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Judah Nadich interview 2/8/95

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: The DP camps, the displaced persons camps

were the camps to which the survivors of the holocaust who

were found alive on German concentration camps on German

soil and on Austrian soil were placed after they had been

liberated by the advancing allied armies. In other words

they were camps were these survivors lived and the main

Jewish survivors until the time came for them to migrate to

other countries where they had chosen to live for the

remainder of their lives. Their sojourn in the camps began

after they had been moved out of the concentration camps

soon after their liberation and they lived in the camps

until they left for the countries where they had chosen to

go.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: There were a good number of displaced

person's camps and they varied both in size and in nature.

For example (um) there was a displaced person's camp in

Stuttgart which in reality had no appearance as a camp. It

was a series of (um) what we would call apartment houses

which had been taken over by the American Army and to which

(um) the amy had placed Jewish survivors from German

concentration camps. On the other hand, there was a ki..,

there was a DP camp like um L\_\_\_berg, where there were when

I visited it over 6,000 survivors and which had been a large

camp for military purposes which had been used also by the

foreign workers who had come to Germany to help the German

effort in industry during the war. So there are all kinds

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of Displaced Person's camps. Um in addition, there um

groups of survivors who lived in a place that could not be

termed a DP camp. For example, there were some Hungarian

Jewish women who had been liberated in a from a

concentration camp in Germany and who had gone to an um

small town in Northern Germany nearby where they just lived

together in whatever kind of housing they could find. They

lived as um a group. I don't know whether you could call

them a DP camp, but in essence it was. So as I said at the

outset there were different kinds of DP camps as to the

number of them I'm not exactly sure. Perhaps 20 more or

less.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: That's um a difficult question to answer.

And I'll tell you why. Perhaps at the um time of the

liberation of the German concentration camps, there may have

been a total of 50,000 Jewish survivors in the American zone

of Germany. Remember that Germany immediately after the

defeat of the German army was divided among four conquering

armies and were governed by the British, the Russians, the

French, and the Americans. The largest zone in Germany was

the American zone. and there were about 50,000 Jewish

survivors in the American zone, but Jews kept coming in to

the American zone of Germany, day by day, and soon the

number was not 50,000 but 80,000 by soon I mean in a period

of um a month, six weeks or more. I am now speaking only of

the American zone in Germany.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: It was a very difficult problem that had to

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be dealt with. And a problem that had been unforeseen by

the American military authorities who had long planned for

the kind of governance they would establish in a defeated

Germany. The um American plans called once Germany would be

defeated, for the liberation of course of all those found in

German concentration camps. And for the return of all those

survivors to the countries from which they had come. And

that was to be done within 90 days, so the plans called for.

And indeed after the concentration camps had been liberated,

the American military authorities worked efficiently and

within 90 days the um the Belgians, the French, the Greeks,

the Poles, whoever um whoever were found in the

concentration camps who wanted to go back to their homelands

were sent home. But the military planners had not foreseen

the fact that there would be Jews in the concentration

camps, they would be the largest number and there would be

people who would not or could not return to their homeland.

They could not because their homes and their businesses in

their native countries had been seized by their former

neighbors. They knew that if they returned and tried to

reclaim their homes and businesses that they would be set

upon, attacked, and perhaps even killed, and indeed, that

did happen with the few Jews who did go back and who tried

to regain what they had once owned. So, most of the Jews

didn't want to back because they could not. There were no

homes for them to return to. In addition, they would not,

because, the lands where they had lived and at the moment I

am thinking particularly of Poland as well as the Baltic

countries, that they knew that their former neighbors in

many cases had reported on their whereabouts to the Germans.

That they could not live among those people who were

responsible for their having suffered during the years of

the war in concentration camps. And who had been

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responsible for the fact that their nearest and dearest ones

had been killed either on their native soil or in the

concentration camps later. They knew that the countries

from which they had come were now lands where the soil had

been polluted by the blood of their loved ones, the very air

had been polluted by the smoke of the concentration camps

that had come out of the crematorium where members of their

families had been burned. At least their bodies had been

burned. So as I said at the outset, they could not return

they would not return. They wanted to live elsewhere. So

the American army found these people who would not go

anywhere who could not go anywhere, and no plans had been um

ar arranged for such people beforehand, because the problem

had had not been foreseen.

Long pause

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: The conditions of course varied from camp to

camp. But by in large I think the following conditions were

pretty much accurate or if not all the camps most of the

camps. Firstly, the housing was inadequate, that is they

were crowded, the survivors were crowded in the housing.

