

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Theodore Feder and Herbert Katzki
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PREFACE

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THEODORE FEDER AND HERBERT KATZKI

June 2, 1995

INTERVIEWER: Would you tell me your name and --

MR. KATZKI: Yes, my name is Herbert Katzki. I used to be with the JDC. I retired. At the time I retired I was associate executive vice-president of the agency. During the time of the holocaust when I was stationed over in Europe I was secretary of the European council of the JDC. The European council was made up or theoretically made up of the leadership of the various committees and the various countries in which we operated but that never came to be because of the war with germany which came on too soon after one had the inspiration of establishing the European council. So I had the title but there wasn't any council, really, to be with. The experience that I had with the -- with the holocaust was not a very long one. I'd been in Paris. I'd come over to Paris. I got there in November 1939. They had been there in -- in Paris until -- until we were chased out by the Germans. We had our headquarters, our office, in -- in Paris and there was a series of transmutations. We had to evacuate the -- Paris when they -- when the Germans came in. We closed the office down on Tuesday. The Germans came into Paris on Thursday. And I went then to Marca (ph.) and worked in the unoccupied _____ of France for the Jewish refugees who had come down into the unoccupied _____.

INTERVIEWER: Let me just stop you a second because I want to hear about all of that in your single interview, but let's just talk about the period right after the war --

MR. KATZKI: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: -- when you and Ted were involved in the same operation.

MR. KATZKI: I see. Well, right -- right -- right after -- right after the war I'd been up in -- in -- back -- back in -- in Paris and we were making a change in the member was in charge of our operations in Germany. That was a man by the name of Jacob Grobe. He was coming out. Somebody had to go in to hold down the fort. So I was sent in from Paris to take over the

German operation. The headquarters of the JDC at that time were in Hurst (ph.). Hurst is a suburb of Frankfurt and a couple weeks after I got there Unrah (ph.), which had his headquarters in -- in Hurst had to move their office up to Arelson (ph.) which is not far from the border between the American, the British occupied, so and so, of -- of a -- Germany. And so I ended up in Arelson. I guess I got up there in January 1946. And that sort of thing. And it was while I was up in Arelson that I met Mr. Feder who was at that time associated with Unrah in their headquarters operation which also was up in Arelson. And so that's our first. Our first association would be locate in the same metropolis of Arelson which I think had a population of 2500 people. The --

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Let's -- let me just have Ted introduce himself as well and then we can find out more.

MR. FEDER: My name is Ted Feder. Presently retired. Still working in a number of programs in the headquarters of the JDC and this pertains to both of us that if they can't find it in the archives ask Katzki or Feder and they'll tell you. And it's true because I think our combined knowledge is extraordinary. When we moved to Alician (ph.) there was some thing unreal about being in a small town and being involved in an organization supposedly helping so many people and -- and communication was terrible. There was not a main line. The roads were very difficult and no one was happy being in Alician and it could very well have been that when Unrah phased out, which was '47, were the _____ commission of the international refugee organization or PCIRO took over from Unrah, the staff and then a year later IRO took over. Then eventually it was taken over by the UN commissioner. _____ commissioner refugees. You could imagine being in a small town like that there wasn't a great and -- deal to do. _____ a movie. The Unrah really could have cared less about those people and giving them any kind of cultural services. So there's a real difficult place to be in. I had mentioned that my _____ with the JDC because I was dissatisfied with -- being with Unrah for many reasons. Political for one and the fact that there -- there were so many people who looked to make _____ working with Unrah and hundreds of employees were sent --

sent back for getting into things they shouldn't have gotten in. And it was then that either Herb or Harry Beal (ph.) who is an associate, listened to my plea to take me on staff with the JDC and _____ to September '46.

INTERVIEWER: Now did you -- you both were in the headquarters office or you had, I assume, very different responsibilities.

MR. FEDER: Different responsibilities.

