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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 where 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 army 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 leaks. 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 Truman as I said appointed the Dean of the Law School of the University 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 Chaplain. 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.

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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 stricken 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_____ borders, 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_____ borders 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 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 umh 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: Hmmmmmm.....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 Frankfurt. 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 later 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 chaplain, once I was assigned to the post of Advisor to Eisenhower. And there were American Army chaplain'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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