human relationships there's got to be a certain amount of sharing. People have to know that, yeah, okay, you were there to help me and the human quality is to say that you were there when I needed you I want to be there when you need me. Without treating principles, as it stands, it's an attitude. And one thing that I tried to do in this agency has been within the confines of our position to communicate this kind of caring to Catholics and others. I've written some pieces about it, I've published some things in a book about it and I think that's been a very important contribution to the friendship we've had in the Catholic community. They know that of all the Jewish agencies at least the American Jewish Committee is not dismissing us, is not calous and indifferent, they're really trying in good faith to find a way to help.

Q. Do you think they see that? In the Catholic community?

A. Oh, yeah. They write articles about it and they say that. They make distinctions between groups who are out simply to try to destroy them, as they see it, undermine their school system. So that's been a factor and --

Q. Have you ever had to fight within the Committee for an issue of something that you've believed in where you had to fight within the--for a position, for the Committee to take a position or not to take a position?

A. Well, this has been one of them, the aid to parochial schools, and I've participated in a debate pushing our support for auxilliary services for schools as means for providing for remedial reading, for therapy, for medical services. that the

whole thing now about bringing buses and those kinds of services to the street in front of a school so that the kids come out of the parochial schools and use the buses so that there's no violation of the use of the property. Well, I've fought pretty hard for that in a couple of lay committees for that to happen. I've fought for us to have this German program. We have a program now on the revision of German textbooks and bringing, working with the University of (?) which is now examining textbooks in the whole religious and secular system of Germany and producing new books and in cooperation with us to teach about Jews, Judaism, the Nazi Holocaust and Israel. There was a certain kind of ambivalence about that, not wanting to touch Germany, worrying about whether Jews will understand what we're trying to do. And, in fact, a year ago, more than a year ago, I proposed in a session in one of our annual meetings on the German thing and there was a reluctance to want to touch it, like an unguided missile that can explode in your face if you can't handle it right. But we just had it this past week it was a sensational session. We brought over a German scholar who I proposed bringing over and he made a marvelous presentation. There was a lot of anxiety, you could feel the anxiety in the room. Could you believe him? It's not true. They're not changing, they don't care, they're all Nazis, they're all anti-semites. So that was-- I know there were other issues along the way. In the Vatican Council, too, I (?) an enormous amount of verse (?), certain ways of doing things, both in Rome and here, how we held with statements (?) because of

with that. But, generally, there was a very creative atmosphere, it was a kind of creative competition which I welcomed. There was a difference in point of views but they were honest differences in most cases.

Q. Your whole staff, do they generally feel that they can disagree and fight within the confines of the Committee and not feel that they're going to lose their job in any way?

Q. Oh, sure. I, in fact, sometimes I think they err in feeling too much with us. No, there's just too much agreement and sometimes consensus. An agency that's alive and vital and is dealing with very hard issues can stand a good measure of creative debate, intellectually searching, pushing as far as we can go and we have them. We have honest discussions. It's just that on any number of issues there's so much consensus about real things we don't debate about how you fight the Klan or the Nazis, only it's just a question of method. You know that they're an enemy and you've got to zap them wherever you can. With the Evangelicals there was some reservations. But, you know, I've been here now for twenty years and there's a certain sense that people have that I know pretty much what I'm doing, I don't start getting involved in something unless I've really done my homework. And when I make a recommendation that we really ought to move forward on something I've got a track record. And we've had a lot of success stories and that's put me in good stead. It's just that I don't squander that because I don't say that because of that they believe in something silly or foolish or a flash in the pan. Also I've gotten a little bit more silver (laugh).