MR. KATZKI: Different responsibilities. Well, up -- up in Alician I was with one agency and Ted was with another agency. My agency was a joint distribution committee and Ted's agency was Unrah up in Arelson, so that each of us for our own agency had our own jobs to do and contacts which we might have had were incidental to -- incidental to our work or a cooperative effort or something like -- like that. But our agencies were so independent of each other. The -- how did the JDC get up to Arelson? Ted -- Ted might have explained the circumstances under which JDC got into -- to -- to Germany. There was a very difficult time for JDC to get into Germany. Army -- army had responsibility as an occupier. They farmed out the welfare work to Unrah because they said "We're soldiers. We're not social workers," and they turned it over. Ted explained all of that earlier on and -- and -- and then with the -- with that kind of a situation JDC had to come and then _____ Unrah's offices and that's why when they moved up to Arelson, the JDC had to move up to Arelson too. The --

MR. FEDER: Herb, would you say that the problem we had in getting called forward to Germany was different than the other _____ agencies --

MR. KATZKI: No --

MR. FEDER: -- _____ the same trouble? Didn't the --

MR. KATZKI: We -- we -- we all had the same trouble because the army was not enamored of having civilians over -- over running the territory over which they had responsibility. So they weren't anxious to let the -- let the civilians come in. So they -- they -- the Unrah, of course, they -- they had sent the official status because they were invited in by the army to do the welfare work, but that didn't mean they had to let the voluntary agencies in at the same time. And so the

voluntary agency had a very difficult time to get permissions to have their people come into the -- come into the country. I think the first fellow who went was, I think, Eli Rock (ph.). Eli Rock went in with the -- with the first _____ or it must have been around in July or August of 19 -- 1945 that he went in with a small team into -- into Munich. But then after that had been done and then the drill was worked out we were able to get our people then all right, but they had to be called forward. Each person individually had to be called forward into Germany with their set of travel _____ from the army and everything else in order of them to be able to get into the country. It wasn't -- it wasn't -- it wasn't easy. And the other agencies had the same difficulties.

INTERVIEWER: What other obstacles were there in terms of your getting entrenched there?

MR. KATZKI: They -- they -- they -- the difficulty with this as I -- as I explained, the army didn't want civilians running around. Once you got into the place and that was part of this business being called forward and so on after that it was all right, but the job was to get in there and then -- in -- in the first place.

MR. FEDER: _____ fortunate that before us, before we came in there was a caddy of people including rabbis, chaplains --

MR. KATZKI: That was -- that was military.

MR. FEDER: Please, please. I'm saying they did our job. Kwasnick (ph.), not Kwasnick, Trousner (ph.) --

MR. KATZKI: Yeah.

MR. FEDER: -- was responsible for having an organization that started a central committee.

MR. KATZKI: That's right.

MR. FEDER: He was there. Many others were there seeing what the needs were. They were very unhappy that they could only do a limited amount of help. In organization they had no supplies and so -- but they did. We -- we came in to a well organized committee.

MR. KATZKI: Yeah.

MR. FEDER: Of course what was sad was once they got organized they forgot those they didn't have to to organize. But that's politics in any kind of organization. But --

MR. KATZKI: With -- with -- with the rabbis they -- they could easily get in because they went in with the army, so they came in that way. But I think that the work that they did for -- for the Jewish people in the country were -- were -- came under the heading of extra curricular activities.

MR. FEDER: Well, obviously. They _____. _____ was kicked out.

MR. KATZKI: That's right.

MR. FEDER: Max _____ was given the reprimand.

MR. KATZKI: That's right.

MR. FEDER: So if they --

MR. KATZKI: _____ extra curricular.

MR. FEDER: So -- but they -- they -- they did a great deal.

MR. KATZKI: They -- they -- they -- they did a good job. For example, the JDC had a great deal of difficulty in getting its supplies into Germany. A couple of reasons. First -- first of all, our -- our supplies were piling up in the -- in the ports in the United States because we couldn't get any ships. The ships were all taken up by the -- by the army for moving their troops around and so on. And it was well -- well into 1945 or '46 even, when we were able to move -- move any supply -- move any supplies at all. In the meantime though, what the -- what the chaplains did through the APO they would write letters home to their families and say "Will you please start sending parcels." And so they sent them all kinds of parcels into -- to the various chaplains and that was a -- a _____ supply program, but --

MR. FEDER: Well, but it was really --

MR. KATZKI: -- it wasn't really much of a supply program because you can't --

MR. FEDER: Not very much.

MR. KATZKI: -- you can't --

MR. FEDER: First of all, APO was limited the size of package --

MR. KATZKI: That's right. And how many chaplains --

MR. FEDER: How much did you put in a square foot?