There were not enough beds and mattresses to go around. In

addition, many of the structures were poor wooded structures

that would not be good enough for the oncoming winter. In

some of the structures and some of the buildings, the um

water supply was insufficient, and there were often leeks.

So generally, the housing was not what it should have been.

Secondly, they weren't getting enough food. These were

people who had been malnourished for years under the

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Germans. They were now suffering from malnutrition and they

weren't getting enough calories. When more calories were

added very often those calories came from the wrong sources.

They were given a lot of potatoes and bread. Sometimes,

even that wasn't good, the bread was stale the potatoes were

rotten. So, food was a problem. In addition, um they

lacked all kinds of things for which to occupy their time.

They had um no means of doing any kind of work. Um those

who had been musicians before the war and who were very

anxious to get their hands and fingers on a musical instu..

instrument again didn't have those. Uh even those who

wanted to spend some time um exercising, sports, using what

we call um in American soccer ball to play with, didn't have

those things. Of course, uh some people might say those are

unimportant things. But for people who had been without

everything for years, every little thing was important. Uh

their clothing lacked much to be desired. Their clothing

was was poor. It certainly was not enough for the oncoming

winter. They needed umb warm clothing of all kinds. Uh

beginning with underwear, and going all the way up to uh

overcoats. And hats and caps. Their shoes were in bad

condition. They needed shoes of all kinds. They needed

medical attention, although I uh must say at this point that

doctors, Jewish doctors among the survivors as soon as

liberation took place, tried to take care of their fellow uh

now liberated uh inmates of of the the former concentration

camps. But they didn't have medicines, they didn't have

medical instruments or surgical instruments. Uh the teeth

of the survivors were in terrible condition. They had had

not dental care all through the years of the war and their

teeth needed immediate uh inspection and treatment. Uh

there were dentists among the survivors who would have been

glad to go to work on that, but they had nothing with which

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to work. Uh in addition, uh they needed materials from

which to make uh false teeth for example, bridges and so on.

I'm just telling you that which comes to mind at the moment.

But the most important things they needed were better

housing, better food, better clothing, and other things.

(SWB interjects....) Oh, I've excuse me, I've left out one

of the most important things. That is when the war when the

war was over and they were transferred to concentration

camps to to uh DP camps. Among the survivors there were

none Jews. Many of those non Jews were victims of the

Germans. They were sent home as I told you a little

earlier, within 90 days after liberation. There were other

non Jews who did not go home, who were they? They had come

from Eastern Europe. Most of them had come to Germany

willingly as volunteers, to help in the German war effort.

Since many of the Germans who had worked in the factories,

most of them were now in the German armed forces, there was

need for additional industrial workers to take care their

places. And many men and women had come from the countries

of Eastern Europe as volunteers. They got good pay, they

received good food, add ..adequate housing, and they worked

in the war effort. But as soon as the Germans lost the war,

they pronounced the war, they pronounced themselves

survivors and they were placed into displaced persons camps.

Now, the problem with that was first of all, there was a

built-in anti Semitism on the part of almost all of these

non-Jewish workers who had come to help the Germans.

Secondly, they had been well feed all through the years of

the war, and if efforts were now to be made to give more

food to the Jews suffering from malnutrition they would only

pour oil on the fires of anti-Semitism and would lead to

disputes and conflicts and who knows what else between the

Jews and the non-Jews in the DP camps. So one of the first

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things that had to be done when I took uh my position as

advisor to General Eisenhower on Jewish Affairs, was to see

to it that his orders of late August, I believe August 22nd,

should be carried out, namely the orders to establish DP

camps in which the sole inhabitants would be Jewish

survivors. So that was a very great need that had to be

taken care of at the beginning.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: Oh yes, Umb, there were certain camps,

particularly, in Bavaria, under the supervision of the

American Third Army, commanded by General Patton, like

Feldafing and Landsberg, where the camps were locked, and

where the Jewish inmates were permitted to leave camp only

by means of a pass system that permitted a small percentage

of them to go out of the camp on these passes and of course

they returned to the camp before the end of the day. The

Jewish survivors in the DP camps could look beyond the

barbed wire that surrounded their camp, they could see

German civilians walking on the roads, they knew that the

Germans had been the enemy of the American Army, yet the

Germans were free to come and go as they please, but they

who had been liberated by the American Army did not have

that privilege. They were confined behind barbed wire to a

DP camp with only a small percentage permitted to go out for

a few hours each day. Moreover, psychologically, they had

been behind barbed wire in German concentration camps, now

liberated they were still behind barbed wire. I think that

may have been among the first if not the very first

complaints that I heard when I met with a committee of

Jewish survivors in the Feldafing--??? Displaced persons

camp.

