

DATE: May 7, 1981, Washington, D. C.

- A. ...I should identify myself by saying I am Edouard V. M. Izac, former member of Congress, residing at 5608 Chesterbrook Road, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Q. When were you born?
- A. I was born December 18, 1891. So I am really in my ninetieth year, which I will complete on December 18. I was born in Kresgo, Iowa and went to the Naval Academy and graduated from there in 1915. I was on various battleships until the 1st World War...the death of Roosevelt.
- Q. Can I take you now to the spring of 1945 to about April and you were serving in Congress?
- A. I was on the Naval Affairs Committee and sat next to the later-President Johnson, and Carl Vinson was the Chairman of the Naval Affairs committee, when the call came from the Commander-in-Chief in Europe, Eisenhower. He picked me and Jim Mott of Oregon as the representatives that were to go to Eisenhower's headquarters and see the concentration camps that his Army, by that time, had uncovered throughout Europe. There were 2 also from the Military Affairs Committee and 2 from the Foreign Affairs Committee. All from the House. We provided the 6 members of the House of Representatives. Barkeley, who was leader in the Senate, named himself in place of Walsh of Massachusetts who didn't want to go to see the concentration camps. He also named George, and Thomas and Brooks and Warey and Saltonstall.
- Q. Yes sir.
- A. Now, when it came time to prepare for the trip, we met in Barkeley's office in the Senate, on a Saturday. We made all arrangements to leave the following morning and we had a plane that carried a certain number of Army files that went along to conduct us through Europe. These were with us all during the trip and we went on that next day, Sunday, to Bermuda. We lay-overed at Bermuda until that night. We took off for the Azores and came down at Santa Margerita from where we proceeded to Paris. The flight from the Azores to Paris, France was over the Channel Islands, Mont Saint Michel, and we arrived there in due course and were put up at the Ritz Hotel on the Place Vendome; not far from the Louvre; not far from the Champs Elysee and not far from the American Embassy. We were at the Ritz until we left on the return trip but we started from Paris to the various destinations that Eisenhower had scheduled. One was...I think the first one..was to his headquarters in Reims and all during our trip, the relatives of the members of Congress were brought to his headquarters so that we could meet with our relatives. My daughter had...my oldest daughter...had married a lad who was drafted but who won a commission in France. He met me at Eisenhower's headquarters and another brother-in-law, my wife's brother,

had, by that time, also reached Paris with his assignment to one of the German automobile factories in Mannheim. So I saw the two relatives there and while my oldest son was serving along the Eastern seaboard on the watch for German submarines that were laying in wait for our bauxite coming from South America.

- Q. Congressman Izac, when did you go to ...was it Buchenwald that the committee went to first? The concentration camp at Buchenwald?
- A. We went to Buchenwald as the first place after we left Reims, the headquarter of Eisenhower. They, all of us, went there. It was especially...I have this recollection... especially for Poles...and the Poles that they brought from Poland were ranged all the way from 10-12 years old, say, to 25, many of whom were in the hospital that we had taken over because they had over-run that place about 3 weeks earlier.
- Q. Yes. What did the camp look like? Do you...
- A. The camp there was a very large expanse of buildings. It had its crematorium, as we found out...where they cremated all the prisoners that died and they had especially a building for the hospital. They had one building for the crematorium. They had 2-3 buildings given over to the manufacture of various arms and most of these people were prisoners, political prisoners. They had no prisoners-of-war. They never kept the prisoners of war in these concentration camps.
- Q. Were there still prisoners...now liberated prisoners..were there still people in the camp at Buchenwald when you saw it?
- A. Oh, yes, yes. But the Americans had over-run the camp three weeks before so they had cleaned it up but they couldn't...they had to admit that the crematorium was there and that the hospital was there and the various factories lying outside of the high barbed wire fence.
- Q. Did anyone say anything to you about the so-called "Bitch of Buchenwald" - a woman; an S.S. woman by the name of Coch, who used to have men killed who had tatoos on their arms and made into book covers...Did you see any of that material?
- A. Oh yes. I have that...I have her picture in there, someplace.
- Q. In your collection of pictures?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you actually see those things that were made out of human skin?
- A. No. But they said that she indulged in that, and I have her picture. She is a vicious looking person; female...
- Q. She eventually committed suicide, as I understand the story...
- A. I don't know. I don't know whatever became of her.