MR. KATZKI: That's right. _____ chaplains --

MR. FEDER: And -- and the -- many of the -- of the chaplains had trouble once they got it. How to distribute it? Who should get it? Do you give it to leadership? Do you give it to a home?

MR. KATZKI: That's right.

MR. FEDER: And so they had real problems.

MR. KATZKI: That's right. So -- so that was the beginning of the -- of the -- of the supply problem. So the JDC was rather handicapped in the beginning. We could get some staff in despite the problems which I mentioned before. We could some staff in but we couldn't get any supplies in and consequently when we went around to talk to the refugees the refugees said "Where is the joint in all of this? We see their people. We want supplies and we don't -- we don't get it. Where is the joint and what is the joint doing?" Well, that wore out of -- after -- when supplies started coming in they had other complaints _____. But after -- after that, but those were the principle handicaps which the JDC had in getting their operation going in Germany. First, getting their staff in and secondly, getting the supplies in. But after awhile that -- that -- that -- that worked -- worked out all right.

MR. FEDER: Was it interesting that there was a different approach by Unrah and the army for the displaced persons in Austria. Remember?

MR. KATZKI: Yeah.

MR. FEDER: We were given the responsibility of running the camps.

MR. KATZKI: Well --

MR. FEDER: Yes. Yes. They were our camps. There wasn't a large --

MR. KATZKI: Oh, wait a minute. They were our camps because they were opened up to the benefit of the -- of the -- um -- the Hungarians who came over the boarder.

MR. FEDER: No. No, that was -- that was later, Herb.

MR. KATZKI: Oh.

MR. FEDER: This -- this was a method of operating. _____ was the director of half a dozen camps.

MR. KATZKI: Was he? I didn't know that.

MR. FEDER: Yes, and we had the responsibility. Unrah supplied the food and so on --

MR. KATZKI: Yes.

MR. FEDER: -- but we -- we were the key here all of this.

MR. KATZKI: I see. Yeah --

MR. FEDER: Of course, when I think of some of the beautiful places they were put up in former PB sanitarium on the top of mountains and -- no wonder they didn't want to move when they had to be moved.

MR. KATZKI: They lived a life of Reilly.

MR. FEDER: But the -- the army, who -- who was Clark (ph.), General Clark was an officer.

MR. KATZKI: Clark. Clark was in Viennan, yes.

MR. FEDER: He -- he was much more tolerant than what we had in Germany. Maybe it's because some of our JDC people were good poker players --

MR. KATZKI: Joe --

MR. FEDER: and played poker --

MR. KATZKI: Joe --

MR. FEDER: -- played poker with them.

MR. KATZKI: Joe Silva (ph.).

MR. FEDER: You never know how you got a head in dealing with -- with people.

MR. KATZKI: Yeah.

MR. FEDER: But your responsibilities in -- in Germany, Herb, we didn't use a heavy hands on the people in the camps or rather --

MR. KATZKI: No.

MR. FEDER: -- our people in the camps --

MR. KATZKI: No.

MR. FEDER: -- or in Munich because _____ they would do what they could. It wasn't easy.

MR. KATZKI: They were doing their work. No. No. No, my responsibility in Germany was an overall responsibility and -- being the overall director. In my -- I spent my time traveling around one to -- one moment I went down to Munich and the next moment to Frankfurt and the next moment up to Bergen-Belsen and the next time up to Berlin in order to keep in touch with our offices to see what they're doing and if there's any way in which I can be helpful to -- to be helpful and try to keep things going as well as -- as -- as well as I could. But -- but the JDC -- at this principle -- principle, the principle of the JDC was "to trust the man in the field." We ran a desimplified operation under those circumstances. If the man in the field did a good job he got the _____ for it. If the job wasn't being done very well not necessarily by him but even by his staff member he's the man who -- who -- who -- who -- who -- who -- who took the lumps because as I said we -- we -- we trusted the men in the field, but he had to bury his responsibility then and --

INTERVIEWER: So did you -- did you feel you had a lot of leverage to do your job?