Q. If you were given all the money you wanted for programs

A. Oh, no.

Q. Or Jewish organization? I guess there's the Eternal Light.

A. The Eternal Light is on, yeah, and the (?) Board of Rabbis have alot of programs. There are lots of programs around but not-- TheEternal Light at one time was a very high classed program, sometimes a great program. When I was a student at the seminary I worked with (?) as an assistant when he was doing the radio program. I thought he was a great witer and produced some very great programs, deeply moving programs. There's not a single great Jewish program around today. Eternal Light is good but in a certain sense it's peaked and people have heard it before,qit's a repeat, there's something tired about it. It comes every once in awhile with something fresh. But if you look at the media there is not a single, identifiable, major Jewish media event on any sustained basis, at least here in America. You get pieces of things, you know, you get a piece of 20/20 but it just becomes a small thing but

(?) going's to come through. I think there's a very large need. It's more difficult now because of the Evangelical thing. The competition from the Evangelical worled, the amount of time that they have, the time they bought from the network affiliates, has become a major threat.

Q. What role do the lay people play--?

(Interruption of discussion)

Q. I wanted to ask the role of lay people in the decision-making process in your department and how are they used and what role, in general, do they play, and what kind of relationships

have you developed with laypeople over the years?

A. Well, it's probably more ambiguous in this department possibly than in others, although we've been working at it very seriously especially with our national chairman, (?). Our former chairman, ~~Leonard Jacobs~~ (?), was really issue and task oriented. I mean, he had a feeling about anti-semitism, which he, himself, experienced in the executive suite, and he was determined when he came in, wanting to use the department with how to deal with problems. And lay people he saw, if they could help support it, fine. But he wrote articles, himself, about it which no other lay person did. Leonard was that kind of task-oriented. Miles and Bob Jacobs were especially gifted in trying to work out lay-professional relations and spent much more time with that. I see the ambiguity out of the fact (?) that in certain areas of this work it takes a certain kind of lay-professional confidence. I mean, there's the business of knowing Christian theology and knowing Catholic theology, and knowing Evangelical theology. You can't get that in instant lessons (?) and you can't fake it. You can learn more about it, and I hope our people do learn more. I think along the way more and more is learned about it. Frankly, I think our lay people just by sitting on some of the sessions know more about it than most lay people in any other Jewish organization. First they know there is an Evangelical and they know there are Fundamentalists and they know it's possible to have friendship with a Billy Graham and a Jimmy Allen, which other people don't know. Also the business of textbook studies, it's a very technical

thing and we even in my own department the only person really competent to do that is (?) and (?) and (?) are not involved in that. It's a whole different experience. She does the programming of passion play studies. It's a highly specialized thing. One of our lay people, Kurt Kellman (?), for example, because he comes from Germany and has had a great interest, he has just done a study of the passion play for us. That's also a semi-professional role. He's a lay person acting as a professional, doing a professional job. There is the area of policy making and we have been trying to do more and more of that. For example, on the 75th anniversary we had not made a step in terms of planning for that without having a sub-committee on the 75th anniversary out of whom all the ideas have come to plan for that. And that's been a very healthy thing. ^{John S. Soderstrom} Tim Likofsky (?) is the chairman of that and there are other people on that committee. That's a good model of how to work. And ideally we need to be doing more of that in other areas of our work, in relation to the Evangelicals and others. One of the problems was a staff problem. This department is over-produced and under-staffed. It is, given the fact that we are all together four professionals, I was hoping you knew this. We covering a country that has 325 million people, touching (?) the Vatican, touching the Royal Council of churches, programs in Asia, contacts in Africa, in Latin America. In every sense it's absurdity. What you try to do is pick and choose and pick aspects of this which you know are central themes which means, though, that you do not have enough manpower to be able to do justice to lay-professional

relationships and we have to provide for that. One of the biggest problems in this agency is that we need executive and administrative help, we don't have that. I need an executive assistant who does nothing but run an office. I don't have that. I have a secretary who does as well as she can but it's been just very difficult to get that in terms of the budget. But that's how a well run operation would run. You would make sure you provide enough help for program, enough help for executive back-up to see to it that the program could work most effectively and enough of that administrative executive help would be also by running lay-professional relations. Somewhere along the way, before I retire, we'll get to that, hopefully sooner rather than later.