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Long pause

SWB:

NB: Dean Earl Harrison of the umb Law School of the

University of Pennsylvania was appointed by President Truman

to umb examine the conditions in the DP camps. During the

month of June, 1945 newspaper correspondents, foreign

correspondents, in Germany had umb sent back stories to the

American press that there were Jewish survivors of the Nazi

Nazi concentration camps living in Displaced Person's Camps

under the American army who's living conditions were

abominable. And that created quite a stir, evidently, in

the United States and President Turman as I said appointed

the Dean of the Law School of the University of of

Pennsylvania, Dean Earl G Harriman, Harrison , excuse me, to

umb examine the camps and to report to him to see whether or

not the reports of the umb war correspondent were accurate.

Umb, Dean Harrison came to Europe and he was accompanied by

Dr. Joseph Jay Swartz who was a Euro European Head of

Operations for the American Jewish Joint Distribution

Committee. And he visited the camps in Germany in the

American Zone and he came back to umb Washington and

submitted his report. The uh report caused a number of

cables to go from Washington to General Eisenhower's

Headquarters in Frankfurt. Uh first uh General Marshall who

was Chief of Staff got in touch with umb General Eisenhower

and told him that he soon would be getting a summary of the

report of Dean uh Earl Harrison that it it was not a good

report that it did not put the American Army in a good

light. And then umb I believe it was on August the 10th,

I'm certain of that date, August the 10th, General

Eisenhower got a cable from the Secretary of War, umb his

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name was Secretary Stimpson who gave General Eisenhower a

summary of the umb Harrison Report and said that the Report

contained some very damaging descriptions of conditions in

the Displaced Person's camps administered by the American

Army and what did General Eisenhower expect to do to correct

the situation, but also told him that in do course he would

be receiving the entire Har ah Harrison report. Uh that uh

report was a reason for the creation of a position that was

rather unique in the History of the American Military. The

creation of an advisor to a Commanding General on Jewish

conditions in the area of Command of the General. General

Eisenhower sent back a cable the day after he had received

the Stimpson cable to say that he was creating a position of

Advisor to General Eisenhower to himself on Jewish Affairs

to be filled by an American Army Jewish Chaplin. And that

was the reason for my being order to uh fly from Paris where

I had been stationed for about a year to Frankfurt to

undertake my new responsibilities. Long pause

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: One of the questions uh in my questionnaire

that I had prepared for myself before visiting any of the DP

camps was precisely that where did these people want to go

assuming that there would be no barrier to going to lands

they had chosen. Between 70 and 75 per cent of them said

they wanted to go to the country then known as Palestine.

Others chose other countries, United States, Canada,

Australia, countries in South America. Usually because they

had realities living in those countries to whom they could

go.

SWB:

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JUDAH NADICH: They could not go because they had no means

with which to go. They had no funds, they didn't have

decent clothing on their backs. They were many of them weak

because of malnutrition. And in addition, there was the

obstacle of immigration laws that limited the number of

people that could arrive in any of these before mentioned

countries. Great Britain had been appealed to just uh a

short while before the time that about which I speak by

President Truman to grant special visas to 100,000 of these

people. Great Britain didn't act upon General Truman's

request. American immigrations laws were strict and

permitted for very small numbers to come from the lands of

Eastern Europe. And most of people in the concentration

camps were Jews who had come from Eastern European lands.

So there were all kinds of reasons for their not being able

to go forthwith to go to the countries of their choice.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: I can't tell you about umb Bergen-Belsen I

can't answer that question because Bergenbelsen was under

British Zone of Germany. I wasn't allowed into the British

Zone of Germany unless I requested special permission. I

had more than enough to do with my responsibilities in the

American Zone of Germany. All that I can tell you in answer

that I question is that I had gotten requests uh from London

from uh a number of leaders of the Jewish Community in that

city to send to them copies of the military orders creating

by post and its duties to them in London so that they might

request uh uh General Montgomery to create a similar

position that is Advisor to the Commanding General on Jewish

Affairs for the British Zone of Germany. General Montgomery

refused point blank.

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SWB:

Long pause

JUDAH NADICH: Each umb DP Camp had a military officer in

charge together with an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and one or more people sent

by the JDC (The Joint Distribution Committee). These

officers frequently and their superiors that is captains and

majors above them had little knowledge what had transpired

during the years of the war and particularly no knowledge

whatsoever as to what had happened to the Jews during the

war. For the most part, very few of them knew anything at

all about the umb treatment \_\_\_\_\_\_\_the Jews by the Nazi's.

I'm sorry to say that some of them uh had a little bit of

anti-Semitism within them which was to have been expected.

