

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ELI ROCK

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Natalie Packel

Date: May 11, 1996

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Gratz College

Melrose Park, PA 19027

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ER - Eli Rock [interviewee]

NP - Natalie Packel [interviewer]

Date: May 11, 1996

Tape one, side one:

NP: Today is June the 11th, and this is Natalie Packel, interviewing Mr. Eli Rock. [tape off then on] Mr. Rock, is it so that you served with the armed forces during the Second World War?

ER: I drove an ambulance in an American organization called the American Field Service, which provided volunteer ambulance drivers to the British and French Armies. And these were usually, not always, men who had not been accepted by the military in this country. A few of them got in before America got into the war, but quite a number of them who were like I was, 4-F. I had a congenital heart condition which had, I had completely overcome and played football and what not, but it was enough to turn, for the army to make me a 4-F and I was restive and I found this opportunity to go overseas for this organization which had furnished ambulance drivers to the British and the French Armies. And I served with the First French Army, initially in France and then in Germany until the end of the war. And during that period I was only vaguely aware of the problem of concentration camp survivors and displaced persons, because I once saw somehow on a highway in--near Stuttgart, a group of people who had survived a concentration camp and were marching down a highway or something and who looked very skeletal in the brand new suits that they were wearing. It's amazing, like many people, of course, I had no knowledge of what the Germans had done. That only, that information only began to come out at a later date and even I think the Allied authorities were not aware of what horrible treatment the Germans had handed out to deportees, and particularly to the Jewish people who came under their care. So I just wasn't aware of these problems during the war. [tape off then on]

NP: I understand that you were with the Joint Distribution Committee?

ER: Yes.

NP: How did that come about?

ER: When the war ended I was released by the French Army and I could have gone home right after, as many of my friends driving an ambulance with--we, our group drove ambulances with both the British and the French Armies and most of the people after the war could go home in short order, and they did. But I was young and a bachelor and I didn't know when I'd get back to Europe. And so I looked around for a job to stay in Europe and I went over to UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association, which was the official United Nations relief organization to deal with these problems. And...

NP: If I may interrupt you, what date, what time?

ER: This would have been, the war ended on May 12th, so this would have been some time in May, 1945. And I spoke to a friend of mine from Philadelphia who had done some work for UNRRA and his wife was with the Quaker organization in this country and they had gone over, they had done work for the Quakers in Paris. And I, we looked each other up. They were not Jewish.

NP: And his name, too?

ER: Bennett Schauffler, S-C-H-A-U-F-F-L-E-R. And his wife, Marnie. Now Marnie was doing work for the Quakers in Europe and they were not Quakers but Marnie had been with the Quaker relief program for quite a while. And they were in Paris on that work and I spoke to them. And as I say, I think Ben was there for UNRRA and I spoke to Ben, Bennett, about a possible job with UNRRA, because I thought I'd like to stay over. I'd had some administrative experience. My job before I went overseas was as Disputes Director of the Regional War Labor Board in, based in Philadelphia, where I did get, I was, I became the head of that division, of the Disputes division of that office. And so I had had executive administrative experience and I thought maybe UNRRA could keep, give me a job so I could stay on in Europe for a while after the war. I hadn't been in Europe, I certainly hadn't had a chance to see much of Europe except where I drove an ambulance. So I thought I could get a job with them. And now that did not come about. UNRRA was not in need of my services or there were just some procedural red tape kind of problems. And Ben and Marnie, who knew about the Joint Distribution Committee, because I think they had once taken a boatload of Jewish children from Lisbon to the States--they had escorted the boatload--and they knew Joe Schwartz, the legendary Joe Schwartz, whom I will talk about and concerning whom I have some memorabilia. Or, I wrote an article once about Joe Schwartz for *The Jewish Exponent* in which I described him. They had gotten to know Joe Schwartz, and they sent me to the JDC office in Paris. This was May 15 or so, May 12th, 1945. And the JDC had only a skeletal program at that time. They had not been--first of all, the war had cut off shipping. They could not send over, they couldn't have done much before the end of the war because they couldn't go into areas where their services were needed. And so they were short-handed. They didn't have their usual social work, relief work, or trainees available in Paris. And so they were glad to hire me, an American, particularly because I had had experience in Germany and they were gonna have to set up a program in Germany and I knew my way around Germany from being there as an ambulance driver.