Q. Shall we stop now? It's a good time to stop.

(Interruption of Interview Tape 2 - Side 2)

Q. This is Mimi Alperin resuming the interview with Marc Tanenbaum and today is November 13th. I want to know how you feel about Jerry Fuchs (?) receiving an award at the Jabotinsky dinner from the Israeli government for his support of Israel?

A. I think it's important, at the outset, to see it in some context. First of all, the Jabotinsky dinner was a political, ideological event, it is not an event of the Israeli government. It was organized by the Herut revisionist party and primarily was a fund-raising function to raise funds which are undoubtedly are going to be used for the political campaign of the Likud next November. So, in that sense, it was not a government function. Then the context was that a hundred people who have ostensibly

had records of service to Israel and to the Zionist movement were honored. Jerry Fallwell (?) must be seen as not only one of the hundred but one of, perhaps, a half dozen Christians who were also honored. Now, Billy-Graham was honored and quite legitimately so. Graham has been a very great friend of Israel from the very beginning and has been an intimate friend of people like Golda Meir and Rabin, and others. He's done a very great service to Israel especially at periods of great crisis such as the 1967 war and 1973 war. He deserved to be honored. He did this great film on Israel, which we collaborated with him on, called His Land. Also honored were two protestants, Dr. Franklin Littell (?), who deserved it, and the Eckhardts (?), Dr. Willy Eckhardt (?) who have been -- (Tape interrupts). So what I'm trying to say is that it was appropriate to honor a group of Christians. The problem became the notoriety of Fallwell. Had Billy Graham been there Graham would probably have gotten as much attention as Fallwell had. He certainly would have represented a balance against which Fallwell's presence would have been relativized, would have been seen in some proportion. Because the election just took place and because of all the prominence given to the moral majority Fallwell stuck out like a very large thumb and one saw the distortion the media gave to that by the fact that the New York Post wrote a piece as if the whole Jabotinsky dinner was organized for the sake of honoring Fallwell. The whole headline was that. And on the television camera had much less about the Jabotinsky dinner than they had with personal interviews with Fallwell. So in that sense it became one of those distortions that the media frequently

perpetrates and I wouldn't get terribly excited over it. Fallwell deserves to be acknowledged. He has been a great friend of Israel for some twenty-five years. He never misses an occasion to speak words of support for Israel. He also has given a lot of money to Israel. He's planted some gardens, and trees in Israel. Given the fact that the Jews are so isolated and Israel is alienated in the United Nations that the Pope has been saying peculiar and troublesome things about Jerusalem and the Palestinians. The Royal Council of Churches has been doing the same thing. We can't exact to be a purist about who your friends are and now that we're moving into a new administration in the United States with a Reagan presidency and these conservative Republicans are going to play a very important role in the next administration, we've got to find a way selectively how to work with people who are supportive of Jewish interests and be critical of them when they are anti-democratic or anti-pluralist, which is the line that we've been taking.

Q. But you feel free to be able to do that?

A. Well, I don't think that we have any alternative. I think ^{who} people who treat them as if they're monsters or stereotypes will in fact make monsters out of them, will in fact alienate them. The truth of the matter is since I saw Fallwell I had lunch with the president of the Moral Majority in New York and Dr. Carl MacIntyre (?) who came here to see me just yesterday says his problem with Fallwell is Fallwell is not Fundamentalist enough for him. Anyway, it's not-- One of my press used to say "Life is mightier than logic," and by abstract logical category

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you become very circumspect and even precious about who you work with. We're not in that business. We're not in the business of trying to produce pure events and you have to realize that people who would prefer, for example, to relate only with liberal Christians, how do they explain going to bed with the National Council of Churches which has been struggling to come out with a more balanced position and ends up endorsing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the PLO. So there are no ideal situations and you have to-- The whole theory of how people relate to each other in a democratic society, and the theory is that of selective participation. Nobody gets involved totally in any one organization to the exclusion of others. I mean, you work selectively, and that's how I work in Religious Affairs. There are certain things selectively we can do with the Roman Catholic Church. We cannot go the way they want to go, as they would like us to go, on abortion and aid to parochial schools, yet there's a whole area where we can work with them. And the same is true with the Protestants and Evangelicals as well as with other Jews.

