

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Judah Nadich
February 22, 1990
RG-50.030*0169

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Judah Nadich, conducted on February 22, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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JUDAH NADICH

February 22, 1990

Question: Would you tell me your name please?

Answer: My name is Judah Nadich.

Question: OK. And where and when were you born?

Answer: I was born in the city of Baltimore on May 13, 1912.

Question: And what was your uh position, please?

Answer: I'm, what positions I had uh (as a rabbi) as a rabbi? I, my first pulpit was in uh the city of Buffalo, New York, Temple Beth David. From there I went to Chicago where I was co-rabbi with the distinguished Rabbi Solomon Goldman at the _____ Synagogue. Uh in Chicago I enlisted in the Army. After the war I worked briefly for the JDC and the UJA, about a year and a half. And then resuming my rabbinic career, I went to uh _____ Israel in Brookline where I served for ten years, and then I came to New York, where I was rabbi of the Park Avenue Synagogue from 1957 to 1987.

Question: Thank you. Let's go back a little bit...

Answer: Incidentally, I want to tell you I wasn't fired in 1987. I retired.

Question: OK. (laughter). That's just fine. Uh tell me a little bit, where did you go to school? Where, how did you, how did you get into the rabbi_____?

Answer: Well, when I was fourteen years old I received a scholarship from the Baltimore _____ Torah where I had been studying to take me to the Yeshiva in New York, then on the Lower East Side. Subsequently it came to be known as Yeshiva University. I was in the student body when we moved uptown to Washington Heights, where the Yeshiva University is presently located. I studied in the Yeshiva for five and a half years, graduating first from its high school. Later going to uh the College of the City of New York, at night and to Johns Hopkins during the summers and after uh studying at the Yeshiva for a period of five and a half years, I have been graduated also from college, I entered the Jewish Theological Seminary of America where I was ordained a rabbi in 1936, and at the same time that I went to the Seminary I went to Columbia. Got my Master's in the Department of History, studying under _____ Baron (ph) and in 1936 I got my Master's Degree from Columbia as well. Subsequently I earned uh a Doctorate of uh Hebrew Literature from the Seminary and a Doctor of Divinity _____.

Question: Thank you. Uh, as a young man, as a young rabbi, uh what were the circumstances that brought you into the Army?

Answer: Ah, well, uh I was uh serving as a rabbi in Chicago at the time of Pearl Harbor. And I recall listening to the radio on December the 7th, 1941, and hearing that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and I knew instinctively that I wanted to be a part of what was going to happen. We had been reading in the press uh about Kristallnacht some time before, not too long before, and we knew that uh there, there was some kind of persecution against the Jews under the, the Nazis, so I felt sure, that I wanted to enlist as a chaplain. And enlist I did not long, after Pearl Harbor, and I was uh admitted to the Army in Chicago and ordered to report at uh Fort Bragg in North Carolina on uh May the 2nd, 1942.

Question: OK. Tell me about those first weeks at Fort Bragg.

Answer: Well, they were I suppose I should say difficult weeks for a person who had never known anything about the military. My father hadn't even allowed me to be a Boy Scout because he was afraid I might like, I might like military things and uh get to like to wearing a uniform and marching. Uh my father you can see was uh a pacifist and indeed uh he was more than that. He was a member of the _____, and that was the first Jewish school that I went to at the age of four, the _____ Schula (ph). Uh but uh those first days and weeks at uh Fort Bragg were days of learning. Uh learning a totally new world. And so, for example, the very first day that I arrived, I knew that I was supposed to report to the Commanding General. I went to his office, knocked on the door. I hear a "come in". I walked in and not knowing that I should do anything differently, I walked up to his desk where he was seated, and uh put out my hand to shake hands with him. And uh he looked at me with a smile on his face, and uh he was a very kind and compassionate man he said chaplain, we don't do things that way in the Army. Now what you will do is you go out, come back in again. As soon as you're inside the door, you come to attention and salute, and say, Chaplain Nadich reporting for duty, sir. I uh was shame-faced, but I walked out of the room, knocked on the door again, came back into the room, did exactly as he had told me, and from that point on, he took me in hand. He uh got hold of a young officer and told him to spend the next day with me, to teach me about military courtesy, the courtesies of the service, and how to march in a military parade, for the very next day I was to march in a military parade behind the commanding general as a member of his staff. Well, I, fortunately I learned quickly and so uh it wasn't long before I was a regular member of the Army.

Question: What were the circumstances that uh sent you overseas?

Answer: Ah. I was at Fort Bragg for only seventy days, when I received orders to report to Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York, for overseas shipment to Army Post Office, APO 887. I quickly ascertained that APO 887 was London. And I was rather pleased to go to that part of the world. I proceeded to Fort uh Hamilton in Brooklyn and after waiting for ten days, I was shipped by uh by a uh Dutch freighter which was a part of a convoy of 55 ships and after sailing 24 days on the high seas, uh the convoy reached Liverpool. I learned afterwards, incidentally, that uh another chaplain who had far more experience than I, who had been in the Army Reserve in peace time, uh was first asked to go and he thought better of it. He declined and I was tapped as the next man, and I was glad to go.

Question: So you landed...

Answer: We landed in Liverpool. I reported as I had been instructed to do at Cheltham (ph) which was our service of supply headquarters, and after a day or two in Cheltham and going through the uh routine, the red tape, I was assigned to the northern, the northern Ireland Bay Section which was located just outside the city of Belfast. The reason for my being sent there, since I was the first Jewish chaplain ordered to the European theater, was because our first American troops were stationed in Northern Ireland, and an armored headquarters, a corps headquarters, and uh two infantry divisions, and I immediately began visiting every camp, every military camp to search out Jewish soldiers and officers, and to arrange for services and for whatever, whatever other service I could render to the soldiers of Jewish faith.

Question: You had told me at lunch something about the particular way in which you solved a burial...

Answer: Oh yes, oh yes. As a matter of fact the immediate reason for the uh request by General Eisenhower for a, an American Army Jewish chaplain to be dispatched immediately to the European theater, was because there was some kind of a problem that could have become a uh cause-célèbre. Uh a Jewish soldier had had been killed in a uh motor, Army motor motor vehicle accident and since there was no American Army Jewish chaplain at the time, the uh rabbi in Belfast, Rabbi _____, was asked whether he would officiate at the funeral service, the burial service for this Jewish soldier. And he was very quick to respond of course he would be pleased to oblige, but he said that he would insist that this Jewish soldier be buried in a Jewish cemetery as is provided for by Jewish law, and he even offered to provide a grave in the cemetery of his congregation in Belfast. The Army authorities told him that according to Army regulations, every American Army soldier overseas who would have to be buried in a foreign, in foreign soil, would have to be buried in an American Army, a military cemetery because after the war would be over, the remains of these soldiers, at the request of their families, would be returned to the United States, would be returned home. The Irish rabbi said that he, he could not officiate under those circumstances, and since the military were concerned for the feelings and the good opinion of the civilian population, uh the American military authorities saw the need immediately for a, an American Army Jewish chaplain. Hence the request for such a chaplain and therefore I was dispatched.

Question: _____. How long were you in Ireland?

Answer: Uh I was in Ireland for approximately, well say August to November, and uh I I was uh ordered from Ireland to England uh when uh I appeared at the various camps one uh fine morning to visit the troops, and to my amazement the camps were empty. I did not know where the troops had gone, but later I learned they had been shipped of course secretly for the invasion of North Africa. Soon after that I was ordered to England and since I was still the only free, that is non-assigned to a division, Jewish chaplain, I was ordered to the American Military Cemetery at Brookwood in Surrey, not far from London, and I was uh stationed with the American detachment uh who took care of burials at their uh quarters in the town of Wilking (ph). We actually occupied a small inn in Wilking. At the cemetery I would officiate at all Jewish funerals on Mondays and Thursdays. The other days of the week, I would get a military vehicle and a driver from southern base headquarters in Salisbury, and cover one slice of England. I had

carved up England into various slices so that I would be able to visit each area once a month. In each Army headquarters or hospital, I would find a Jewish officer or non-commissioned officer or private who would know how to conduct a Jewish service, give him prayer books and other religious supplies, have him conduct the services each week, but I would show up once a month to uh be of help, to conduct a monthly service, and to help with any problems that might arise. As more Jewish chaplains arrived in the United Kingdom, I would assign them to take parts of England or, and Scotland, and thus my own territory would be decreased as time went on. But I went as far as Glasgow and again to Belfast, and in all parts of England and to some parts of Wales.