Because members of the American Army were uh a broad cross

section of the American people. I think that in 1941, uh

the year that uh war was declared in the United States, in

December of that year, there was far more anti-Semitism in

the United States than there is in 1995. There had been uh

anti-semitic perchers and speakers on the radio, there was

no television then, but on the radio, week in and week out.

Like Father Coglin (?) Gerald L. K. Smith and others, and

I'm sure that their words spoken week in and week out had an

effect. So to come back to the subject, there was anti

Semitism on the part of some if not all of American Military

officers and even more, there was little knowledge on their

part and some cases they were doing a job that they didn't

like doing, that they didn't want to do because it wasn't

strictly speaking a military position, something that they

had expected when they entered the army. So very often, the

umb military men placed in charge of camps provided

problems. Mind you, some of them were good hearted people,

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and they tried to do what they thought was best, but they

were young men. They were dealing with people who not only

had suffered greatly under the Germans during World War II,

but who before the war, many of these survivors had been

prominent people in their home cities. They were older

mature people, and yet they were lorded over by perhaps a

young lieutenant in his early twenties who thought that he

knew what was best for them. In addition to this, I must say

that the orders that inundated from General Eisenhower's

Headquarters in Frankfurt were not always translated into

action in the field. And that was a source of many

problems.

SWB:

LN: There were many Americans, many military Americans who

were of great help. And that should be underscored. There

many Americans who overlooked military regulations in order

to help the survivors. In addition, the umb divisions that

first liberated the camps, did everything that they possibly

could to help the strickened men and women and even some

children whom they found in the concentration camps that

they had liberated. I know that American army medical men

and women worked around the clock to help save the lives of

the survivors in the concentration camps. Many of them they

could not save. They were too far gone and they died in the

hands of their American rescuers, but doctors, surgeons,

nurses worked 24 hours a day after their units had captured

a concentration camp in order to help save the Jews whom

they could possibly save. So all praise to them, and to the

many other American military people who helped saved the

lives of many Jewish survivors. May I give you just one

interesting example. In Austria, Southberg, I called upon

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the G5, the officer in charge of civilian government in

occupied countries. The G5 for Austria who was General

Hume(?), and he was an extraordinary help in helping the

Jewish survivors in the liberated concentration camps of

Austria. But there weren't many like him.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: No they were not. And if I go back a little

bit when I was still stationed in Paris. The uh Jewish

underground that had just begun to operate in conquered

Europe and in liberated Europe, one of their leaders came to

see me and to say that there were about some six hundred

Jews who were to be moved across the S-------L\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

boarders, from Germany into France and down to Marseilles

where they were to be put uh aboard a so called illegal ship

that was to try to run the British Blockade and to land

these people, these survivors in Palestine. He came to see

me because he lacked food for the people who were to be

aboard ship for who knows uh a week, ten days, two weeks.

It had come to my attention that there were warehouses,

American Army warehouses in Paris full of of survivor food

kits that had been dispatched to Paris for forwarding

through Switzerland to American prisoners of war in Germany.

The war in Europe was now over. These prisoner of war

packages were no longer needed. American military prisoners

of war were sent home at once, as soon as they were

liberated. These uh food packages were being stolen

regularly and they were appearing on the French black

market. I went to the American Quartermaster General in

Paris, asked him if I could remove these prisoner of war

packages from these several warehouse because a number of

Jewish survivors were being moved from one place to another.

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He didn't ask me for specific answers. He quickly signed

the order. He understood what I was asking him for.

Long pause.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: I had gotten a request from the Jewish Agency

representative in Paris to try to get some food for a

shipment of people who were being brought across the

S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_L\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ boarders from Germany into France down to

Marseilles where they were to board so called illegal ships

to try to run the blockade put up by the British and to get

these survivors into Palestine. I had learned that there

were American prisoner of war packages in several American

military warehouses in Paris which were no longer need

because our prisoners of war had already been sent back

home. I went to the QuarterMaster General at Headquarters

in Paris. I told him that a group of Jews had to be moved,

they were survivors I explained, had to be moved from one

place to another. That they required food for the journey

that there were these warehouses of American military of war

packages in our warehouses in Paris, packages that would no

longer be needed, that were already being stolen. That were

already appearing on the French Black Market. I asked him

would he not grant permission for all of those military

prisoner of war packages to be removed from the warehouses

for this purpose of feeding hundreds of Jews on this

journey. He did not ask me any questions about where they

were coming from or where they were going. He understood

that he had better not ask the questions. He didn't want

information that might bother him. So he bent the rules and

quickly signed the order. And for the next several days the

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trucks hired by the Jewish Agency representative in Paris