Q. Okay, I want to skip to your experiences in Southeast Asia. How did you--? I can understand your personal involvement, but how was it decided by the Committee or those, let's say, Bert Gold, that you become involved? Or did you go to him? How did that happen that you became so involved in the relief efforts and really raising American consciousness to what was happening in Southeast Asia.

A. First of all, we had a number of precedents for that kind of involvement in humanitarian, refugee projects before then.

In 1968 I was approached by some people from Biafra, there was a big Biafran struggle to develop an autonomous republic independent of the Nigerian government, and a number of Biafrans, Negro Christians, came to my office, sent to me by Christians with whom I had worked in other areas, Catholic Relief Service, Church World Service, asking if we would help. And in those days the Christian Ibos, who were called the Jews of Nigeria, were being massacred by the thousands. They came here with photographs of their children who were dying like flies. They started off by saying what's happening to us is like what happened to the Jews in Germany in 1930, we're being destroyed by the tens of thousands and nobody's paying attention. So we organized an American Jewish Emergency Relief effort for the victims of the Nigerian-Biafran conflict. I brought these people in to meet Bert Gold, Bert met with the officers, he made a decision then, and we called together twenty-one Jewish organizations here at AJC and we organized that intra-Jewish Emergency Relief Effort for Biafra Nigeria. It was a very important contribution, they'd never done anything like that before in the same way. We raised a lot of money, we helped provide doctors and nurses, literally helped save thousands of lives. Now, against the background of that precedent, and the feeling that we had that this was an appropriate thing, a necessary thing for Jews to do, in order to overcome the kind of callousness to human suffering that was taking place in the world, that when the Southeast Asian episode emerged with the destruction of so many thousands of Vietnamese boat people, it was almost a replay of what happened in Nigeria-Biafra. At that time, 1978, the president of the International Rescue

Committee, Leo Churn (?), called me up. He knew that I was concerned about these matters as a Jew and as a representative of AJC and as a human being. He was then putting together a delegation of fourteen prominent Americans who'd be willing to go on a semi-governmental, fact-finding mission to look into the plight of the Vietnamese boat people and he asked me if I would join them. So I said I was interested in doing it if I could and I discussed it with Bert Gold and Bert authorized my going. So I went on this mission and I was transformed by it, I mean it really changed my life. We went through every refugee camp in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Phillipines, Thailand, Singapore, and to see people literally dying before your eyes, mothers holding children, collapsing from hunger and malnutrition. I couldn't sleep for nights after that and I was determined to do whatever I could when I came back. I mean, for me it was like looking at some of the Jews who were left after the Nazi concentraion camps. I mean children with bodies that were bones, just sacks of bones, bloated bellies from starvation, hair that was turned orange from protein malnutrition. And I knew that, I didn't think about it logically, just my human response to that was one of we've got to do something about this. What kind of world is it that allows Biafra to take place and lets hundreds of thousands of people die, in Uganda 400 thousand, 500 thousand massacred, and now this. And you cannot say you don't know about it. It's on television, on radio. The problem is that it's very abstract and remote, you watch it for 3 minutes on Cronkite on television and then it's over with. So I came