Question: How long did this go on?

Answer: Uh this uh continued for about a year while I was stationed in Surry, near London, and then for the second year I was stationed in London proper uh at American Army Headquarters uh in London uh at uh at or near Grosvenor (ph) Square.

Question: And what did you do from _____?

Answer: And there I was uh a chaplain in the office of the theater chaplain, who was a Roman Catholic monsignor, _____. His deputy was an Episcopalian chaplain, Edwin Carter, Jr., uh known familiarly as Nick Carter, and I was the uh the one Jewish chaplain at theater headquarters, and I was given the assignment of uh G3 © that is I was in charge of all religious supplies there and later on in France.

Question: What did it mean to be in charge of religious supplies? What are some of the things you had to do?

Answer: Uh well uh I recall particularly in France where my job was more difficult, uh that I had to uh obtain for Catholic chaplains, mass kits for example, and uh hymnals, and hymnals as well for Protestant chaplains. Uh I had to uh visit uh vineyards (ph) who had been approved by the local French Catholic bishop, uh that is whose wine was approved for, for use in mass, and I would uh taste the various wines to make sure that I got a good tasting wine for my friends who were uh Catholic chaplains, and I would uh buy the uh the wines for Catholic mass, and I supplied uh Protestant and Catholic chaplains and Jewish chaplains with all of their needs. Even going so far as to supply New Testaments in German for German prisoners of war. That I got a special kick out of, that a rabbi should be supplying German prisoners of war with New Testaments in German.

Question: OK. How did you get from England to Paris? What were the circumstances?

Answer: Well, from England to Paris, uh I was uh flown over in a small plane together with a number of other officers, and we landed on an air strip in Normandy. The uh German troops and uh I told you were not that far away, and indeed as our plane landed on the air strip in Normandy uh Ger...German artillery began shelling the air strip. We were asked to uh leave the plane as quickly as possible and to run for cover, and uh of course I followed orders very quickly. And

uh in the process I lost a brand new officer's trench coat that I had just purchased in London before departure for France.

Question: You took up duties in Paris. What was your role in Paris? What was your title and what was your role?

Answer: Ah, in in Paris I was uh, my title was Deputy to the Theater Chaplain. Not the senior deputy. That was still Nick Carter. But I was deputy to the senior chaplain in the theater to the theater chaplain, Father Terrand (ph) for Jewish affairs, so that when a new Jewish chaplain would arrive from the States, I was to assign him to his new location. Uh I was still uh G3, distributing religious supplies, and I was a Jewish chaplain at that time, in the beginning the only Jewish chaplain uh in the area, and of course we moved uh after the breakthrough at St. Lowe (ph) we moved into Paris as Paris was captured. In Paris I first met with the the survivors in Paris. Uh and uh my position there was to be of immediate help to the survivors because for most of them I was the first contact they had with the Jewish community outside. And I was a signal to them that uh the American Jewish community was there, at least in the person of this one rabbi, this one chaplain.

Question: Can you describe it? Describe your first meeting with a, with the group of survivors?

Answer: Uh, my first meeting with the survivors happened in a rather interesting way. I uh took a jeep and drove to the area where I had been told Jews had been living, the area known as the _____, the little place. And I flew my Jewish chaplain's flag from the jeep. Uh you may know that the uh Jewish chaplain's flag consisted of a dark blue background, and in the center there was the Jewish chaplain's insignia, consisting of the Ten Commandments, the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. Above the tablets, uh the uh six-pointed Star of David. It didn't take long before some people came out and recognized, of course, the Jewish symbols, and began to talk to me. And they noticed on the lapels of my Army uh uniform the same insignia. And they began to ask me who I was, what was I doing there. It didn't take long before a crowd had assembled. And some of them thought I should talk to a small committee of Jewish leaders that had already been created to be of help to the Jewish survivors of Paris. Now where did these Jews come from who had survived the German occupation of Paris? Most of them had fled during the German occupation, or just prior to it, to the south of France where the Italians were in charge. The south of France was under Italian occupation. The Italians were never as rigid or severe in their governance of their territory as were the Germans. And so it was easier for a Jew to hide himself in the south of France, in the area under Italian orders. And so when the war was over and Paris was liberated, very quickly these Jews came back out of hiding from the south of France. There were a few who had indeed been hidden in Paris itself. And who had miraculously survived. Now I was brought to this committee that was meeting uh in a house that they had taken over as a Jewish community headquarters. And they uh spoke to me uh and told me of their problems and their needs. And among other things they quickly gave to me uh a batch of uh the yellow star that the Jews of France had to wear, on which of course was the French word _____, Jew. And uh I brought those yellow stars back to America. Uh but uh they told me that their immediate need was to open a soup kitchen or soup kitchens, uh that food was in short supply. They also would like to open they told me a free loan society. Uh I communicated with uh the uh Joint Distribution Committee in New York, through military

channels, and I was cabled from the JDC but through the Jewish Welfare Board which was the only organization set up to deal with American Army Jewish chaplains. Through the JWB I received \$10,000 from the JDC. That \$10,000 was used by this committee of Jews in France to open the first soup kitchens in Paris and to start the first Jewish free loan society that would enable uh small Jewish shop keepers and artisans to start up work again. Uh that uh didn't end my uh relationship with the Jews who had survived. I met with the committee very often, until the JDC opened its own headquarters on the Rue de _____ in Paris uh but throughout my year in Paris, every morning virtually, there were as many as thirty to thirty-five Jews, Parisian Jews or French Jews, who found themselves in Paris, who lined up in the hall outside of my Army office at the Hotel Majestique which was American Army headquarters in Paris. Each one of whom had his own story that he wanted to tell me, to communi...communicate with relatives, particularly relatives in America, to try to find relatives or problems of all kinds.

Question: You told me about a very special service that you conducted (ah, yes) in Paris. Let's talk about that.

Answer: Yes. One of the most thrilling experiences I had in Paris during that year was to uh play a part in the first service that was held after the liberation of Paris in what is called the Rothchild Synagogue on uh uh Rue de la Victoire (ph). Uh it's formal title is really the, La Grande Synagogue and that synagogue was packed with French Jews, many of whom were women wearing black. And with American Army soldiers, most of whom were still wearing battle dress, their helmets on their heads, battle uniforms, their guns left in the lobby of the synagogue. And I had the great privilege of uh preaching in French and speaking afterwards in English and I remember to this day that as I would come to the end of a sentence or the end of a paragraph as I was speaking, and as I paused to draw my breath, I could hear the gentle sobbing, particularly of women in the congregation. My French address, my English address, each was punctuated by the crying of people in the congregation, and it was an experience that I shall never forget. They were crying for those who would never return to Paris, those who had been killed by the Nazis. They were crying for all that they had lost during the years of the German occupation of France. That was a very moving service. Nobody who attended it will ever forget it.

(SHORT PAUSE)

Question: Somewhere after, while you were still in Paris, I believe you were ordered to go to a cere...a ceremony?

Answer: Oh yes. Uh I was ordered to appear as the representative of General Eisenhower at a ceremony for French martyrs who had been killed by the Nazis and who had been buried in a mass grave in a French cemetery just outside of Paris. Uh General DeGaulle was to be the principle speaker but General Eisenhower had been asked to send a representative and the order had come to the theater chaplain to dispatch a chaplain who could speak French. So I was told to go. And I went. And there was quite a crowd there and we were ready to start the ceremony when suddenly there was a tremendous noise of bullets and artillery shells flying around us, past us in all directions, and there was a great deal of screaming of course. Everybody there was certain that the Germans who at that time were not too far away from Paris, that the Germans

must have returned. That they were surrounding the cemetery. That their target was General DeGaulle, and incidentally anybody else who was there. And therefore all of the shooting. And I quickly dodged behind a tall monument, and a little bo...little French boy ran past me. I grabbed him and pulled him down beside me. He had become separated from his mother. He was crying, and I held him near me all throughout the uh shooting. When it suddenly got quiet again, all of us left the cemetery quickly. It was only the next day that I learned through the French press that what had happened was that on the railroad tracks just outside the cemetery, the Germans had left two carloads of ammunition, shells, bullets of all description, and spontaneous combustion had started this tremendous racket of all the bullets and shells being fired and uh we were just very fortunate that uh we weren't killed. I never got to give my uh carefully prepared talk in French.

Question: What else were you doing in Paris at that time?