MR. FEDER: Well, there's no question that we were given full latitude to carry on the programs. There might have been questions that were raised about policy which then we would relate if we could get through on the phone to have somebody _____ in the wilderness, but we had to make the decisions ourselves and I think to sort of prove of that a number of people we sent home were, I don't we sent one guy home --

MR. KATZKI: In fact, I can think of one -- one woman we sent home. She was a social worker who had been so -- so attuned to the American ways of doing things that if she could not find an agency to which she might refer a difficult case she went to pieces, but we couldn't use people who went to pieces because there weren't many agencies to which they could refer people. They had to do the work themselves.

MR. FEDER: No. No. No --

MR. KATZKI: So -- so she was sent home.

MR. FEDER: The question --

MR. KATZKI: One.

MR. FEDER: -- when -- when you think of all the black marketing that was going on --

MR. KATZKI: Well --

MR. FEDER: -- how easy one could fall into it. Our people were --

MR. KATZKI: We didn't have that.

MR. FEDER: -- were -- were just great. They --

MR. KATZKI: We didn't have that.

MR. FEDER: -- no one made -- no one that I know of made -- made money to be there to make money.

INTERVIEWER: Did it take a special kind of person to do the kind of work both of you did?

MR. KATZKI: I think so. I -- I -- I -- I think the kind of person who went -- went into work overseas with us was the kind of a person who was not so much interested in himself and his own advancement and that sort of thing, but felt an inner urge to do something for somebody else and got his satisfactions out of doing something for somebody else rather than just concern himself about -- about -- about -- about himself. And --

MR. FEDER: I think JDC was just "dog on lucky" because the interview, for example, you gave me. I recall one question you asked me. You said do I have anything against German Jews.

MR. KATZKI: Sure.

MR. FEDER: I got that _____, no, but other than that you knew me. You knew my reputation, the work I was doing and I know that what we were looking for wasn't only capacity to minister programs, but also the tact necessary to deal with the army, with Unrah, with committees and in those days there weren't many people who were commonly organizers. As a matter of fact, school social work hadn't begun in this aspect of the importance of commonly organization and I -- I think we were just fortunate. We didn't fall. The committees as much as

they would give us a hard time knew how far to go and when to stop because they -- they saw in us people with good will. We weren't after them or after saving money or -- of changing things. We were there to be part of them and that was an important issue.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think your greatest challenges were in -- in _____?

MR. KATZKI: In Germany the greatest challenge?

INTERVIEWER: Once you were in.

MR. KATZKI: I think the greatest challenge was to reinstall in people who had been abused for so long, a general feeling of worthiness and self-respect. I think that was the first job. You had to give them that before you could start in with giving them medical aid or -- or food or things of that kind, but you had to make them feel worthy of themselves. And I think that was the big challenge that the JDC had in the early days. Wouldn't you say so, Ted?

MR. FEDER: Well, it was a challenge, but, you know, we had no formula. We had no formula.

When you think of the ___ of people we had in difference from _____ to _____ --

MR. KATZKI: Yeah.

MR. FEDER: -- Lactel (ph.) came out of the army as a supply officer, very crude, always cursing yet he was beloved by the people he was working with because they saw in him something very original and what they really wanted.

MR. KATZKI: And he wanted to help them.

MR. FEDER: That's -- that's also true, but -- but at the same time talking about that there was something else that was going on in the camps and that's a very queasy subject to get into, but it was there. Mainly when they recognized, in the camps, a caple (ph.) that they had known in the concentration camp what to do. Rumor had it that there had been people hurt in many camps. We never found out anything on that. The army wanted no part of it, but what did happen was that the central committee set up a code of honor in which those people who were accused of capless could face the person who was accusing them. Well, this was pretty rough and -- and they felt they -- they had to do it. They felt that they would have ability to med out some kind of,

in quotations, "punishment" and when I get to that you'll see how insane that was. And -- and they would have -- there were thousands of pages of testimony by those who had been hurt and by the caple and then they would give up a decision. What kind of a decision could they make? Any decision they made against the person involved us. Involved us. Like, the JDC will no longer give rations to this caple. The JDC will not help this man to immigrate. Boom. JDC will have this man evicted from the camp. And that committee, the JDC. None of them, none of them and we told the committee that we were going to accept their decisions. No one lost food. After all, if a man is going to immigrate and he tells the story of what it was that he did in a camp and the security officers except what it is they say why stop them from -- from going? But it is a very sore subject. It was something that bothered us a great deal, but they had _____. They had to get it out of them.