and I discussed it with Bert. Bert called together a meeting of some twelve important Jewish leaders, people of substance, and we made a decision to set up our own fund to try to raise some funds for them and we did. There were some very important Jews who came to that who themselves had earlier come to Bert saying what are we doing about it, people like Albert Parker, who's in the movie industry, another fellow from Washington who owned the Baltimore Colts, people of real substance, and then then some of our own leaders, Richie Mo^{ny}z (?) was there, Morris Abrams was there and others. So we made a decision that AJC would get involved and I saw that, as I came back, that Catholics and Protestants were raising money but my own feeling was that a great many people did not understand the magnitude of this human crisis, did not realize how serious this was, and that there had to be some organization taking place, some interpretation of this. I also felt that it was an occasion to try to help Christians understand what Jews went through, the terror of being abandoned by the world, of being literally confronted by a world that was escaping the reality of the massacres that were going on. So I began travelling around the country organizing ecumenical and inter-religious groups and literally every region of the United States we probably have organized forty, fifty groups with the purpose of having them number one receive refugees and number two help raise funds and I guess the third thing was to help them become rehabilitated when they came back. And to the credit of the Jewish community after, I think, AJC dramatized the seriousness of the plight almost every major Jewish group began to get involved after that. The Reform Seminary,

Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk (?) of HUC, sent a letter, he, himself, is a survivor of Nazi Germany, sent a letter to every reform rabbi in America asking every reform congregation to adopt at least one Vietnamese family or one person and literally hundreds of congregations, not only reform but conservative as well, Jewish community councils, Jewish federations, began doing that. The Jewish community has resettled something like eight to ten thousand refugees. And that was taking place at a time when we were also burdened with receiving Soviet Jews, Iranian Jews, but nevertheless the Jewish heart was big enough to be able to receive these people. Jews wanted to make a statement to themselves and I think to the Christian world that we did learn something from the Nazi experience, that you don't stand by while human beings are dying before your eyes. And it really, to me, has been one of the magnificent chapters of the American Jewish community and it's created a kind of consciousness that while Jews are overwhelmed by their own problems there is such a deep sense of humaneness and caring, compassion, that when tragedies like this strike Jews will be present. I just got a letter yesterday from the president of the Church World Service, a very warm letter, expressing deep appreciation for the contribution AJC made, we just gave them \$10,000 not too long ago, and he said this is a model of what happens when Christians and Jews in America collaborate in great human issues. So we had all kinds of values not the least of which is that we helped save literally tens of thousands of lives. I think one of the most important things, I've gone back three times to Southeast Asia with the International Rescue Committee. one of the most important things

that happened that was that our delegation came back, we met with President Carter and Mrs. Carter, Brzinsky, with Vance, Cyrus Vance, with a large luncheon with senators and congressmen in the Capitol, and the most important thing that we did was that we got President Carter to issue an executive order to the seventh fleet in the Phillipines that was there, steaming in the harbor, polishing brass, that they must go into the South China Sea and whenever they see a boat in trouble they were commanded to get the people out of the water before they drowned. Prior to that sixty percent of the Vietnamese boat people were drowning. It's incredible.

Q. And the Seventh Fleet would stand by and watch?

A. And the Seventh Fleet they sent in ships and helicopters and they kept waiting all over the South China Sea and whenever they saw a boat in trouble somebody would signal them that they needed food or water they went in and took them out or gave them provisions. And, literally, ~~it has~~ virtually brought to an end the drowning of the Vietnamese boat people ~~or~~ the Cambodians. Then after that the Cambodian crisis took place and that was the last trip I took in February with Liv Ullman and Joan Baez, Bayard Rustin, Eli Wiesel, and Leo Churns, and several others, and a great many Europeans. We brought twenty truckloads of food and medicine to the border of Cambodia. The Cambodians wouldn't let us in, we turned around and took it back to the camps in Thailand, (?) and (?), which are two of the major camps, and we distributed that food to the Thai Red Cross and it helped save thousands of lives. And, to me, it was one of the proudest chapters of my twenty years with