Answer: Oh, uh I must tell you of something in which I took great pleasure. I, I mentioned earlier that I was in charge of all religious supplies for the American Army on the continent of Europe. And months before Passover I realized that we would need matzo (ph) for the American Jewish troops. And when I went to the Quartermaster General he informed me of course as ...

END OF TAPE

...that but that uh if I could locate a matzoth factory in England I could order as much matzo as I wanted, that it would be charged on reverse-lend-lease, and he added since the British are not going to pay us in total (ph) anyhow, order as much matzo as you want. We'll charge it to reverse-lend-lease and the British will pay for it. I took him at his word. I gave that English matzo factory that I had discovered the largest order it had ever received. When the matzo came sailing across the Channel to Paris to me, it filled an entire liberty ship, which rode high in the waters of the English Channel and the matzo was delivered to Paris. I distributed it to all of the Jewish chaplains then serving with the American Army for further distribution to American Jewish troops, for the various Passover _____ that would be held. Incidentally I held my Passover Seder for six thousand troops in the Lido in Paris, on the Champs d'Elysee, the largest nightclub in Paris, an odd place to have a seder but it worked out very well. No nightclub acts but a seder each night for three thousand soldiers, three thousand the first night, three thousand the second night of Passover. But I had a great deal of matzo left over, so I distributed it first to the Jews of Paris and I gave matzo to the Jewish chaplains with the free French troops, the free Czech soldiers, the free Polish Army, and distributed the rest of the matzo to Jewish civilians in France and Belgium because food, bread in part...in particular, was not easy to purchase. It couldn't be found in in any great measure, and matzo could be eaten not only during the eight days of Passover of course, but throughout the year. So that was my big order of matzo, and its distribution. Further when _____ came and there was a need for _____ and for _____ palm branches used during the festival services of the Feast of Tabernacles, again the Quartermaster General obliged me by arranging to have it on reverse-lend-lease and the British again paid for it. And the uh _____ and _____ were purchased in what was then Palestine, flown to Egypt, an..by British planes, flown from Egypt to Paris, once again by British planes, and I had enough to distribute to all parts of the American Army wherever troops were located.

(SHORT PAUSE)

Question: OK. You were in France for quite a while.

Answer: I was in France for a year. (Um-hum) And I traveled incidentally to uh all parts of northern France, Belgium, and eastern France to meet with the Jewish chaplains, particularly those serving with the uh front line infantry and armored force divisions.

Question: What did you see as you traveled in the way of survivors, Jewish survivors, in France?

Answer: Well, uh interestingly enough, in a number of French communities, small groups of Jews returned and the American Army Jewish chaplains did an extraordinary piece of work in helping them. Uh I think of Chaplain, the late Chaplain Isaac Kline (ph) in _____ and many Jewish chaplains in various Jewish commun...in various Jewish communities in France who first brought the returning Jews the necessities of life-food, medical supplies, medical treatment through Army medical officers and the where-with-all, the necessities for daily living and then helped reconstruct the communities. Uh these Jewish chaplains would write back to their home communities, to their home synagogue and ask the members of their synagogues to collect clothing and children's toys and soap and various other items that would be needed by uh the beginnings of Jewish communities in different parts of France and Belgium. And the communities responded generously. Hundreds of packages would arrive for a single Jewish chaplain. And he would distribute the contents to the Jews in the community where he was. And Jewish chaplains went further. They helped rebuild synagogues and Jewish community centers so that Jewish communal life began once again in these communities, albeit with far fewer Jews than had been there before. This I witnessed as I traveled through various parts of especially of northern and eastern France and Belgium.

Question: Was it at this time that you first met up with representatives of the Brichah (ph)?

Answer: Ah, I'm glad you asked that question. Uh I first met with the representatives of the Brichah when I was still stationed in Paris. And I was approached one day by one of them who came to my office at the American Army Headquarters, the Hotel Majestique, and who told me uh that he was involved with some other Jews from Palestine in helping to bring Jewish survivors to ports in southern France. He told me that other comrades of his were working elsewhere to bring Jewish survivors to ports in southern Italy. From these French and Italian ports, the plan was that these survivors would board ships and would be brought to the coast of Palestine. Now this was prohibited by the British who were still in control of Palestine, and so these ships were called illegal ships. This was called quote "illegal immigration" unquote, uh but these men and women were working to save Jewish lives. This particular man who came to my office in Paris told me that a group of a few hundred, he mentioned possibly as many as eight hundred, would be moved soon from a southern French port. Could I possibly help with getting food supplies because even had they the money, it would have been very difficult to buy food in France at that particular time in history. So I said I would inquire and find out what I could. At the Officers' Mess that evening, I spoke to an officer who was working at uh the Quartermaster General's office. I asked him if he could help me. He said as a matter of fact uh there was a

large supply that filled several warehouses in Paris of prisoner of war parcels that had been sent from the United States during the war that were to be shipped to Switzerland. From there the International Red Cross would send them to American prisoners of war in Germany. Now these parcels were full of food of high quality and they, they were particularly chosen kinds of food for the nutrition that they would provide to those who would eat them. The war had just been ended in Europe, and the American prisoners of war had been transhipped to French ports and had been sent back home. Uh this food was still in the warehouses in Paris, was appearing in the French black market—in other words

the parcels were being stolen from the warehouses and uh this uh American officer said to me if you go to the Quartermaster General and ask for these parcels for the prisoners of war, they might be given to you. I followed his advice. I went to the Quartermaster General. I told him there was need to send uh to ship uh uh Jewish survivors from one place to another without mentioning any particular locations. He wasn't interested in asking which locations. I said to him I know that there are these prison of war parcels that soon will rot, that are showing up in the French black market. Would he sign papers enabling me to take control of those prisoner of war parcels? He was relieved to get rid of the headache and he said just make out the orders and I shall sign them, five copies. He made out the orders and for the next several days, trucks of the Brichah were moving these prisoner of war parcels from the warehouses, the several warehouses in Paris, to their own channels for shipment ultimately to southern French ports to go on so-called illegal ships to Palestine. By the way, there were a number of American Army Jewish chaplains who helped the Brichah in similar fashion. There were those who obtained medical supplies for these ships. There were those who even obtained ammunition to be taken aboard the ships. Indeed wherever there were Jewish chaplains stationed in France, if they were contacted by the men or women of the Brichah, they found ways of helping the members of the Brichah.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Question: Uh how did the Brichah get their trucks? Do you know?

Answer: I'm not uh privy to that information. I really can't answer that. I don't know whether they bought them. They did have certain funds. They could have bought them. Uh trucks were not too hard I imagine because gasoline was still rationed. When there's rationing of gasoline and gasoline is difficult to obtain and it's very expensive, people who own trucks are not so anxious to use them.

Question: Did you help the Brichah in any other way at this time?

Answer: Ah yes. I helped the Brichah later on after I was ordered to Germany to American Army Headquarters in Frankfurt.

Question: OK. Let's talk about Frankfurt, uh unless there's something else you want to add about France.

Answer: About France? No, not necessarily. (OK. What...) Oh yes, I, there is. I must tell you that uh I made a number of friends among Jewish survivors in Paris. I was invited to preach in uh several synagogues during the High Holy Days and uh during the festivals and on different

Sabbaths, and as a result of the preaching, I met a number of French Jews who invited me to their homes. And thus I got to know a number of them, and my friendship with several of them has continued to this day. They have visited America and I and my children have visited them in France. And similarly with friends among British Jews in London.

Question: How did you get, why did you go from France to Frankfurt, Germany?

Answer: Well, after a year in Paris I received orders commanding me to go to American Army Headquarters in Frankfurt. And to report for duties as an advisor to the Commanding General uh dash, General Eisenhower, dash, uh to advise him on Jewish affairs. And uh I flew from Paris to uh, no—I didn't fly. I took the American military train which was an overnight train that ran between Paris and Frankfurt. Paris was our rear headquarters. Frankfurt was our forward headquarters. So I went by train overnight to Frankfurt.

Question: OK. Can you give me a little bit of background about uh suddenly being appointed an advisor?

Answer: As to why this came to be?

Question: How did this come to be?