were busy transporting the Prisoner of War packages out of

the American military warehouses to be used for the purpose

I indicated at the outset.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: There were a number of instances. I know that

other Jewish chaplains of the American army who had been

asked to help the same project I just mentioned, got umb

medical supplies and even ammunition, and uh these were all

obtained by, from American military officers who gave them

voluntarily, knowing the purpose for which these supplies

were to be used.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: One of the first desires on the part of

liberated survivors was to try to find members of their

families. In some cases, they had left families behind in

their native cities and towns. They went back, some of

them, to look for members of their families. In most cases

they returned without having found any. In one particular

case, that of uh Dr. Salmon G berg, who was head of the

St. Atilian?? DP Camp, which was really a hospital. He had

left his little son with a Christian neighbor in Vilneuf???

and uh Lithuania. And he went back. He found the child and

brought the child back with him to St. Atilian???? Then

these survivors wanted to get in touch with members of their

families who lived in the United States. And I tried to be

of help to them. In France, the survivors came to see me at

Army Headquarters. French-Jewish survivors and I sent their

letters to the addresses of families in American that they

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still had. When I received the letters back, I gave them

back to the French-Jews. Remember, there was still no

regular mail for civilians. In Germany, one of the first

things that was done by the Central Committee of the

Liberated Jews of Bavaria. These were Jewish leaders who

had been liberated in the concentration camps and were

living at first in DP Camps. They had been leaders of

Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. They knew what

leadership entailed. They quickly created a committee in

Munich and one of the first things that committee did was to

try to to get a roster of the names of all of the survivors

in the American Zone of Germany. And they tried to forward

mail from these people to their relatives in America through

American Jewish chaplains. Many of them brought letters to

me in Frankfurt, to forward to their relatives in the United

States. And soon, my daily mail included many letter from

people in the United States writing to their surviving

family members in the DP Camp's which I forwarded to the

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_or the JDC people working in the camps to be

distributed to the proper people. And indeed that was one

of the first things that that liberated survivors wanted to

accomplish, to get in touch with family.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: I didn't see lists. There weren't lists

posted in the DP Camps. But within each DP camp there was a

committee elected by the survivors. And this committee

would gather the names of all the people of the camp. They

would forward the list to the Central Committee of Liberated

Jews in Munich. And that committee would then try to get in

touch with the relatives in other countries.

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JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: Oh yes. Within Germany itself of course that

was one of the first things they did, was to look at the

list and see if they could find wives, husbands, brothers,

sisters, who had survived the war in other concentration

camps in Germany or Austria.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: Uh. long pause.... Ben-Gurion had sent a

request from Paris where he was visiting to umb General

Eisenhower and to General Montgomery, asking for permission

to enter the American Zone and the British Zone

respectively. And I was called by uh someone in General

Eisenhower's office and I was asked if I knew who this man

was who wanted to visit. I told hi I told the person, yes I

I knew who he was. That he uh was the Head of the Jews of

Palestine, roughly. Rough description. I was uh asked

whether I thought it was advisable to permit him to enter

the American Zone of Germany. I answered, "it would be most

advisable, because his very arrival would lift the moral of

the survivors in the DP camp's." So permission was sent to

him.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: It so happened that I was to proceed to Paris

for a day to receive the Croix de Gare from General

DeGaulle. And when I arrived in Paris I called the Office

of the Jewish Agency and learned that then Ben-Gurion at the

Cliarage ?? Hotel, and he would very much like to see me.

After the uh Croix de Gare ceremonies, I went to the hotel

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that Ben-Gurion, and he asked me uh generally about the

conditions of the survivors. Then I told him I would meet

him that very night on the railroad platform where the

American military train that ran between Paris and

Frankfurt. I got there early at the railroad station and I

um saw the uh American Captain in charge the train. He gave

me my umh ticket for the train and my quarters on the train.

My accommodations was to be uh half of a bedroom. I was to

share it with another American Army Major. When umb, Ben

Gurion came, I was standing on the platform waiting for him,

I I uh asked him to wait and I went to the Captain of the

Train and asked him where was this gentleman to be seated.

Uh, he asked me for his name. I gave it to him. He said,

uh, well he was to sit in the Coach. I told the Captain

that this gentleman was a distinguished visitor who was

coming to General Eisenhower's Headquarters and it was not

proper for him to sit up all night in the in a Coach. The

Cap the Captain asked me what I thought he should do. I

said, "I think you should the Major sharing that bedroom

with me that unfortunately a distinguished guest of General

Eisenhower had arrived to take the train for Frankfurt. And

that the major would have to leave the bedroom and take the

seat in the Coach." That's what happened. And so Ben

Gurion and I occupied the bedroom on the train. And we

talked until about 2 o'clock in the morning as the train was

riding while Ben-Gurion flied me with questions about the

displaced person's. We arrived in the morning at Frankfurt.