care about Soviet Jews and specific Jewish problems, ~~the Jews~~ also care about the condition of the human family and just don't talk about it but do something about it. ~~That we're present.~~ And you see that in the response of congressmen and senators in their recognition that with all the problems we have Jews have found enough conscience in their souls to be present when people are hurting. And I think it's had some political effect. It's had some political effect on Christians. Not incidentally, as part of this picture, one of the most impressive things I saw in the camps for Cambodians and Vietnamese (?) in Thailand, in particular, were teams of Israeli doctors and nurses. With all of the problems that Israel has, with all of the efforts of isolate Israel, to paint Israel as some kind of moral pariah, the Israelis were among the first to send over teams of doctors and nurses. They sent over four teams, I saw the fourth team when I was there, and they did a fantastic job. They put an end to epidemics of all kinds, malaria, cholera, typhus, because they had very great experience working with these kind of emergency hardship cases especially in Sinai with Bedouins. So we spent some time together there, we met the Israeli ambassador there, gave a reception in her honor. It was a very high experience, deep experience for me.

Q. Do you plan to write about it at all?

A. Well, I've kept notes and files, I've written a few articles and have done some television. The problem is that I've got to find some time to write generally. I'm working on a book now on the Evangelical phenomenon and I've written about five

chapters on that but I can barely find some time to get back to it.

Q. I want to ask you something about your children. You haven't said anything about your children, I haven't given you an opportunity but tell me, you have three children?

A. Three children. As you may know I've gone through a very great tragedy with a divorce which was a nightmare for me. I've just about gotten out of it, this past year. This was a completely unexpected thing. The children, thank God, are fine. We have three children and they're superb, superb human beings, and didn't deserve to have this tragedy inflicted upon them. My wife wanted the divorce, I didn't want the divorce, and she's-- I'll just say a word about it, I don't want to make--you know, it's a personal matter, but my wife was born in Germany and she was taken away from her parents when she was eight years old. And for about three years she wandered through the Netherlands, England, the United States, and she suffered a very deep break in her personality and suffered a very great sense of abandonment. When I met her one would never know that. She was finally reunited with her parents when they came to the United States after 1938, '39. She's a beautiful woman, very bright, she's phi beta kappa, she was studying to be a psychologist and very vital, tremendous vitality. And I fell in love with her very early.

Q. When did you meet?

A. 19-- We were married in '55 and probably met in '53. But it had not become evident until a little later on that beneath that surface of vitality and normalcy that there was one

of her-- She's been in psychiatric care for most of our marriage. There was a volcano of rage and anger, constant explosions, and, well, I learned to live with it, to accomodate with it. My father used to bang into the heads of the three of us, my brother and sister, you make your bed and you sleep in it, and I'm quite traditional in that sense. My values were that you don't break up a family and if you make a mistake you've got to make the most of it. You've got to affirm whatever is affirmable. And then when the children were born that sort of shifted some of the focus and they were a source of enormous pleasure and gratification. I used to, when my first child was born, Adina, she was a chlicy child, I used to stay up every night with her rocking her to bed and I've never forgotten those moments. It was-- I was bleary-eyed when I came to work at AJC, it was 1960, but those were very precious moments for me. I changed diapers and took out the garbage. Because I enjoyed that, I mean, I felt that--it was not a big business for me about women's lib and consziuousness. In any case, just to round out the story, it was a rather stormy, tempestuous marriage. There were very many positive things in it otherwise we wouldn't have stayed together for twenty-two years, but there was so much anger and rage that it became immobilizing for me. There was an enormous amount of guilt that my wife used to inflict on me and it got to be horrendous. It was a combination of those personal characteristics and then, later on, she grabbed hold of the women's lib movement, the most extreme version of that, which made demons of men, this idiological thing that men are the enemy and I began to see that transformation taking place in her. So, it exploded one