Answer: This was, that's uh a question of interest because uh there was no such position ever before uh in the American Army or indeed in any other army. An advisor to a commanding general with regard to Jewish problems. And there, it's interesting as to how it came to pass. The war, American war correspondents had reported during the summer of 1945, and their reports were read by Americans in New York, Chicago, elsewhere, in the in the daily press, that Jewish survivors of the concentration camps in Germany and Austria were being badly treated. And as a result President Truman appointed uh Dean Earl G. Harrison who was Dean of the Law School of the University of Pennsylvania, to make an inspection trip. He came in July of 1945. His aid was Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz fortunately. He was the very able European director of the Joint Distribution Committee. And when Dean Harrison returned to the United States toward the end of July, he made a report that was highly critical of the American Army uh in Germany and of the manner in which they were taking care of Jewish survivors. And at the beginning of August there was a Zionist conference held in London, the first such conference since the last world Zionist conference of 1939. This was uh the beginning of August 1945. Uh several of us chaplains were lucky enough to get to London to attend that Zionist conference and we told the delegates, particularly I remember Rabbi Stephen S. Weiss (ph) of what we had seen in Germany and uh Dr. Weiss, uh at the suggestion of one of the chaplains, the late Rabbi Robert Marcus (ph), uh sent a dispatch through the American Embassy in London to General Eisenhower, suggesting the appointment of a Jewish chaplain as a liaison officer to coordinate the work being done to help the Jewish survivors in Germany. Uh General Eisenhower two days later replied to Rabbi Weiss on the 9th of August that uh he did not agree with the suggestion, that uh there could be no appointment of a Jewish liaison officer because liaison officers were at his headquarters representing various nations. There was a French liaison officer. There was a Polish liaison officer. A Czech liaison officer. But there couldn't be a reli...a religious liaison officer. Well, uh Gen...General Eisenhower had already received from General Marshall, the

Chief of Staff, several days before this a communication telling him that the report of Dean Earl G. Harrison was very critical of the American Army in Germany but on the 10th of August, the day after Eisenhower had replied to Rabbi Weiss, he received a cable from Secretary of War Stimpson telling him that the report of Dean Harrison severely condemned the American Army, that something had to be done. General Eisenhower, the very same day, replied to Secretary of War Stimpson that only yesterday he had turned down the suggestion to appoint a Jewish liaison officer. Now he was going to appoint a chaplain, an Army chaplain, to advise him and to coordinate whatever was being done to help Jewish survivors who had been found in the German concentration camps. So that's how the position came to be created. And that's why I got the orders in Paris to proceed during the third week of August at all full speed to Frankfurt.

Question: What did you find when you arrived in Frankfurt?

Answer: Well, uh I uh I found that the Army had planned uh fully as to what to do with any survivors who might be found in German concentration camps. There had been set up a combined displaced persons executive, which was a large office staffed by a number of officers. There was a general who was in charge, General Nicholson. Uh this combined DP executive was under the general command of uh the G5 on General Eisenhower's staff, General Adcock (ph), and they were doing a good job in following the plans that had been prepared a long time before. Those plans said simply that the survivors found in German concentration camps should be quickly sent back to the lands of their origin. And indeed French and, and Belgian and Greek and other nationals found in the concentration camps within ninety days were sent back to their homelands. But what the planners had not thought of was number one there would be German Jews and Austrian Jews and

Hungarian Jews who came from countries that were considered enemy countries by the American Army, so they were enemy nationalists, and nobody had planned for enemy nationalists to be found in the concentration camps. The irony was that the Germans, the Hungarians, uh the Austrians had deprived these Jews of their German, Austrian, Hungarian citizenship, but now they were given that citizenship again because to do otherwise would be to follow the practice of of the Nazis. And so they were enemy nationalists. That was one problem. The second problem was, and this was a far greater problem, the planners, the military planners had never contemplated the possibility that there would be survivors who were, who would be Jews who would refuse to return to the lands of their origin. Polish Jews. Ukrainian Jews. Lithuanian, Estonian Jews. Uh Hungarian Jews. Romanian Jews. Because they knew that their homes, their businesses that they once had had in their lands of origin had been seized by their erstwhile neighbors. They knew also that in many cases their former non-Jewish neighbors had cooperated with the Nazis in turning in their Jewish neighbors. Indeed in helping the Nazis ship their Jewish neighbors to death camps. They knew that it would be dangerous even to return to the lands of their origin. They were concerned less their neighbors now in possession of Jewish homes and businesses attack them, as indeed happened. Moreover, psychologically these Jews, survivors of German concentration camps, knew that the very land, the very soil where they had once lived was now a soil that absorbed the blood of their children and their parents and their spouses. That the very air was polluted with the smoke of the crematoria where Jews had been burned. They had no desire to return to the lands from which they had come. Now it was the problems of these Jews in particular that had not been thought of in advance. Therefore the Army indeed did not take care properly of these Jewish survivors. It

wasn't until the 22nd of August when General Eisenhower issued an order that the Army take care of these survivors and that so-called enemy nationals who were Jewish and who had suffered under the Nazis should be taken care of as victims of the Nazis, that the whole situation was turned around. And a part of that turning around of the situation involved my being ordered to take on the duties of visiting these camps, seeing what the conditions were, bringing back my reports to General Eisenhower or in his absence to his Chief of Staff, General Walter Beetle Smith. And to recommend changes in whatever conditions had to be changed.

Question: At this point we're going to break and change tapes.

Answer: Fine.

END OF TAPE

Question: OK. Uh we've begun. You were, you have been assigned to Eisenhower and you have arrived. Uh can you tell me, what was your first assignment?

Answer: Well, my first assignment was to meet of course with the uh uh officers who were the staff of the combined displaced persons executive. And I spent oh the better part of a week uh learning what my job was to, to consist of. I read through a lot of uh files and I had long discussions uh with uh the several officers who were a part of the combined DP executive and then I uh compiled for myself a list of questions that would be a questionnaire for me when I would arrive in a displaced persons camp. The questions would have to do with uh housing, food, sanitary conditions, medical conditions, health of people and uh the like and where did these people want to go. What did they see as the solution, the ultimate solution to their problems. So armed with this questionnaire, I started off on my first tour. And I went first to Bavaria uh then under the command of the 3rd Army, whose commanding general was General George Patton. And uh General Patton had appointed a Major Schaffer (ph) as his displaced persons officer on his staff in Munich, which was the headquarters of the 3rd Army. Well, I went to Bavaria and I headed first for Feldafing (ph). Now why Feldafing? Because in the report of Dean Harrison, Feldafing had been praised. Indeed uh Dean Harrison had stated that Feldafing should be the model for other DP camps in the American zone of Germany. I went to Feldafing. I found uh over five thousand Jews there and the Army contingent in charge was headed by a Lieutenant Irving Smith. Now Irving Smith was a very able and efficient Army officer. He was Jewish. He was sympathetic to the plight of the survivors. And yet the Jews of the camp voiced to me through a committee whom they had chosen, their complaints about Lieutenant Smith. Why? Well, because he issued orders without consulting with the committee. He, well that that was his job. He was an Army officer. And he wasn't trained to be in charge of a group of civilians in dire need. But as I went around through the camp with the committee, the Jewish committee, I was appalled by what I had seen. Why was I so upset? Because Feldafing, which had been held up by Dean Harrison as the model camp, was severely over-crowded. There were uh a number of, of uh barracks that were completely unfit for human habitation. The barracks were in many cases uh housing with poor roofing so that whenever it rained everything inside would get wet. Certainly as I thought of the coming winter, people couldn't be housed in, under such conditions. In addition, there was severe crowding in all of the barracks where the Jews were living. Remember, this was not a concentration camp. The Jews had been moved out