I took him to Headquarter's. Introduced him to uh General

Walter Beatle Smith, Chief of Staff. General Eisenhower was

away on one of his many fieldtrips. And then I took him to

first concentratio...Displaced Person's (DP Camp). The camp

was called Ziellshyme(?) near Hurkst?? not not to long a

ride from Frankfurt. I had requisitioned a a recona

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reconnaissance car. We arrived at Zielshyme??? drove into

the camp. I told the driver to wait. I stepped out of the

car. And a number of the umb people in the DP camp. They

had knew who I was. I had been there often before. We

chatted awhile and suddenly one of them went over to the

car, looked inside and saw this man sitting in the back

seat. He couldn't believe his eyes. He looked and then he

screamed, "Ben-Gurion." And the others began to look. They

too began screaming at this familiar face. To them it was

unbelievable. That this man who was the Head of the Jewish

Agency for Palestine, the Head of the umb the umb Government

of the Jews, uh the substitute break government was there in

Zeilshyme???? their DP camp. And other Jews came running

and I was afraid that a riot might ensue. So I quickly

called them together. And said to them, "I want you to show

Mr. Ben-Gurion the discipline in which you are capable. He

is going to speak to all the people at the Camp, at the

assembly hall. Now you people run around the Camp, tell the

people to get together in the assembly hall. And they will

hear Mr. Ben-Gurion then speak." They did that. I drove

with Mr. Ben-Gurion to the assembly hall and we waited there

for the people to come. Very soon they packed the entire

hall. Those who didn't get in stood outside the open

windows and doors straining to listen to what would happen.

When the place was as jammed as it could possible get I

escorted Mr. Ben-Gurion out on the stage and as soon as he

appeared, the people rose to their feet, they began to sing

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , the Hope, the national anthem in what

was then Palestine. And as they sang, they broke down into

tears, and Mr. Ben-Gurion did and I did and eventually when

they could get back to it they finished singing and for the

first time, for the first time, these people that had gone

through years of hell, knew that they were free. Most of

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them had cherished the hope, all through the years of their

suffering, that maybe someday they could get to Palestine.

And here Palestine had come to them in the form of the

leader of the Jews of Palestine, David Ben-Gurion. And

throughout his talk, there was sobbing, there were tears,

and as the conclusion there were cheers. It was a scene

that I shall never forget. And I'm sure that know one who

was there will ever forget. And when I met Mr. Ben-Gurion

in the following years in Israel, he and I would often speak

about that historic event in the assembly hall of the

Zeilshyme ????? DP camp. I then took Mr. Ben-Gurion back

to American Army Headquarters and he very much wanted to

visited the DP camp's. And General Walter Beatle-Smith

speaking for General Eisenhower asked uh Mr. Ben-Gurion if

he would visit the DP camp's and bring back a report to

General Eisenhower, together, with recommendations. That

night Mr. Ben-Gurion and I met with the Committee of the

Jewish Leaders of the Zeislhyme??? camp that we had visited

earlier in the day. Mr. Ben-Gurion fired questions at them,

trying to test their mettle, to see what they were made of.

What did they really want, and I remember that he asked them

a question that I knew was not a real question. But he

wanted to see how they would react. He asked them if the

Jewish Agency were to give orders for all the Jews of the DP

camps in Germany to walk out of their camps and to keep

walking until they crossed the boarders to Italy and to

France, and to go to the Southern coast of Italy and France

and board ships for Palestine, would you go? Would you

follow those orders? Despite the danger involved, you might

be shot at, you might beaten. Would you go? And they gave

the answer, that he had hoped for. They said, "yes, we

would go, we would follow your orders." And so he got the

answer he had hoped for. Unfortunately I could not

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accompany Mr. Ben-Gurion to his trip to all the other DP

camp's because at that very same time, a civilian advisor to

General Eisenhower whose coming he a\_\_\_\_ suggested as a

possibility to his first cable back to the Secretary of War,

Stimpson. That gentleman was to arrive that same night and

I was of course to meet him and to bring him to General

Eisenhower. That gentleman was Judge Simon H. Rifkins. I

finish with that.

Long pause.

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: The problem that inserted itself into the

very earliest consideration of how to take care of the

Jewish survivors was on of, who are the Jews? That is a

question that has perplexed writers and authors for a long

time. Are they a religion, a people, a race, a nation?

Well that question to the floor soon after the Jews had been

liberated in the concentration camps and methods were

adopted that uh were uh aimed at relieving their plight.