- Q. Did you see anything like a gas chamber at Buchenwald? They didn't say there was one...
- A. Oh, yes. In every one of those camps, and we only visited three. The British had Auschwitz and those farther out to the north so the only ones that we saw were down south.
- Q. Buchenwald...Nordhausen...the Dora camp. Can we talk about the Dora camp for a little while. You got to that one...
- A. That was, in many respects, more remarkable than any because they had built a camp and put good working people there across the street from a mountain. Now they had tunneled out that mountain for something like 30-some miles and in there was the V1 and V2 missiles that they shot. We saw one that had exploded a couple of days before in Antwerp and they exploded in London and in various parts of England, of course, because their aim wasn't too good at that time. But inside this mountain we saw all kinds of munitions. They had probably 25,000 workmen in there.
- Q. How many of them were slave laborers?
- A. Apparently, most. Most were slave laborers and when they gave out, due to bad nourishment, or no nourishment, they sent them over to the hospital and a lot of the people have since said when they were supposed to go to the hospital, they were exterminated on the way, so they didn't clutter up the hospital. Anyway, that was one of the most remarkable, I think, of all and there again I was very fortunate in getting to be the first...in that first conveyance all the way from Ulm to Dachau.
- Q. Yes. Now, Dachau. We really want you to tell us about that trip. You were with General Patch?
- A. Patch and Saltonstall were in the front seat. I and Dewey Short and Jim Mott were in the back seat. We three were in this sequestered home just on the outskirts of Dachau, not more than...you could walk it...probably three blocks away. And here was a real prison camp. It had...it occupied a space, I would say, of 4 square blocks..of our city blocks. Over and apart there was an inner fence and an outer fence. The outer fence was electric, so nobody from the outside dared touch it. On the inside it was about 8-10 feet high, and it was a woven wire fence. At every...I would say, 30 paces, there would be a tower and the towers...we say they were 20 feet tall, but they may have been 30 feet tall, because the guards up there could look down and see if there was any tampering all around. And that went all the way around on the four sides. Across the street, and that close, was the railroad track in which the bodies of the prisoners - political prisoners - were sent ahead of the army. But our army caught up with them at Dachau and, as a result, we killed or captured all of the

guards up, top side; how many down below even the army doesn't know, because they were the spearhead coming there ahead of most of the troops.

Q. Do you remember the day you got to Dachau?

A. Yes, we were there the evening of the 2nd day and I have never forgotten my first impression of Dachau. Here was a shed, next to the crematorium and it was an open shed, 50-60 feet long, in which human corpses were stacked exactly like cordwood. We, in this country, stacked our cordwood, prior to chopping it up into that size that we can use in a fireplace or a stove. They had them stack in there, very neatly, about...I would say there were thousands. I'll never know, because they were so emaciated that they didn't take up much space. There was not a pound of flesh on any of them. They had been starved to death and, incidentally, when they made these reports about how many prisoners were in a camp, we would always under-estimate for the simple reason that they were given a number...as that number died, he was washed out and somebody else took that same number. As a result, there were this intelligentsia place, which is mostly from Northern Europe -- when we arrived, we talked with probably oh...20 or 30 of the ones that were still there and they were some sick in bed...our doctors were taking care of them already...I found that a minimum of 2,000; maybe as as many as 3,000 -- we will never know -- but these were Catholic priests from the north of Europe: Belgium, Holland, France. Just those alone formed about 2500 - to be in the middle - and so we saved some that were not too bad off at the time we arrived. They could tell what their food was and how they were treated all along. There were such things as places to be killed; if you were from a certain region and were of the intelligentsia you would have a place to kneel before they would shoot you in the back of the head...right through the head. Two other places; one apparently was for women ... but all along, we saw practically no women. I must tell you about the railroad tracks. I climbed aboard one of those open gondola cars and here were people - dead - lying all over the back. I mean all over the floor of the car. I climbed over several cars. They had just been sent down ahead of our army but our army caught up with them at that point.