of the concentration camp soon after the liberation, and had been put into this kind of housing, which had been constructed originally for foreign workers who had come into Germany, who came into Germany from such countries uh as Poland and Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Many of them were brought by the Germans as slave labor to work in German industry while the Germans themselves were in the German Army. Some had volunteered to come because of their sympathy with the Germans. Well, now these foreign workers were also displaced persons. They claimed the status of displaced persons. And their housing that had been used for them was now being used by Jewish displaced persons. And I thought the conditions in, in Feldafing were deplorable. And I wondered how bad could the conditions be elsewhere if Feldafing had been praised by Dean Harrison as a model DP camp. I found out why Harrison praised Feldafing, and that was because Feldafing at that time was almost unique in that it was an all-Jewish camp. Now other camps where Jewish survivors were being housed were camps where non-Jews were also being housed. Who were these non-Jews? They were the foreign workers I mentioned a moment ago. In many cases they were sympathetic to the Jews, but in most cases they were anti-Jewish. Many of them were, had been sympathetic to the Nazi cause, had volunteered to come as workers to Germany. Moreover they had been fed well and housed well and clothed well, all through the years of the war and what the Jewish survivors of concentration camps required was not what they needed. And to give the Jews in the camps where they were housed with the non-Jews special treatment, more food than the others got, better clothing than the others had gotten, more medical attention than the others received, would be unthinkable. It would, it could create riots, that the Jews were getting special treatment. Never mind that the Jews needed the special attention. It was the Jews who had suffered under the Nazi severely in the concentration camps, not the foreign workers. But it was an impossible situation. So what Dean Harrison had recommended was that camps should be set up with Feldafing as a model, that is they should be all Jewish camps and they should have a Jewish committee who would work together with whoever was in charge of the camps, whether it would be uh a military group or an _____ company or workers from the Joint Distribution Committee who were by now being permitted to come into Germany, and to work in the camps, and General Eisenhower in that famous order of his of August 22nd also ordered that camps be made available for Jews alone, that non-Jews be removed from those camps and sent back as quickly as possible to the homelands from which they had come. And that was a great step forward because that permitted additional special treatment for Jewish survivors. And when I came back to headquarters in Frankfurt, and I uh made my first recommendations, first orally to General Nicholson (ph), General Adcock and very quickly to General uh General Walter Beetle Smith, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, later to be Ambassador of the United States to the Soviet Union and Secretary of State, my first reports included a number of recommendations. One with regard to the crowding, that more and better housing be obtained. Uh secondly, with regard to food, uh two thousand calories a day which was an improvement over what the Jews in the camps had gotten earlier under the American Army treatment, that two thousand calories a day was not sufficient to build up people who had been suffering from malnutrition for years. In addition, the two thousand calories did not provide sufficient nutrition. The diet was not a balanced diet. And I made another recommendation that was of vital importance to the Jews in the camps in Bavaria, including Feldafing. Namely, that they saw that their camps were surrounded by barbed wire. Uh that irritated them to no end because in the concentration camps under the Nazis, their camps had also been surrounded by barbed wire. Moreover, under the orders of General Patton, a pass system existed in each camp under which no more than a certain percentage of Jews in the

camps would get passes enabling them to leave the camp for a certain number of hours. The Jews in the camps looked out and saw Germans who were, were the enemies of the Americans, Germans who had placed them in concentration camps, walking freely on the roads, on the highways. They were not behind barbed wire. They didn't have, have to ask anybody for a pass to walk around freely. They, the Jews, who had been so severely treated by the Germans, were still behind barbed wire and had to ask for permission to have a few hours of freedom outside the DP camp. Well, uh I must say that uh General Eisenhower acted quickly on all these recommendations. Orders were done quickly to General Patton to correct these situations and I had a uh vivid illustration of how at least in one instance if not in others, the orders were not carried out by General Patton. Generally speaking, had Eisenhower's orders beginning with his August 22nd initial order correcting the situation been carried out on all the lower levels of command, the situation for Jewish survivors in Germany would have changed radically quickly. Unfortunately there was a wide gap between the headquarters in Frankfurt and the military units dealing with the Jewish displaced persons, and with all the intermediary levels through which the orders had to pass, including General Patton's headquarters in Munich. And so, for example, when I went back again on my second trip to Bavaria, the Jews complained to me that the barbed wire still existed. The pass system had not been changed, and when I came back to Frankfurt, I reported that to General Walter Beetle Smith. Soon afterwards I came into the anteroom to General Eisenhower Eisen-uh-hower's headquarters, to his office, and I saw General Patton sitting in the anteroom at eight o'clock in the morning when the Army day began in Germany, and I knew that I must be the reason for his being there. I had reported that he had not carried out Eisenhower's order with regard to the removal of the pass system and the barbed wire. I saw him sitting there with his pearl-handled pistols, one on each side of him, with his shiny helmet and boots. He glared at me with distaste and I beat a quick diplomatic retreat out of the office. Later General Smith told me that what had happened was that when he had reported to Eisenhower that I had said that Patton had not carried out the orders about the removal of the barbed wire and the pass system, Eisenhower had instructed General Smith to call General Patton to have him report the following morning at eight o'clock. General Patton had to ride overnight from Munich to Frankfurt to be there at eight o'clock in the morning, and later when General Eisenhower saw him, General Eisenhower said to Patton after reminding him of the barbed wire and the pass system and his not carrying out Eisenhower's orders with regard to them, General Eisenhower asked him, George, why don't you do something for these Jews? And General Patton replied thinking that he was talking to his buddy, his close friend with whom he had gone to school at West Point, he replied uh Eisenhower, in a jocular way, well, why the hell should I. And Eisenhower lost his temper, which he normally kept under control, and retorted, well, God damn it, if for no other reason than because I have ordered you to. Now shortly after that General Patton was relieved of command of the 3rd Army and was given the command of the 15th Army, with headquarters at Bad Nauheim (ph). I don't know why that happened, but the 15th Army was only a paper Army. It consisted of no troops, only of the headquarters. The general story as uh told by newspaper correspondents, the war correspondents and by the movie about General Patton, was that he had slapped a soldier in a military hospital in Sicily, charging him with malingering. But the question asks itself, why should Eisenhower have waited so long to punish Patton for something that had happened a long time before. I'm not saying that this incident of the barbed wire and pass system were the immediate cause of Patton's demotion, but I'm guessing that it may have played some part in it.

Question: OK. Uh you were so involved in all of this, and you were going to the camps. Did you have contact again with the Brichah during this period to help you at all?

Answer: I had contact with Brichah. I found them in various places in Germany and later when I went into the American zone of Austria and I soon gradually came to be a kind of a communications factor in their operations. Scattered as they were in different areas of Germany and Austria, it was very difficult for them to communicate with each other. It was impossible for them to give reports to a representative of the Jewish agency in London. At this particular time it was Mosha (ph) _____, later Mosha (ph) _____. But I was situated at American Army headquarters in Frankfurt, and I could communicate by telephone with all parts of Europe, so that I could speak to _____ in London and to various members of Brichah in different parts of Germany or Austria, and bring reports from the Brichah men and women to _____ and his requests to the members of Brichah, so that I played a small role there uh acting as a kind of uh a communications headquarters for Brichah. Of course I continued on my rounds of the DP camps regularly, week in, week out. Not only in Bavaria but in all other parts of the American zone of Germany, and at this time too, I had the good fortune of welcoming a delegation of Jewish survivors from Bergen-Belsen in the British zone of Germany. Uh they came to meet with me to find out what was happening in the American zone of Germany with survivors, to tell me what was happening in Bergen-Belsen under the British zone, and among them I remember was

_____, Rosen _____ and the lady _____, a physician who was later to become his wife, and several other leaders of the Jewish committee of survivors in Bergen-Belsen. Incidentally, the Jews of London, the leaders of the British, British Jewry, wanted also to have an advisor, a Jewish advisor, appointed to General Montgomery, who was the British commanding general in the British zone of Germany. They asked me for any kind of papers, military orders that might be uh copied by them and sent to General Montgomery to, to see if he would not create a similar position in the British zone of Germany. General Montgomery refused point blank. But I continued visiting, meeting with Jewish chaplains, who once again were doing a remarkable piece of work in helping Jewish survivors. Uh Chaplain Gunther (ph) _____ had found a number of Hungarian Jewish women wandering across the countryside. They had been brought to Germany as a part of a slave labor force, and upon liberation didn't know where to go or what to do. Similarly with other American Jewish chaplains, wherever they were. Chaplain Robert Marcus (ph), Chaplain Hershell Shactor (ph), and particularly Chaplain Abraham Klossner (ph) stationed in Munich who was of inestimable value in helping the Jews in Munich create the central organization of the Jews of Bavaria whose name was later changed to the Jews of Germany. I had sent Chaplain Klossner on a thirty-day order to Dachau where he was to help with the survivors in Dachau. He did that. He did not come back after thirty days. Uh the uh field hospital that had been stationed by the American Army in Dachau to help save as many lives as possible of the survivors, moved on. He remained behind. He was attached to no American military unit, which was altogether contrary to American military orders. He remained on his own, finding shelter and food on his own with the Jewish survivors in Munich, but he was of extraordinary assistance in helping the Jews, the displaced persons, Jewish displaced persons, in Munich and throughout Bavaria. I cannot pay too much tribute to him and to the other American Army Jewish chaplains...(how much)...oh incidentally, excuse me for interrupting you, I was almost court martialed because of Klossner because my boss, the theater chaplain, Father _____, learned that I had ordered Klossner who was one of the last American Army Jewish

chaplains to arrive in that batch of thirty who arrived after the war was actually over. Chaplain Elia Bonen (ph) who had been with uh the 42nd Rainbow Division that had liberated Dachau, had helped as much as possible while his troops were still in the area of Dachau, but he telephoned me to say he was moving on from Dachau with his troops to Salzburg in Austria, and that I should send somebody to help the Jewish survivors in Dachau. Chaplain uh Abe Klossner had just arrived. I had nowhere really to send him so I ordered him for thirty days to the American field hospital that was remaining in Dachau. When the theater chaplain learned of what I had done, that I had not at the end of thirty days seen to it that Chaplain Klossner should be ordered to another military unit elsewhere, threatened to have me court martialed uh but fortunately I talked my way out of it.