Marc Tanenbaum
interviewed by Mimi Alperin

Tape 3-Side 1-93
November 13, 1980

Q. Michael was probably the most brilliant of our three children. I'm not saying that because he's a boy. He has an incredible analytic power and he, in some ways, is a child of the 1960's. He has, literally, mastered American history and has read all the revisionist versions of American history and he got in trouble in high school because of it. The history teachers used to talk about Washington and Jefferson and Madison and Michael used to sit and mumble, "Yeah, Jefferson was a slave owner and he had a black concubine." And he went through that whole historic period and the teacher didn't like that, so he got into trouble. Whenever I used to go down to testify before a congressional committee or meet with some congressman or senators, I used to go in and sit down with Michael and I'd say I'm going to a foreign affairs committee or foreign relations committee. And he would say, "Well, you know the voting record of Dick Clark (?) on this legislation?" He used to memorize--he didn't sit down and memorize but actually would absorb the American almanac of politics which had the voting records of all the congressmen and senators. That was his bedtime reading. And he had this grasp of every political movement that was going on. But he has something of this very critical, almost radical, orientation toward the establishment since childhood. When he was fourteen, fifteen, he began to feel that the whole nuclear energy phenomenon was a threat to the quality of life and to survival. We had a lot of debates about it and we said well, we've got to find a way to preserve nuclear energy, the real issue is safety technology and how we

one together, but the quality of it was poor, they hadn't had a decent faculty and a bad curriculum and we wanted the kids to have the best possible education. So we began searching around at all of the schools. There was a U.N. elementary school, a kindergarden elementary school in our neighborhood in Queens, they had Parkway Village, which was a lovely setting. There were apartment houses and a very large park in the center of it and playground and they have the choice of some of the best teachers of people from all over the world, English speaking teachers. I know they have the European curriculum, I mean it's a no-nonsense curriculum. When they finished that school and even half a chance you really learned and these kids got extraordinary educations that I don't think they've gotten anywhere else. And apart from that, the human relationships, I mean, these kids have been growing up to live, be citizens, of the twenty-first century and they're at home in the world. The extraordinary, almost dialectic, went to work there. In the U.N. school each of the kids is encouraged to talk about his culture, his religion, his nation and Adina became the ambassador of the Jews in her class. So when all holidays came around she was called upon to talk about Chanukah and Pesah and Shavuous and Sukkos and she would come in and do demonstrations. She would light candles and bake latkes and you would see these kids from all over the world eating latkes and she would sing songs with them and teach them how to dance. And they did the same thing with her so learned about Buddhism and Hinduism and as well as the Western religions. And Susie's had the same experience. So in that sense they have been really prepared with

good educations, very good human relationships and have an awful lot going for them.

Q. You should be very proud. I only have one more question. Where would you like to see yourself ten years from now? What would you like to be--? Would you like to still be here in the American Jewish Committee? What are your ambitions for yourself?

A. I don't know; I really don't know. I'm so busy trying to get through this week that I don't even have time to think about 1981. I, you know, have been tempted-- I think right now, frankly, my first prerequisite is putting my personal life together. I want-- I'm not a loner and I don't know how much I want to say for the record, I just hope someday I meet someone and we'll marry and rebuild some kind of personal life cause it's not possible to continue having this kind of rich public life and not have the personal, emotional nurture that comes out of a relationship between two people who care for each other and can depend on each other. I have not had too much of that and so that's one of the high priorities. I've been tempted, during (?) the time I've entered the AJC over the past twenty years, but especially over the past, I guess, four five years, with a number of offers. At one time George Bush proposed my name to the Nixon administration to represent the American government at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and it was given, apparently, quite serious consideration and then some internal politics entered into it, namely some Jews who had given a lot of money to the campaign and who were active politically. So I have thought of, at one point, of

embarking--

Q. Would you have liked that?

A. What?

Q. Would you have accepted that?

A. Well, I'm not sure, I'm not sure that I could have, in fact, been effective because I think the United Nations is a snake pit and unless you're there representing-- I mean I have the greatest pity for Yehuda Blum who has to sit there every day and take that kind of abuse. At one point I had thought and some people in government had talked to me about becoming involved in world refugee problems because, if anything, I've had a real capacity to help people understand the human side of these problems and mobilize response. And I have felt, you know, as a Jew, as a person, that's one of the most important things to do. There's so much suffering in the world. I've seen so much pain and (?) terror, that if I could do anything in my life to help mitigate some of that then I'll feel I've lived a useful life. I just have a sense already that I've said it, some great moments, that if I were to die tomorrow I have the sense that I've done something useful with the time I've had here. I literally have helped save tens of thousands of lives and it's no small achievement. But those are kinds of stray moments, fantasy moments. I'm very content with my work at AJC. Every week, every month, there's an enlargement of my capacity to be effective here. I see now that almost everything we touch all the big problems we suffer now is success. If we have any more success stories I think our department will cave