INTERVIEWER: How come you kept your distance from the division?

MR. FEDER: Pardon?

INTERVIEWER: How come you didn't accept those decisions, those judgements?

MR. FEDER: Even though we saw that the people were the judges, the lawyers, we felt that there really not honestly constituted. If the military government were very concerned about this kind of activity in so on especially the rumors that some had been murdered, we felt we couldn't abide by it. The JDC couldn't accept a -- a kangaroo courts decision. And you know what? They never said a word. When it was _____ it was _____. They had had it and _____. And there was no more.

INTERVIEWER: Herb, when you talk about one of the first challenges was making people feel human again, making them feel a sense of worth, how did you accomplish that?

MR. KATZKI: One way to do it was to show -- show them the respect which we'd -- we -- we -- which _____ do. By helping them to set up to self organization work. The _____ was a _____ as Ted indicated he _____ legal responsibilities. A man who is a teacher did some teaching and somebody else is doctor. He did something else. And so you did what ever you could to boost his self esteem. It depended on the -- on the

individual in the approach that you took, but you found some kind of a handle and you -- you gave -- gave him a -- a -- a -- a -- boost up the -- if you ask me in an individual case how it was done, I'm not sure that I could answer that for you. I could only tell you what the general approach was and that's -- that's -- that's the way it was done.

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you, did you have any kind of training for your field workers so that they knew to be sensitive to the _____ or to other things?

MR. KATZKI: Well, we did -- we tried to give them a certain amount of training -- training -- you train -- training you couldn't give them because we had no experience. I felt this was the first time in history that one was confronted with a situation that one -- one found over there and we didn't know what -- didn't know what to expect. When people came in on the job they would come into our headquarters office in -- in -- in -- New York and maybe they would read files and read reports, so at least they would have a familiarity what the kinds of problems with which they would be confronted. So on. But the rest of it we just took our chances on the individual as to the -- the -- the way his value to the JDC was -- was -- was characterized and we sent them out. Look, we would have people who would come out into the field who maybe came from Kenosha, Wisconsin or some other place like that who'd never been out of the United States. They would come overseas. They would come into headquarters to get an assignment and they would say to the head of the operation "Tell me what I'm supposed to do," and the instruction would be "Go on out there and you will see, and you will do it." That was all the explaining we got. That's all he had to work with and that what he had to do and that's the way he did it.

MR. FEDER: But it's also true that those people that we gave the responsibility to were highly professional people. Social workers -- they've been through the mail. They have their leadership ability. They move what it was to be expected and they also gave them good guidelines, good guidelines. We couldn't tell them that if the police come down and arrest one of them, that you go down to the police station and bail them out and use a good argument, but these were people who learned on the job -- although coming with _____ I had a two and a half month course at the University of Maryland and everything from cooking to social work, to

warehousing -- I remember one of the questions that they gave in the test was, "If you are in _____ and you get a cable that in four days there will be landing in _____ thirty-seven tons of such, such, such procure warehousing and setup procedures for distribution. That's all. So you had to come up with something and most people were very innovative and that's exactly -- let's see, who was it that was in North Africa -- not --

MR. KATZKI: _____?

MR. FEDER: No, no. Way in the beginning.

MR. KATZKI: _____?

MR. FEDER: No. But anyways, he was with the joint and he had been with them and I remember his getting up and saying, "I'm very pleased to be here to talk about my experiences, but I want to tell you that anything you have learned here isn't really going to help you a great deal. If you think that the book that you have or the books that you will get will answer the questions for logistics or procedures in handling large groups or contact with the military, forget it. You are either going to have to have it coming out of the military or being innovative in order to rise to the occasion." And the famous saying "play it by ear."

MR. KATZKI: That's right.

MR. FEDER: That's certainly right pertaining to that point, but we didn't really send them out by themselves. When you think of all the people we employed -- remember the class too -- they were refugees who were given a military status, where they could wear a uniform, they could have dollars, they could have _____ and they were our employees or employees of other agencies. Never _____, they've been around, they knew well what was necessary and our new people most did listen to them. That was an important piece. I don't want to say we had a trained staff, but we had a lot of bright guys around who were able to be helpful when our people came in with the money and the food.