Question: How?

Answer: How did I talk myself out of it? By fast talk and also because by this time I had been greatly involved—I was still in Paris at the time © I had been greatly involved in service to the Jewish survivors in Paris, to Jewish lay leaders in Paris, and he might have been just a little bit afraid to court martial a chaplain on his staff who had contacts, he knew, not only with civilians in Paris but with the Jewish community back in New York, with the heads of the Jewish Welfare Board and the Joint Distribution Committee. There might have been a row created had he done it, so he thought the better of it.

Question: Can you (cough), sorry, can you talk a little bit about, you've had these relations with Brichah. You're working with the Army. To what extent did the Army turn a blind eye to what you and the Brichah were doing about making sure that supplies got through, etc.?

Answer: Ah that's very interesting. I told you already about the Quartermaster General in Paris who did not ask questions he might have asked as to how many displaced persons were moving, where were they moving from, where were they moving to he didn't ask the questions. In addition, when Jewish chaplains obtained medical supplies and sanitation supplies and even ammunition for the Brichah, it was with the cooperation usually of their military superiors. When uh I met General Hume in Austria, and on behalf of the Brichah I asked him where would be a good place for survivors to cross the border. He said this is altogether unofficial and if you are ever asked, you never heard it from me, but he took me to the wall map and he showed me a point where it would be a good place to cross the border. Incidentally, he gave me an article that was printed as a brochure that he had written some years before, of Moses as the first great military commander who took care of medical and sanitation requirements for an army on the march. And it was quite a learned article that he had written, long before World War Two had started. He gave me a copy that I treasure to this day. Now later on, there is a similar story in connection with what happened in Vienna. When I came to Vienna, and first I met with General Mark Clark who was the American general in command of Austria. I paid my courtesy call. He wanted to make certain that I had not come at the express orders of Eisenhower because Eisenhower was not in command of Germany. I told him I had simply come to see how well the American Army under his command was taking care of Jewish survivors in the Austrian camps. When I came to Vienna and I visited the Rothchild Hospital, which was kind of a way-station for the Brichah, where they housed Jewish

survivors who were being brought from Poland across Yugoslavia through Broto...through Brotoslovia (ph), across the border into the Russian zone of Austria, and then into the American zone of Austria, and then into the American zone of Germany. I met members of the Brichah there who said they have a very important matter in which they asked my help. They explained that a border crossing from Yugoslavia into the Russianin Austria.

END OF TAPE

... who had come there from Poland. They wanted to know if that Russian crossing point was closed permanently or whether it would be opened again, the reason being that they had made all kinds of preparations before they used that crossing point. Money had been passed from hand to hand to make sure that it would be safe to bring Jewish refugees across that border crossing point. Now it was closed. Would they have to open another border crossing point with the required payment of sufficient funds, with making certain that it was militarily safe? I said how could I help. They said that by coincidence, a sheer coincidence, there was a Russian officer who was an aid to the Russian commanding general in Vienna. This Russian officer's name was the same as my last name, Nadich. This Russian Jew had come from the Ukraine, that they planned having a party in the apartment of one of the members of Brichah in honor of the two Nadichs, the one who was on the staff of the Russian commanding general, and the one who was the advisor to the American commanding general, that they would supply us both with plenty of vodka, that I should ply my colleague with drinks until I would get the answer, if he knew the answer. So the party took place. I was pleased to meet my colleague with the same name. We spoke about the Jewish conditions in the Ukraine. He told me of his great concern, his great fear about his return after the war to the Ukraine. The Nazis had been there for several years and had poisoned the minds of those who had not been antisemitic before. He didn't know what would befall the surviving Russian Jews if they were to return to the Ukraine. Gradually we got around to the subject in which I was interested. I discussed with him the crossing point from Yugoslavia into the Russian zone of Austria. By this time I neglected to mention before we began to talk privately, the other members of the Brichah had had left the room, and the two of us were left alone. And I tried to keep up with him glass for glass with the vodka and then he gave me, he actually knew the answer and he gave it to me. No, he said. That crossing is closed temporarily, only for a few days. Next week it will be opened again. As soon as I got what I wanted, I continued filling his glass but I stopped drinking, and soon the members of the Brichah came into the room, and the party was over and then I conveyed to them the information they wanted.

Question: Quite a story.

Answer: Yes. That was an interesting experience that I had and I must say it was very, very difficult for me. Difficult because I wasn't certain that I could successfully keep up with the Russian Nadich in the drinking the vodka. And I wanted to make sure that my mind would remain clear until I got the information I was charged to get. But it worked. It worked.

Question: Where did you go from there?

Answer: Where did I go from there?

Question: Yeah. The party was over...

Answer: The party was over. I visited several camps in Austria, wrote reports about them also for General Eisenhower and for General Clark. General Clark had told me that he and General Eisenhower were taking a brief, well-earned vacation in the south of France in early August, when the cables began flying from Washington about the report of Dean Earl Harrison that condemned the American Army for not adequately taking care of Jewish survivors in the American zone of Germany, and Eisenhower returned at once to Frankfurt and Mark Clark returned to Vienna. Interestingly I met, in 1971, General Mark Clark's son. I was on my way to Japan and Viet Nam to hold torah convocations for the American Army chaplains serving in the Pacific and in Viet Nam and I called upon the commanding general of the American Army in the Pacific at his headquarters in Honolulu and he was the son of General Mark Clark. And he asked me about my meetings with his father in Vienna in 1945. I visited with my friend, my very close friend whom I really loved, uh Chaplain Elia Bonen (ph) with the 42nd Division, now at headquarters in Salzburg. I visited DP camps in various parts of Germany, including the large one at Linz. And then...(Tell me...) Then I returned to what was my proper base of operations, the American zone of, of Germany, Austria...

Question: What condition did you find the survivors in these camps?

Answer: That's a very important question. What condition did I find the survivors in in the various camps in Germany and Austria? I speak particularly of the camps in Germany because I visited them not once but a number of times. The housing was not adequate. The amount of food they were getting was not sufficient. They needed much better clothing, especially warmer clothing and decent shoes for the oncoming winter. They required all kinds of assistance so that they could work again. In the various camps, and I think particularly, I remember particularly Landsberg, work shops were set up under the supervision of some of the Jewish displaced persons themselves. For example in Landsberg, Jacob O'Likesky (ph) who had been the head of the program of the art in Lithuania and therefore had the experience in setting up workshops and supervising them. O'Likesky headed setting up workshops in the DP camp at Landsberg, but he needed tools. He need implements. He needed machinery, and I asked for the requisitioning of that from German sources. In addition there were German, there were Jewish musicians in the DP camps. They wanted to play their instruments again, but they had no instruments. They wanted to give concerts again in the DP camps, and so I asked that violins and uh wind instruments and string instruments and percussion instruments be requisitioned from German sources of supply, and they were. They needed athletic equipment, sports supplies. They wanted to play what they called football, but we play soccer. I don't mean all of them did, but there were sufficient numbers of younger men, and we requisitioned these supplies for them. And there was hardly an aspect of living conditions where they didn't need supplies of all kinds. Gradually, as the weeks went by, the situation in the camps improved, bit by bit, week after week. They continued their improvement during the three months that I was at work in Germany and they continued their improvement even afterwards under the civilian advisors to General Eisenhower.

Question: You uh had all these duties, but in addition you had a very import event. I believe Ben Gurion (ph) came.

Answer: Oh yes, yes.

Question: Would you tell us about Ben Gurion's visit with Eisenhower, please, and how did that happen and what was your involvement in it?