NP: Excuse me, your experience in Germany was as the ambulance driver.

ER: Initially that was...

NP: Initially.

ER: ...the total experience. And, but I also could speak, my French was pretty good and they could use me in Paris in dealing with the French Jewish committees that they were dealing with. So, whatever the reasons, they just had no staff and they hired me. And a man named Arthur Greenly headed up the program, the office in Paris, on *Rue de*

Teheran...

NP: Mmm!

ER: And, do you know that street or...

NP: I, yes, yes, I've have read about it. I've seen it in certain articles.

ER: Yeah.

NP: O.K.

ER: And I was, I worked in that office. And I was Arthur's translator when he had a deal with the French Jews, and I...

NP: What language did you speak?

ER: Well, I--my French was quite good. I had had a lot of French in school. And then I had served with the French Army in where I'd had to speak French. So at that time, and of course language capacity fails with passage of time, but it was fresher then. And so I was useful to the Joint Distribution Committee in Paris and I helped set up a program in Germany where the JDC could at least have some role. We did not--we had not been able to bring over any significant amount of relief supplies because all the shipping was tied up with military stuff. And we didn't have any staff, because again, it was difficult to bring over staff during the war. And we did have some European staff, like William Bein in Warsaw, but...

NP: How do you spell his name?

ER: B-E-I-N, Bill Bein. And he was, well, he was in Warsaw, but in the Warsaw Ghetto during the German occupation, there was a man named Guzik, who headed up the Joint Distribution Committee, the JDC's program *in* the ghetto, when--and administered relief assistance to people in the ghetto by borrowing money with no, nothing but the Joint Distribution Committee's name as credit. And then he was able to bring in a few supplies and whatnot, smuggle them in with this borrowed money. Now, incidentally, to digress, later, when I worked for the JDC in New York, one of my functions was to serve with the Joint's claims committee, which passed on, I was a staff person for the claims committee, which passed on claims from Warsaw Ghetto survivors or their heirs, for repayment of money that they had loaned to the, to Guzik in the ghetto days. And it was really a fascinating experience, to...

NP: I am a bit confused. Where would they have gotten this money? These were survivors within the ghetto?

ER: Every, in the ghetto people had jewelry, and they had dollars under their mattresses. Every, yeah, this was common in pre-war Europe. Everybody, the dollar was the most valuable currency, and so he...

NP: But aren't you speaking now of post-war?

ER: No, that was post-war repayment.

NP: All right.

ER: But during the war the Joint's program in the ghetto, they couldn't bring in, it could not bring in supplies. And it did its best to help people by borrowing money from

people in the ghetto.

NP: Within the ghetto, yes.

ER: Within the ghetto, and then using that to buy, bring in supplies for needy people. [tape off then on]

NP: We can continue.

ER: Now that meant that the JDC had obligated itself to repay these people. Unfortunately the head of the Joint's program in the ghetto, a man named Guzik was, and they had very inadequate, the JDC people in the ghetto had very inadequate records. They couldn't keep records but they had maintained records of these, and they had a memory of what they had borrowed. But Guzik, after surviving the Nazis and living in the ghetto, was killed after the war in a plane crash, coming to...

NP: G-U-Z-I...

ER: Yeah...

NP: G-U-...

ER: G-U-Z-I-K. And now his assistant--an elderly lady by the time we met her, in the ghetto; I've forgotten her name--came to, was brought to New York by the JDC and from her memory and notes we were able to reconstruct a, some record of what the JDC owed, based on those borrowings. And then we had people, the people who had loaned them money, or more often, or equally often their heirs or relatives who had heard that they had loaned their, the original person had loaned jewelry or money to the JDC, and who wanted repayment. And we of course wanted to repay them, but we certainly had to have some adequate basis for doing it. So we set up a claims committee of--in New York City--of a board member and several other lawyers. And I was the administrator in the JDC office that worked with that claims committee. And I worked for the JDC in New York from, I came back from Europe in '47. I first worked for the JDC in Berlin, first in Bavaria, from the end of the war until the end of 1945. As I say, oh I didn't, I skipped something. I had come into Paris. I had looked for a job. I got a job with the JDC, and I stayed with it; I worked in the Paris office of the JDC until July, when I was sent back into Germany to head up the JDC program, its new program, in Bavaria, based on my knowledge, again, of, well, I was, the JDC had very few staff people at that time. And so I was given this very dramatic kind of job, working in, particularly at Feldafing, which was the first Jewish, all-Jewish DP camp, in Bavaria--very overcrowded.