... ..

this morning what do we do to follow up? Where do we go from here? More conferences, more books, more publications, more-- That's great. But we've got that kind of thing now with the Evangelical world. We've got to face the whole moral majority issue. Well, that's going to be years of work for us. And we've got the capacity to do that in ways that on other Jewish organization do, in terms of relationships. I mean, no other Jewish group has a network of relationships with Evangelicals so that we turn to Billy Graham and Jimmy Allen and that whole world. And that's going to be politically a very important piece of work to do during the course of the next several years under the Reagan administration.

Q. This might be the time to lobby for more staff and more funding from the American Jewish Committee.

A. Well, we do, you know, incrementally our budget has tripled since I came into the agency, our staff has enlarged somewhat. We do need more staff, there's no question. The workload-- I mean, of all the departments in the agency we're the one department that has front-line troops. There's just nobody else out on the front-lines the way we are. Our people, Jim Ruden, Inger Debell (?), Judy Banks (?), I mean, day after day after day they're out meeting with Christians, they're out attending their conferences, they're out standing against these resolutions, against Israel, against Jews, so that we do need more hands and feet of competent people and we thank God they're all magnificent people with enormous devotion, very great talent and ability and I think they're among the finest representatives of the Jewish community. I don't think the Jewish community

really understands or appreciates the depth of their devotion and their effectiveness. When you watch Jim at the NCC and Judy Banke at a conference on Catholic educators, I sit there and I glow and, frankly, my whole policy has been to try to develop stars and superstars cause I think those self-fulfilling capacities get all the way down to the AJC and to the Jewish community. People who are repressed and denied and filled with frustration simply are not going to give their best and my people come in every day looking for another challenge, what more can they do that's of service. And we have a family relationship, there's an enormous sense of mutual appreciation here. So that means a great deal to me and so the point of it is yes, more staff but like the staff I've got now.

Q. I can't think of another thing, I think we've really covered alot. What I think I'll do is we'll have this transcribed and then you will see it and--

A. Some of the personal stuff I may want to--

Q. Well, you can do whatever you-- It can be closed.
(Interruption of tape)

Q. Okay, tell us about--

A. One of the other major highlights of the program that I've been proud of that AJC made possible, in 1970, this was three years after the six-day war when there was so much misunderstanding of Israel's victory and there was so much silence in the Christian world, especially liberal Protestants, about the meaning of Israel and Jerusalem to the Jewish people. I proposed to Zvi (?) the Dean of Humanities at the Hebrew University that we sponser an international conference

at the Hebrew University. The theme of it was Religion, Land, Nationalism, Peoplehood, that whole cluster of interaction, interacting themes, which are generally not understood in the Western world. And we brought together a few hundred people not only official representatives from the Vatican, World Council of Churches, scholars in the United States, Christians and Jews, but for the first time we brought together in Jerusalem representatives from Buddhism, Vietnam, Indonesia, Hinduism and several Islamic scholars. We also brought in some scholars from Africa. We talked about the meaning of the land and nation, tribe, people in the African religions and we produced a book that is now a basic work in that field, it's in English with sections in German and in French, and it provides one of the most comprehensive books at this theme, which is the critical theme in all of the national conflicts all over the world. So I've regarded that as one of the important achievements of our department. It never got terribly much attention in this country and if it doesn't appear in the New York Times it doesn't happen, but it happened and it was a blockbuster. And it made friends for us. We have friends in Africa that we keep contact with that grew out of that meeting. And some day I guess we ought to be doing more things like that.

Q. There's still a -- very little understanding.

(End of Interview)