Answer: Well, by uh sheer accident, I was awarded the uh by the French government, the Croix de Guerre (ph) and I was asked to obtain the uh, oh I got—I see the puzzle in your face I was awarded the Croix de Guerre because of my help to the French Jewish survivors during the year that I was in Paris and I was asked to come from Frankfurt to Paris, to the Hotel de _____ where the medal would be given to me by uh General deGaulle. I asked permission from my military superiors. I was granted the permission, and I was to go to Paris for one day. I took the night train to Paris. I came into Paris. I had heard that Ben Gurion was in Paris. I found out where he was, at a certain hotel. I came to see him there, after the ceremony with the award of the medal, and sometime before that—this explains how I knew that he was in Paris—I had been asked by General Eisenhower's office to comment about a request they had received from a certain Mr. David Ben Gurion connected with the Jewish Agency for Palestine, who asked for permission to enter the American zone of Germany. And my comment was that it would be very valuable for permission to be granted because his very presence would raise the morale of the Jewish survivors in the American zone of Germany in the DP camps. So permission was granted. I called upon General Eisenhower at his hotel room in Paris on that day that I had come for the Croix de Guerre. I learned that he was scheduled to take the night American Army military train to Frankfurt. I told him I would meet him on the railroad platform. I got there early. I found out that I was to uh be given a bedroom on the train with uh an American major. At that time I also had the rank of major and uh officers of field rank were given bedrooms, so uh I looked for the commander of the train that happened by coincidence he was an American Army captain who was Jewish. When I, when uh Ben Gurion arrived, I asked him where he was to be on the train, and he said that he was to be uh in the coach sitting up all night with uh American Army soldiers. So I went to see the captain commanding the train, and I said to him, do you see that man with a shock of white hair on the platform. The uh captain said yes. I said his name is Ben Gurion. Does that mean anything to you? And uh, he David Ben Gurion's room said no. I said well, uh he's the head of all the Jews of Palestine. And he shouldn't be asked to sit up all night long in the coach. He said what do you want me to do. I said well, you tell the other major in the bedroom with me uh that there's an emergency, that there's a distinguished guest of the American Army on the train, that uh you're very sorry but the major would have to leave the bedroom. And uh happily the captain followed my advice and Ben Gurion was ushered into my bedroom after the unfortunate major departed. David Ben Gurion then continued to ply me with questions about the Jewish displaced persons. The major thrust of his questions was, were these people who are completely broken, were they hospital cases? Would they have mental problems for as long as they would live, or were they valuable human material who could become important citizens in Palestine in the Jewish community? And I assured him for, for from all that I had learned that they were indeed in the later category, that they survived because they were strong, that those who were weaker

unfortunately did not survive. They were strong both physically and psychically. And that was because of their strength and their will and their determination that they were able to survive. We talked until two o'clock in the morning, until we both fell asleep. In the morning I took him, after the train landed, after the train arrived in, in uh Frankfurt, I took him first to uh be registered, to be signed in, to the American Army mess. We had breakfast. Then I took him to General Eisenhower's suite of offices. General Eisenhower was not there at the time. He was on a field trip. But I introduced him to General Walter Beetle Smith, saying General Smith, if there were a Jewish state now, I would be introducing the prime minister of that state. That was uh no great feat on my part. Of course Ben Gurion was the leading Jew of the Jewish community and it was a foregone conclusion that if there were to be a Jewish state, he would be at its head. I was later told by General Smith that when he introduced him to General Eisenhower, that General Eisenhower was greatly impressed by this man, Ben Gurion, and that he reported to General Smith that he was very much taken by him. He asked Ben Gurion to visit the camps and of course Ben Gurion had come for that purpose, and to report to General Eisenhower upon his findings after his tour would be over. Well after I had introduced him to General Walter Beetle Smith, and we had had lunch, I took uh David Ben Gurion to his first DP camp, to Zilesheim (ph), which was not far from Frankfurt, near the German town of H____. In Zilesheim—I would come often because it was close to Frankfurt—the people there were accustomed to my coming in with an American Army vehicle, and a number of them saw me come in this time too. A few of them came over to say hello. They happened to peer inside my car in the back seat and they saw something that was incredible to them. They knew the picture of Ben Gurion, but they couldn't by the wildest stretch of their imagination imagine that he would be there in their camp in Germany. They began to scream “Ben Gurion, Ben Gurion. As others heard the shouts, they came running, and I was afraid of a riot and I cried out, my friends, please show Ben Gurion the discipline of which you are capable. You go around and tell all the people in the camp that David Ben Gurion is here and that he will speak to them. Let them come to the assembly hall. They ran. They gathered up the people who were there. They came to the assembly hall and when Ben Gurion and I reached the assembly hall, we went to the back of the stage. The assembly hall was quickly filled. The windows and doors were flung open so that people who couldn't get in, who couldn't fi...get even into the standing room which was completely full, could at least hear standing outside the windows and the doors. And I came out to introduce Eisenhower. As the two of us came on the stage, the large throng of people rose and the people began to sing the Hatikvah (ph) and as they sang the Hatikvah, many of them burst into weeping. And I must confess that Eisenhower...that David Ben Gurion and I also wept for the Jews in that assembly hall. At that moment, that DP camp, their liberation was complete. They had dreamed most of them of some day getting to Palestine. Here, in the form of Ben Gurion, Palestine had come to them. The Nazi nightmare was ended. They were free. They were now in touch with their brothers in _____. And when the weeping subsided, Ben Gurion spoke to them, movingly. He continued to break down and the Jews listening continued to sob. It was one of the most moving experiences in my life. And to my dying day, I shall not forget it. He then asked to meet with the leaders of the committee chosen by the residents of Zilesheim. The first time I had come to that camp there were only two hundred and fifty Jews there, but the numbers quickly grew to five thousand. That night we met with the committee of the Jewish leaders of Zilesheim. Again he hurled questions at them. Were they able to come to Palestine? Did they want to come to Palestine? I knew that in my questionnaire that I had asked in the camps, approximately three quarters of them wanted to come to Palestine. They wanted to

live for the first time in their lives as a majority in a Jewish country, that they could no longer be concerned about any future nightmare. And the remaining 25% wanted to go either to the United States or Canada or to South America or to Australia and he also wanted to know the answer to an important question that he put to them. I knew it was a test question. He said to them, if we of the Jewish agency were to issue an order that on a certain day all the Jews in the DP camps of Germany should march out of those camps, march across borders to ports in southern Italy, would you follow such a command, knowing that you would be ordered by the American military to return to your camps, that you would be shot at by perhaps by Italian border police, that it might cost you your lives? Would you follow such an order? And to a man they answered, give the order. We will follow it. Ben Gurion told me afterwards he was extremely pleased by the metal of the survivors. His first meeting with survivors, and he saw what they were like. Unhappily, I could not accompany him on the rest of his tour of DP camps because I had been informed that same day that the civilian advisor invited by General Eisenhower when he issued the order appointing me as his military advisor on Jewish affairs, the civilian advisor appointed by President Truman was soon to arrive in Frankfurt from the United States. He was Judge Simon H. Rifkin (ph), then of the Federal bench.

Question: What did you do then? Where...

Answer: Well uh, Ben Gurion went on his way to cover the major DP camps. I went to the railroad station to meet Judge Rifkin who was arriving on the military train from Paris, and later I learned that when Ben Gurion came back, and I saw him again when he came back to Army headquarters in Frankfurt before he departed, he gave General Eisenhower, as the general had requested, a report on his findings. He requested certain things that the Jewish DPs had asked of me which I knew could not happen. For example, he asked that the Jews be taken out of the DP camps, that whole German villages should be requisitioned for them, that the German occupants of the housing in those villages be evicted, and that the, the Jewish displaced persons be brought to take the houses of the Germans evicted from their homes in these villages. I knew that would be turned down by Eisenhower, and I myself never made that recommendation. Ben Gurion did. And Eisenhower turned it down. But another request by Eisenhower was honored by Eisen...another request by Ben Gurion to Eisenhower was honored by the general. He asked that teams of Jews from the then called Palestine be permitted to enter the DP camps to serve on the staffs of those administering the camps, _____ people, JDC people, to be of help to the Jews in these camps in several ways. To teach them agriculture so that they would be able to become farmers when they would eventually arrive in Palestine. To teach them Hebrew so that they could speak the language of the Jews of Palestine before they got there and other similar tasks. And Eisenhower indeed agreed to that request, and Jews were brought from Palestine and brought into the camps to serve these functions and any other functions that they had in mind. And of course they prepared the Jews in these camps for the eventual immigration from the camps to Palestine.

Question: OK. On that note we're going to stop, pause and change tapes.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

END OF TAPE

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

Question: OK. Uh can you at this point tell me something about General Eisenhower and your relationship with him? What was he like?