Now, uh the plans as I mentioned earlier drawn up by

American Military experts in civilian government were that

people of different nations were to be sent back to their

native lands within 90 days after the liberation of the

concentration camps. The Jews, however, as I said earlier,

didn't want to go back, they couldn't back, they wouldn't go

back. Now, when General Eisenhower was asked to appoint a

Liaison Officer who would coordinate the work of helping the

Jewish survivors. He was asked to do this by the American

rabbi, Steven S. Wise, who was in London the first days of

August for a Zionist conference, the first to take place

since before World War II. The Zionist came from various

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countries, free countries, for the conference. Some us

American Military Chaplains got permission to go to London

to attend the conference. We spoke with Rabbi Steven S.

Wise, one of the most prominent American Rabbi's of the

1920's, the 1930's, the 1940's, as well as with other

American and other Jewish leaders about what we had seen of

the Jewish survivors. Rabbi Steven S. Wise sent a cable

through the American Embassy in London to Army Headquarters

in Frankfurt asking General Eisenhower to appoint a Liaison

Officer to coordinate the various efforts at helping the

Jewish survivors. That came to Army Headquarters at

Frankfurt on the 7th day of August 1945. General Eisenhower

replied on August 9th, two days later, saying he could not

appoint a Jewish Liaison Officer. There were Liaison

Officer's at Eisenhower's Headquarters, but they

represented, each one, a different nation. There was a

French Liaison Officer, there was British Liaison Officer, a

Polish Liaison Officer, a Czech Liaison Officer, but the

Jews are not a nation. So he rejected Rabbi Wise's request.

The very next day on August th 10th, he got the cable from

Secretary of War Stimpson, asking him what he was going to

do about the report from Dean Earl Harrison and its critical

report, the critical umb remarks about the American Army's

care of the Jewish survivors. So General Eisenhower replied

that he was going appoint an advisor on Jewish Affairs, not

a Liaison Officer, an Advisor. And on August 22nd he issued

an order that despite the fact that Jews had come to

concentration camps with the nationality of their native

lands, Polish nationality, Lithuanian nationality, whatever.

That they were now to be regarded as stateless people, and

therefore were to be put in concentration camps by

themselves with no other people with them, no other, no non-

Jews. So Eisenhower was able to bridge this gap, to answer

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this problem by appointing an Advisor and to regard the Jews

as "stateless persons." Now General Montgomery, when he was

asked by the leaders of the London Jewish Community to

appoint an Advisor on Jewish Affairs, replied that he

couldn't. Because he then he would have to appoint a

Catholic Advisor, and a Protestant Advisor, and therefore he

didn't appoint a Jewish Advisor. So the problem of "who

were the Jews" reared its head throughout the discussions of

what to do with the Jewish survivors.

JWB:

long pause

JUDAH NADICH: General Eisenhower when he was made to

understand what the problem was as a result of the Harrison

Report and as a result of his own visiting the camps

afterwards and you'll forgive me if I say as a result of the

reports that I submitted to him of my visits to the DP

camp's. At once acted, speedily, to remedy the problem. I

can say, frankly and honestly, that there was not a

recommendation that I made to him to improve the lot of the

Jewish survivors in the DP camp's that he did not address

affirmative, at once. By issuing an order to rectify the

situation. I uh call you attention particularly to the fact

that hundreds, thousands of Jews, were coming into the

American Zone of Germany from Poland, in particular, and

from other Eastern lands. These were Jews in many cases, in

most cases, who when Russia entered the war had been

uprooted from their homes and their cities and cou and

towns. And trucked back of the Russian lines all the way to

Asiatic Russia, in order to keep them out of the battle

zones. Now they were brought back by the Russians to their

former homes only to find that their homes had been taken by

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their neighbors as well as their visitor's. They didn't

want to live there anyhow in those in those countries' where

their families had been destroyed. So they began moving at

first on their own, across across the

S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_F\_\_\_\_\_\_borders, from Poland into Czechoslovakia,

from Czechoslovakia into Austria, from Austria into the

American Zone of Germany. The question was, "what to do

with them?" Technically speaking, they were not defined as

DP's. DP's according to army regulations on the orders,

rather, were Jewish survivors found in concentration camps

on German soil or on Austrian soil and who where then placed

in DP camps in Germany and Austria. So these Jews arriving

from Poland and Baltic countries were technically not DP's.

What to do with them? They were coming across the borders

and soon questions started coming into Eisenhower's office.

Uh we discussed the matter, I recommended that they be

admitted to our DP camps which eventually would be emptied.