- Q. The Germans wanted to send those bodies away so that the evidence might be burned or...
- A. Yes. That's right. Or to put them in a place where they could be burned...but these... they had been surprised by our finding them still in these gondola cars.
- Q. Do you remember the odor of the camp? The smell of the camp?
- A. Oh, yes. That was one of the places because we hadn't had time enough in there...the army hadn't had time to fumigate and do all of the cleaning up that was necessary in all of those places.
- Q. One of the key points about that camp was the gas chamber. Did you see a gas chamber?
- A. I went into the gas chamber.
- Q. What did it look like?
- A. I saw...it was brick and concrete..I climbed up to see the valves. Here was the valve with a peephole so that someone on the outside could see inside and the valve was operated by the guy looking through the peephole. (tape stops temporarily)  
...so many of them: thousands...thousands, occupying...well, just like a cord of wood; a log of wood and so many of them...of course, they took able-bodied people wherever they found them and impressed them into service but they didn't give them any food and they...
- Q. In fact, they lived 90 days and in 90 days, they'd replace them with another one.
- A. Yes, that's right.
- Q. Let's go back now to the gas chamber at Dachau. Tell us what you saw.
- A. I went into this so-called gas chamber. I found it constructed of brick and concrete. The floor was all concrete. I climbed up on the outside in the space that they had hollowed so the operator could work the valve that opened for the gas to enter the extermination chamber which was, I would say, 30 feet across and of round construction. The gas was still on, because nobody had turned it off yet. But I mean, the valve had been secured, of course.
- Q. But the gas could still have been sent through there.
- A. Yes, it could have gone through.
- Q. '...if they had wanted to kill someone else. So there is no question in your mind

that this was an actual gas chamber?

A. Oh, there is no question about that.

Q. Was there any question that people had actually been murdered there? That human beings had actually been brought into that chamber and executed by gas?

A. They all seemed to know that the Jews of all nationalities...I mean from all countries that were brought in and they were men, women and children; some babies, with a little ear-ring and so on, they took all of those things and deposited the gold in a certain place in one of the other buildings of the camp and then they turned on the gas and of course, everybody was dead and they went through and picked out all the gold teeth, for instance; denture work and rings, wedding rings of all kinds, of course, on men and women and they...but I mean: men, women and children, apparently.. They played no favorites: if they were Jews, they were subjected <sup>to</sup> this.

Q. One of the things that lead us to you was a document; that is, Senate Publication #47 published by the 79th Congress in its first session and the date is May the 15th legislative day of 1945. The title of this document is "Atrocities and Other Conditions in Concentration Camps in Germany," Report of the Committee Requested by General Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, to the Congress of the United States, and if I might hand you this, there is a section on Dachau, and I understand that you wrote this document. Is that accurate?

A. Well, Barkeley and I wrote it. Barkeley was chosen by the Senators and I was chosen by the House members, to write the report.

Q. And you tell us, in this document that you are really using three kinds of evidence: First is your own eye-witness testimony. You saw it.

A. We reported what we saw.

Q. Second, you talked to these other eye-witnesses like the prisoners in Dachau who could speak English, for example...you learned from them.

A. That's right, and sometimes from our own soldiers who were leading the advance of the Americans and arrived long before we arrived.

Q. And the third was, of course, the common knowledge that did exist in that camp, as it does in any organized group.

A. I must tell you of this occurrence: when Eisenhower found out about this, he said what we should do is order the civilians in these towns near the camps to come out and see what they must have known existed in their midst. And I have seen the picture of one of the places where he ordered them to come out and they were the intelligentsia of the town: the mayor, the city council or whatever they have and even in their top hats, with shovels and axes and various implements to bury some of the dead that had been heretofore burned down to....well, just to cinders...

Q. Just to dust; just to ashes.

A. Yes.

Q. Let me take you back once more to the Dachau area. Did anyone speak about torture, or did they show you the whips that were used to torture; to whip, some of the prisoners with? Did you see any of those kinds of things?

A. Yes. In the..under the crematorium, there was a chamber and the chamber usually had a chute, a concrete chute leading down below the level of ground. That was for the people who were to be cremated to be sent down below where they had hooks on the wall...great big hooks where you would hang a side of beef, like our butchers use a side of beef. You know, they hook it over? Well, this was for prisoners who were either dead or dying and they would string them up...like that...until the next turn of the crematorium, because they had so many to dispose of that they never caught up with the...