Answer: I'm glad you asked that question. Uh General Eisenhower, I learned years later when he received an honorary degree at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, spoke of the fact that he and his brothers were raised by their mother on the stories of what he called the Old Testament, and he grew up believing that the Jews were indeed the chosen people. And that they were the first to bring to humanity the divine message of ethics and morality. I got to know him through the humanitarian approach that he took to the improvement of the Jewish survivors in the DP camps in Germany. At the very beginning he cut through what was a gordian (ph) knot with which generals at American Army headquarters were wrestling for a long time. The gordian knot consisted of the old question, who are the Jews. A question that has been given much attention by scholars of all kinds. Are the Jews a nation? Are they a religious grouping? Are they a race? Are they a people? On the one hand it was argued that the Jews could not be given special attention in the DP camps because you couldn't look upon them as Jews. There were either German nationals or Austrian nationals or Polish nationals or Czech nationals. And if you were to look upon them as Jews and deprive them of their nationality, were you not doing the same thing that the Nazis had done, of robbing them of their citizenship, and looking upon them as a racial group. On the other hand, how could you help them if you did not look upon them as a special separate group. Well, Eisenhower cut through that gordian knot and when he received these several communications from Washington, from General Marshall, from Secretary Stimson, and I must stress from President Truman, that the situation must be corrected, Eisenhower at once made up his mind he was going to stop with all of this argument, all of this debate, and he was going to treat the Jews as a separate group. And German Jews and Austrian Jews and Italian Jews were no longer to be enemy nationals, but victims, and to be treated as victims of the Nazis and the Jews who didn't want to go back to their homelands, they were to be treated as a special group, given special help, brought back to the level of ordinary common place health of human beings and because he did that, I credit him with the speedy rehabilitation of the Jewish survivors. He came to speak at the Park Avenue Synagogue at my invitation in May of 1965. By that time he had been President of the United States, and he was living in Gettysburg. I telephoned him and I asked him would he come to speak at a special service at my synagogue commemorating the 20th anniversary of the liberation of the German concentration camps by the American Army under his command. He agreed to come. In introducing him to my congregation, I said to them, I want to tell you one story about this man which will be sufficient to tell you about his character, his humanitarianism, and his answer to the difficult Jewish problem. I said when we, when the German arm...when the American Army liberated the concentration camps in Germany, there were definitions of who was a displaced person. Who was a displaced person who would benefit from housing, food, clothing and all the rest under the aegis of the American Army. The displaced person was defined as a survivor, in this case particularly a Jewish survivor, liberated in a concentration camp on German soil. But soon there came into the American zone of Germany, other Jews. Jews who had been in hiding in Poland. Jews who had been shoved back by the Russians behind the front lines, all the way back to Siberia, an action that actually saved their lives. Now these

Jews came back in large numbers from Siberia to Poland. They found that their homes and their businesses could not be reclaimed. They discovered that their loved ones had been murdered by the Nazis and the Polish or Ukrainian or Lithuanian helpers and they no longer wanted to try to make out, to make a new life where they had originally lived. And spontaneously they started a trek from Poland to the American zone of Germany, later organized and assisted by the men and women of the Brichah.

Question: How did Eisenhower react to this?

Answer: Ah, this is a major point that I wanted to make. When these Jews started coming across the borders to enter the American zone of Germany, Eisenhower was asked by the commanders on lower levels, what shall we do with these refugees who are coming into our zone in such large numbers. I was asked for a recommendation. The recommendation of course was that they be admitted into the DP camps in the American zone of Germany. General Eisenhower approved that recommendation. Eighty thousand Jews came in, and Eisenhower, by that one order of approval, contributed to the saving of eighty thousand Jewish lives. Now my friendship with him continued after the war. I was asked to help write items of interest in his campaign for the presidency, such as his Rosh Hashanah message during the campaign. My wife and I were invited to the Inauguration. Before that time I was invited to give an invocation at the Republican National Convention that had that had nominated him. I had him at my synagogue, but before that I had visited him at Gettysburg at his farm, so we remained in close contact all through the years.

Question: How did Eisenhower, did you and Eisenhower at the time you made this recommendation, did you talk to him face to face? What did he say to you?

Answer: I did not in most instances have the opportunity of speaking to him face to face. I did often. I did have the privilege of coming to his office, speaking to him face to face, most of the times answering his questions. When he was not in his office, and that was, that occurred frequently, he would be out on a field trip, then my conversations were with the second in command, his chief of staff General Walter Beetle Smith.

Question: Did Eisenhower ever talk to you about the Jews and his feelings about Jews?

Answer: I did have occasion to hear such remarks from Eisenhower. He always spoke in an affirmative fashion. He always condemned every kind of bigotry and prejudice. He hated what the Nazis had done. He issued orders, after he had first visited Dachau, that American military commanders should bring their units to see Dachau so that the troops might know what they had been fighting against. He visited Feldafing on Yom Kippur, spoke to the Jews assembled there, told them of his high admiration for them, for the Jewish people and for Judaism, and urged them to keep their hope high, that they still had a future. Eisenhower was that kind of personality.

Question: Thank you. OK. When you had been relieved of your post and Judge Rifkin came in your place, uh what did you do?

Answer: Well the first thing I did was to escort Judge Rifkin on a tour of all the camps, to introduce him to all of my contacts among the Jews in the camps, to tell them that he was the person for them to speak to afterwards. I returned to the United States on a troop transport and uh I came back to the United States at the end of November, beginning of December in 1945. Before my return I had been visited at my headquarters in uh Frankfurt by uh Major Edward Warburg (ph) who was at that time the president of the Joint Distribution Committee, and he was good enough to invite me. After I would be discharged from the Army, to become a member of the staff of the JDC. He even suggested that I would be appointed Director of JDC operations in Germany, after I would spend at least a month or so with my family back home. But I returned to the United States. Soon afterwards I was asked to speak at the annual meeting of the Joint Distribution Committee in New York. I was full of vehement indignation at what I had seen. I had, I contrasted that with what I had found among American Jews when I returned. There was very little awareness among American Jews of what had happened to their fellow Jews in Europe. Very few were aware of it, and very few were concerned about it, naturally, because they didn't know. So I was angry and at my uh, I was asked to speak at the annual meeting of the JDC and I'm afraid that I gave voice to my anger at that meeting, but to my surprise I was asked to give an address the following week at the annual meeting of the United Jewish Appeal to take place in Atlantic City where an unheard of goal was to be proclaimed, a goal of \$100,000,000 to be raised during 1946 among the Jews of the United States. Of course I uh accepted the invitation. I addressed the UJA Conference in Atlantic City the following week, and I was asked the next morning to have breakfast with the leaders of the JDC and the UJA who were there at that conference, and at the breakfast table I was told that I was being relieved of the employment I was to have with the JDC. Instead I was asked to accept employment with the United Jewish Appeal and to be a speaker for the hundred million dollar campaign from which of course the JDC would be receiving its funds. And I agreed and for the next six months I spoke in forty different states of the country. I had no place I could call my home. I just went from town to town, city to city, and spoke at UJA fund raising meetings. According to the calculations that I kept myself, some \$20,000,000 were raised at those meetings. The JDC then asked me to return to Europe, to visit the DP camps in Germany, Austria, Italy, once again to bring myself up to date on what had happened and then to go to South Africa where I was to spend four months in South Africa, what were then called Southern and Northern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe and Zambia, and to raise funds there for the South African Jewish War Appeal, the agency that then transmitted its funds to the Joint Distribution Committee for work among the Jewish survivors in Europe. I spent a brief while in America. I met the young lady at that time to whom I became engaged after three weeks. Sadly I departed on my mission for the JDC to Europe, from there to South Africa where I met the most generous Jews I had as yet met in my career. South African Jews gave generously, very generously, and I made friends among them, friends to this day, and similarly with the Jews, the few Jews in Zimbabwe and Zambia. I went as far north as what was then called Livingston, in northern Rhodesia and now Zambia, and of course as far south as Capetown. And I spoke in every city, town and dork (ph) in which there were seventy Jews or more. And happily the South African Jewish War Appeal reported that the campaign was very successful. I returned to the United States. I got married, happily, and then I worked for the United Jewish Appeal in the New York City campaign for six months. Then tired of not having had a home for myself for a good number of years, my wife and I settled down in the town of Brookline, Massachusetts, where I

accepted a congregation, _____ Israel, in Brookline. And so I started my life as a rabbi once again.

Question: Rabbi Nadich, thank you very much.

Answer: Thank you.

END OF TAPE