INTERVIEWER: Did the people who worked for you who were of the camps, teach you a lot?

MR. FEDER: Sure we learned a lot, always. Always, you asked a question and you'd get an answer. They knew, being in the camp, they knew everything about it. They knew where the

black spots were. They knew whom you could trust. They knew the people. They lived with them. They were a part of them and their information and their knowledge of _____ was invaluable to us. Without them we would have never been able to function.

MR. KATZKI: For sure.

INTERVIEWER: Were there sticky politics you had to wade through? With the army, with any other aid organizations? Difference between European and American sensibilities terms of approaching this problem?

MR. KATZKI: I personally never had any problems like that in Germany in politics and so on. We were not a political organization. We prided ourselves in being not political and whatever. So we didn't know from politics. So interagency politics really didn't enter into our work. Certainly not in my experience. Did you have anything like that _____?

MR. FEDER: Oh, we had a few little tussles in _____, but that didn't have much effect.

MR. KATZKI: That didn't count.

MR. FEDER: No, that didn't count. If you view the groups that we had to associate with in order to get our jobs done, number one _____. At first rate people in the _____ department _____, would you want a greater person than him?

MR. KATZKI: He's all right.

MR. FEDER: This Norwegian was six foot eight and he had also been in a concentration camp, _____. So his knowledge was so vast as to how people reacted to whatever may have come up, and whenever we had a problem in the military or with their own headquarters, he would help us fight our battles. But it's not a question of politics.

INTERVIEWER: One thing I'm thinking of is that clearly the British had different feelings about this immigration to _____ than you did. Did that pose any problems for you?

MR. KATZKI: The British had some curious ideas. The British knew the only thing about nationalities, they didn't know anything about religious differences. For example, a displaced person who came from Poland and was Jewish, so far as the British was concerned, he was Polish and that he had to go back to Poland. Never mind that the Jewish person wouldn't go

back to Poland at all. So that was a big job which we had with the British when they wanted to _____ to the countries of their origin. Regardless of what their own attitudes were to the places from once they came and it took a great deal of doing to get them to change their attitude and their point of view to take it in to account that there were differences between people who were Jewish, who were the subjects of all of this oppressive measures and everybody else. So that was one difficulty that we had which was ultimately over come. That was all right.

MR. FEDER: Well, _____ was a hell of a stem and we used that at every turn. And they couldn't stand up to it. Although, they used methods that might almost come up to _____. Not among the Jews, but among the Polish for example. Here it was in 1945 and the Poles still didn't know what was the divisions, Russia, Poland and Germany because depending on where they would land they would go and it wasn't until the beginning of 1946 that they finally got a bloody map and there weren't enough maps for everybody, see, but by and large those who saw themselves in the German zone were ready to go. But then there was something seemingly to hold them back and Unrah decided with the army that every person, man, women and child who was returning to Poland would get x-kilos of flour and sugar and powdered meat -- powdered milk. And you know what? Many went simply because of that -- that package. Now, I remember the day that they -- they left because it was heart breaking. Going back on a package. The Russians came in for camp and took their own Russians. Nobody said "no" to them. And that was one of the reasons I decided I was going to get out of Unrah. That forcible repatriation.

MR. KATZKI: So that was one -- one -- one of the problems we had. The other problem you touched upon briefly was the British attitude about admittance of people to -- to -- to Palestine with the white paper with their limitation of _____ for five years, whatever, and nobody else could get in there and that was a problem that had to be dealt with, but I think that Ted touched upon that this morning when -- when he spoke about the immigration which took place from Europe to -- to -- to Palestine the way that problem was -- was -- was dealt with. The British -- the British I would say were very -- very, very militaristic, very -- as though they had

blindness on in -- in -- in dealing with the problems that of the refugees. They only knew one thing. Refugees were a burden to them and let's get rid of them and so they -- they moved them out the best way they could, the quickest way they could and so on and they -- they -- they tried to oppose any opposition to that attitude. Obviously, opposed that attitude and we did what we could to just change --

MR. FEDER: But it's also true that of the large number of refugees at the end of the war, maybe 10,000, the vast majority, the vast majority were repatriated. That included the French and the Belgians and the Dutch, innocent Spaniards, but repatriation did mean the majority out.

MR. KATZKI: They were going to western Europe _____ country.

