

-TITLE-JOHN COULSTON  
-I\_DATE-  
-SOURCE-INTERNATIONAL LIBERATORS CONFERENCE  
-RESTRICTIONS-  
-SOUND\_QUALITY-  
-IMAGE\_QUALITY-  
-DURATION-  
-LANGUAGES-  
-KEY\_SEGMENT-  
-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-  
-PERSONAL\_NAME-  
-CORPORATE\_NAME-  
-KEY\_WORDS-  
-NOTES-  
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John Coulston (C)  
Robert Hasin (H)  
Runyon Peterson (P)  
Date: October 1981

Liberation -- 4 April 1945

2:30 (C) When they first entered (the camp), the first thing the tank commander did was shoot the SS men. Those SS men that were still alive marched the people who could still work to another town; the rest were shot.

3:15 A US soldier who had lost his leg had been captured by the Germans; there was no place to put him but in the camp. The (camp) survivors threw flowers on him.

3:45 (H) He arrived the same time as Coulston's unit and found several dead guards.

4:02 He took photos from the pocket of one guard.

4:25 There were the usual things (in this camp): lime pits on the outside of the camp and barracks with many dead inmates.

4:35 There were not too many people left in the camp - he guesses 150-200.

5:12 The "starved, emaciated looks" of the inmates was an entirely new experience to the liberators. "I was never prepared for anything like this.

6:32 (H) How did he feel? it was a complete surprise -- a revelation -- to find humanity such as this.

6:42 He has never felt that he has come up with the proper answer.

7:00 (Reading from a piece of paper): Churchill, in trying to describe the situation, said, "This has lost all power of definition, and these are crimes without a name."

7:35 There were some sick people.

7:43 The stench is something he has never forgotten; he had never experienced anything like that.

8:20 (P) He was in a different unit. He took pictures of the place with the railroad track. Bodies were put on top of the railroad ties so (the Germans) could hide them.

8:45 He took pictures of these burnt bodies. He took pictures of other things as well.

10:00 By now, he had seen so much of the stuff that it didn't bother him (Mr. Peterson starts crying.)

INTERVIEWER: "It only goes to show how human you are."

11:35 INTERVIEWER: It is most difficult to believe that one human being could do so much.

12:05 It is important that the liberators are her to bear witness to the atrocities which they've seen.

14:15 (C) (He reads from a letter written by Elwin Besin (ph) who had a tank destroyer): "I've tried to forget... till you found me... We heard firing... (our) tank was the first one in... The captain ordered us back into the tank because (the inmates) were filthy and all covered in lice"...

15:15 (H) (The liberators) brought some towns people, including the Burgmeister, into the camp; They knew nothing about it. The Burgmeister was "literally shedding tears."

15:38 Later the Burgmeister and his wife committed suicide.

16:05 (P) His wife doesn't believe that the camp was so close to the town and no one knew.

16:24 he believes it, because at the time, the towns people didn't dare look.

16:62 But on the other hand, they must have smelled the burning flesh!; they certainly should have known what it smelled like.

17:10 But with the dictatorship, no one dared to even ask any questions.

20:31 INTERVIEWER: Did you extend help to the inmates?

20:38 (C) They had to keep going, because they had a mission; they (therefore) did nothing, because their own men might be killed. They felt "horror and a coldness" which they took out on the Germans.

20:55 They were afraid to give (the inmates) food, because it could kill them, as they later found out.

21:21 (P) They gave them C-rations; the liberators ate well.

22:36 he got a picture of a bombed-out synagogue (from the dead SS guard). On the back there was written: "Die Vergiftungsküche der Welt" (The poison kitchen of the world).

25:00 INTERVIEWER: What do you thin of this Conference?

25:05 (C) This is one of the greatest things in the world: "We who are Americans are talking... We are supporting others who have been fighting over this... We all know the horrors of revisionist history."

25:38 (He reads from the testimony of two former officers):  
"There are people who deny this...they make me sick... My thanks to (the Holocaust Council) where people can go and get the true facts of the terrible thing inflicted by Hitler and his gang."

28:04 We must learn the true facts of the whole thing.

28:15 Non-Jews and Christians must do their best so there won't be another Holocaust.

28:45 (H) There was an incident (lawsuit) in California where people were contesting the authenticity of the Holocaust

29:26 Now, why should t here be a struggle to prove there was a Holocaust?

29:36 "We three men know there was a Holocaust"!  
.END.