Q. ...number that they had to kill.

A. Right, they had so many that were killed there.

Q. Did you see any Jews? Were there still any Jews left in the camp?

A. No, the only ones that I remember seeing were the Poles in, I think it was Dora.. either Buchenwald or Dora.

- Q. But down at Dachau itself, it was basically the intelligentsia? You mention the priests..were there nuns in that camp? There's been one report that there may have been some nuns.
- A. No, there were no women there at all. But they apparently had been because they pointed out one of the places where the women would be put to death and that was already covered with blood showing that it must have happened in the few days prior to our arrival. That was at Dachau.
- Q. What other things do you remember about the prisoners themselves? About their condition; their bodies?
- A. Well, I noticed that, due to malnutrition, they were skeletonized long before they died. In other words, like some of our prisoners today, they were on a hunger strike induced by the lack of food. In other words, when the food ran out or they didn't have enough for the Schustaffel and the guards, the guards got theirs, of course, regularly, but...
- Q. ...the prisoners didn't?
- A. The prisoners did not.
- Q. And they starved to death.
- A. Yeah,there really were a great number of those that we saw who starved to death. And I am thinking now of looking into one of the chambers and all I can see are arms... I mean, bones...of arms, legs and so on that had been partly consumed by the fires when they were interrupted.. All kinds of ashes with human bones all through them. Of course, the doctors among our army pointed them out to us members of Congress immediately. They could say: there's part of a head; there's a knee; here's a foot, or an ankle, or something like that. And that was commonplace in all of the crematoria. I think that is, of course, the crux of the atrocity program put into effect by Hitler...oh, I must show you...
- Q. Yes, we would like to see whatever you do have.
- A. I must show you something...

A. When we got into...I remember that the day after we arrived at the prison camp of Dachau, we went with General Patch into the town or the city of Munich... Munchen, they call it...and on the way into the city we came to a great plaza, I would call it...an open-air plaza over which the people had built two rails for their trains, right across an open, let's call it, concrete yard of maybe 3 blocks duration in every regard...in every direction. It was the entrance, apparently, that the people of Munich liked to present to visitors. So as we approached in the General's car, we noticed these tracks and in trying to go over them, we ripped out the bottom of the touring car. His sequestered... (laughter)...oil went all over, so we all got out and, to make a long story short, he got another car in order to go back but, anyway, while we were there, there was still shooting on the far side of Munich. Their retreating army, you see, and our advance units were in contact and they kept on all the way to Biergestaden. Well, anyway, that gave us an opportunity to visit the immediate section of the city immediate next to this wide-open space. So I had an idea that here is where Hitler got his start: in a beer garden and I hoped that somebody would lead me to it. So, come to find out, they had

Side 2

A. (cont'd)  
...that was the last place that the bombs hadn't reached. I found oh, 50-100 of these at tables...

Q. That mug....could you hold that up...that beer stein..

A. Yeah.

Q. And these were still sitting on the tables?

A. These were still...with a little beer in the bottom of them...showing that they followed Hitler in using the beer garden for...following the "crazy man".

Q. The "crazy man"?...Could I ask you one more thing about what's happening today, because the world doesn't really know a great deal about that awful time and I have an article from "The Spotlight", dated March 23, 1981, in this article

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written by the Director of the Institute for Historical Review, he talks about a "Liberator's Conference" that is being planned for October of this year - he says November - but then he talks about your visit to the concentration camps and there is one photograph here showing Senators Warey and Brooks and Representative Richards and what he is saying is that the gas chamber that you saw was not a gas chamber; that the kinds of deaths that the Nazis imposed on the prisoners were just normal things: that they died of disease, or they died of malnutrition, but they weren't shot in the back of the head; they weren't killed in the gas chamber. What can we say to a man who would write this kind of thing in 1981?

- A. Well, that is not true because we have too much evidence showing how even the intelligentsia were subjected to gun shots through the head; many, of course, were flogged and mis-treated in various ways as well as suffering from malnutrition...
- Q. And, then, of course, the gas chamber, because the bodies, in a sense, were also even stacked up in two rooms on either side of the gas chamber itself. I was there on the 30th of April..I saw Dachau, myself. And it is so important that we tell the truth about what we saw.
- A. Well, the truth is that we can never describe sufficiently the degradation that people were subjected to by the Nazis. And the only trouble I had in writing the report with Barkeley was that he wanted to name, always, Nazis. I felt you sould use the word "German" because I had had a sample of it as a prisoner of war in the 1st World War and I found that they were like that. They are despicable characters and they stoop to anything to vent their rage or vent their anger....or
- Q. Here they were trying to conquer the world and they took all of the Allied Forces to stop them. Couldyou, just quite briefly, tell us about how you escaped as a prisoner of war in WW-I. Would you mind just telling us a little about...
- A. Well, I had been captured by that submarine...who was looking for the captain and couldn't find him, but I had been back there with my guns..the captain had changed his uniform to another outfit and... (tape ends)