MR. KATZKI: Okay. But even though some of these -- you know, I suddenly remembered, a meeting where the Ukraine got up out of a _____ agency meeting and was said "We will remain here until the Soviet Union falls." You know, we laughed. We said the man's mad, but I doubt if he went back after the communism is filled out.

INTERVIEWER: Any other real -- obstacles to what you were trying to accomplish that you can think of?

MR. FEDER: Well, we were lucky that we never had to worry about finances.

MR. KATZKI: No.

MR. FEDER: There was --

MR. KATZKI: That was no obstacle.

MR. FEDER: There was no obstacle. Whatever it would cost, cost what may and so if things weren't working it was our fault. Not the fact that we didn't -- didn't have fun or somewhere the -- the line going out was bottled up, but we -- we -- we mentioned political. We never, we never had to face it. I never saw it. I argued with the military, Unrah, but not on an _____, political basis. It just wasn't there. Everybody went along with our basic modism, basic program: Get the people out. Let them go. Whatever. Whatever it cost. And so from that point of view we were really fortunate and also we weren't being given flack by a lot of Jewish organizations in the States.

MR. KATZKI: You're sheltered from that.

MR. FEDER: Pardon me?

MR. KATZKI: You're sheltered from that. You're --

MR. FEDER: Yeah, more letters --

MR. KATZKI: -- overseas

MR. FEDER: -- we wrote plenty of letters, but we weren't touched. Not -- not even with all the political parties and their _____. The _____ and the _____. You know, --

MR. KATZKI: They complained, but it didn't help.

MR. FEDER: Complain. They had to complain. Who else could they complain to but us?

MR. KATZKI: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: If you had to think about one area that like a week of a _____.

Something that you -- you just couldn't achieve. Is there anything? I know you talked about _____ you were, but having regrets _____.

MR. KATZKI: I think the only thing that we regret that we couldn't do was that we had problems getting countries to agree to issue visas to let people in. I think -- I think that was the -- the biggest regret that we had. People -- people just wouldn't -- wouldn't -- wouldn't accept the immigrants. That -- that -- that's the one thing that I can't think of. Can you think of anything, Ted?

MR. FEDER: No. Although, eventually that was overcome.

MR. KATZKI: Yeah, I -- I know, but --

MR. FEDER: Initially, it was a problem and then when our people in the States went to work in the Jewish community in Brazil, talked to the government _____, it was worked out.

The -- the total picture of the needs of -- of those who had been left behind in Germany was very _____. People reacted to it.

MR. KATZKI: You had to -- you -- you have in general the -- the -- the reaction of governments with the aveant (ph.) conference. With the conference in Bermuda was suppose to

be organized to find needs for helping people and instead of that they went in with the preconceived idea that they can't do anything and that's what came out from aveant came out from Bermuda. Can't do anything to let people in.

INTERVIEWER: There must have been a really good _____, if I can use that word, to your whole organization because it seemed that functioned very successfully.

MR. FEDER: I --

MR. KATZKI: We --

MR. FEDER: -- don't think we've ever met someone who worked in Germany or in Europe for that matter who doesn't look back at that period in his life with -- with certain feelings. The -- we were -- the linesman (ph.) shop, the commatery (ph.) of people who've been even How Trobe (ph.) the other day, you know, he -- he got excited. They were exciting days. They were productive days. It could've been just the opposite, but they were productive because when you look at the bottom line someone would've said "Why'd it take so long?" But -- and there people who thought it could never be solved. When we had visitors meeting with some of the committees there they came and said "How are we going to solve this?" So patience, understanding and ability to communicate.

MR. KATZKI: Now, when you -- when you look at it from the point of view of the _____. I've _____ a great many of the -- of the -- of the staff members and it makes a small difference whether the man's assignment was whether he was overseas for one year or for longer periods of time invariably and without exception that tell you that the most interesting and productive experience of their life was the time when they were overseas with the JDC doing what they did. It makes no difference what they did after they came back home. What -- what level they achieved in their life. The JDC experienced doing this work with a most satisfying and productive career their -- _____ careers that lifes _____.

INTERVIEWER: Let's stop on that note.

MR. FEDER: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: And I thank you for doing this together.

End of tape 1 of 1

(Interview concluded)