And they would go to other countries. And Eisenhower issued

an order saying that they were to be admitted and I don't

know exactly how many were saved in this fashion. But I

think it have been 80,000 Jews. On the other hand,

Montgomery turned back such Jews as they tried to enter

British Zone of Germany and issued orders that they were to

be turned back by force. But you see the contrast between

Eisenhower and Montgomery.

Long pause.

What does what does he shoot when he.....

JWB:

JUDAH NADICH: Hmmmmm......General Patton commanded the

Third Army which had the supervision of most of the DP

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camps. The Third Army was in charge of all of Bavaria and

one of the first complaints given by the Jews in uh Bavaria,

particularly in Zeldezing??? but also elsewhere was that

they were not allowed to leave the camp as they would like.

But only a small percentage would be permitted to leave each

day with a pass system. And they objected to that because

despite the fact that they were now liberated, they still

didn't enjoy freedom to come and go. They could look

outside of the con the DP camp and see the Germans, the

the former enemies of the Americans walking freely, but they

the victims of the Germans whom the American's had liberated

were not free to come and go as they please. And of course

they objected vehemently to the barbed wire around the DP

camp. It reminded them of the barbed wire around the German

concentration camp. And one of their first requests to me

was to try to do something to have the barbed wire removed

and the pa pass system abolished. That was incorporated in

my report to General Eisenhower through General Smith and

orders were issued to have the pass system abolished and the

barbed wire removed. Well, next I west from Frankfurt to

Bavaria, to visit the DP camps, Zeld\_\_\_\_\_in particular as

well as Lansberg and the other camps. The barbed wires was

still there and the pass system was still in existence. I

came back to Frankfurt and I reported in due course to

General Walter Beatle Smith, General Eisenhower's Chief of

Staff. I visited him, I reported to him most of the time

because General Eisenhower was often on field visits to the

troops and General Smith would then report to Eisenhower

when he returned. I was told afterwards, by General Smith,

that orders were issued to General Patton to come and report

the very next morning at 8 o'clock to General Eisenhower at

his Headquarters in Frankfort. That meant an over-night

trip virtually,driving from Munich to Frankfurt. And the

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next morning at 8 o'clock, and I didn't know of this at the

time, I walked into the \_\_\_\_\_\_room that lead into General

Eisenhower's office, and there I saw General Patton, sitting

with his shiny helmet on, his ivory handled pistol worn on

each side. And his highly polished belt and straps. And I

quickly beat a retreat. He glared at me and I knew what was

healthy for me...I got out of there. Afterwards, General

Smith told me that General Eisenhower asked General Patton,

"George, why aren't you doing something for those Jews?"

And Patton, thinking that he was talking to his old West

Point buddy said, in a half laughter, "Why the hell should

I?" And, Eisenhower replied, with anger, "Well, goddamit,

and for no other reason...and because I have ordered you to

help those Jews." Not long afterwards, General Patton was

removed from command of the Third Army and he was ordered to

command the 15th Army which consisted only of a Headquarters

without troops. The Headquarters was a B\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in

Germany. I know that books about Patton and the movie about

Patton showed that he was ordered out of the Third Army

because, supposedly he slapped a soldier in a military

hospital in Sicily for malingering??? But, to my mind,

there has always been a question. "Why was Patton punished

a couple of years latter for something he had done in

Sicily?" My own thought is that he was punished because he

had transgressed, he had violated a direct order from a

superior officer which is something that an American Army

Soldier knows he must not do.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: See, I no longer was acting as a chaplin, once

I was assigned to the post of Advisor to Eisenhower. And

there were American Army chaplin's assigned to divisions and

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units and headquarter's in different parts of Germany. The

marriages \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were in England and in France.

SWB:

JUDAH NADICH: Yes I did. I did, umb, by the time I left

Germany which was umb toward the end of November, the third

week of November, 1945, the conditions were much better in

the DP camps. Uh, the orders of General Eisenhower had

taken a long time, but eventually they filtered down to all

the lower levels and they were being carried out. The dp

the Jewish DP's were in separate camps now. They were

getting more food, better housing, clothing, shoes. They

even got soccer balls and musical instruments, and even

Yiddish newspapers from the United States and books in

Yiddish and in German and in French that they could read and

understand. Umb, in addition, they had organized

themselves, the Jewish survivors. They were for many of

them, very capable people. They had been leaders of

communities in their home towns before the war had started.

There was this excellent organization, the Central Committee

of Liberated Jews in Munich. And in every camp there was a

Committee of Jewish DP leaders. And for the time I went

home, the situation was far improved over what I had seen in

just two and a half months earlier. So the efforts of the

Army uh had good results.

long pause

end of tape.

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