NP: Had you had a knowledge of the Jewish--of the DP camps that were not all Jewish?

ER: Yes, as a matter of fact there was another camp nearby that--Wolfratshausen it was called eventually, W-O-L-, *Wofrat*-, W-O-F-R-A-T, *hausen*, H-A-U-S-E-N which had been set up originally as a catch-all DP camp into which both Polish Jews and Polish gentiles, who had been deported to Germany under the Nazis from Poland, were housed. It soon became evident to the army and UNRRA that you could not put Jewish and non-Jewish Polish DPs into the same camp, because the Polish Jews remembered how as they

were being deported from Poland there were often Poles standing on the side cheering the Germans, they so hated Jews. There was a tremendous amount of antisemitism in Poland and after everything that had happened to them the Jewish survivors were hardly in a mood to live together in that DP camp with Polish Christians.

NP: If I may ask, General Eisenhower at the time, was he working with you or, and General Patton?

ER: Yes. Here's a picture I have of Eisenhower. Well, I got a picture of Eisenhower at the Holocaust Museum. But he came to--I'm gonna come to that in a minute...

NP: Surely.

ER: He came to Feldafing in the summer of '45.

NP: This was General Eisenhower.

ER: Eisenhower and Patton. And I was part of the group that escorted them through the camp. The, but in terms of my personal journey, the war ended. I went to work for the Joint Distribution in Paris and helped in various ways. And in July, when we obtained permission to, we had to get permission to send our people in to work with the concentration camp survivors, and there were other people in the J, working on this for the JDC, including Jake Trobe, who later became my boss. Jake Trobe is currently living in the Philadelphia area at...

NP: Is that so? Oh.

ER: At a retirement home, retirement apartments. I'll think of the name in a minute, out on the Main Line. The, anyway, the JDC recruited various people because there was need to, desperate need to help these survivors. And we could only be a subsidiary organization to the, to UNRRA, which had the supplies, the manpower, and the entitlement, the permission to work in these DP camps. So we had to be an accredited agency under UNRRA. And so when I came into Feldafing it was in that role. I worked first in Paris. We obtained permission to send people into Germany. And I went back into Germany with one of the first, well, the first team that went into Bavaria. And I had four lovely people as part of my team. And we went into Feldafing and established an office there.

NP: Feldafing was in Bavaria?

ER: Feldafing was in Bavaria.

NP: Could you describe the...

ER: Yes.

NP: ...physical...

ER: There were basically two Jewish camps for the survivors after the war. Feldafing was one and there was another one nearby whose name I, which I've temporarily forgotten.

NP: Foehrenwald, is it?

ER: No, Foehrenwald was...

NP: Foehren-...

ER: Not yet established. The other camp was not as big as Feldafing but it, and it originally was a, it had a mixture also of Jewish and non-Jewish DPs. Foehrenwald was next to Feldafing [phone; tape off then on].

NP: Do continue.

ER: Feldafing, some of this I've written up, and I've got with me here some of the things I've written in the past.

NP: Oh boy, do you think...

ER: And also something I...

NP: ...maybe we could copy and have for the Archives?

ER: Yeah, oh I'll definitely give you such. I've got an article that I wrote about Dr. Joseph Schwartz...

NP: All right.

ER: Way back in 198- [phone] I thought I transferred the calls.

NP: It sounds like she picked it up.

ER: Oh it rings once, yeah.

NP: Rings once, yeah.

ER: Yeah, that's right. The JDC Paris office, and the rest of the world in May, 1945, was not yet fully aware of the totality, virtual totality, of the destruction of the European Jews. The, and Russian Jews. The word, during the war, had begun to drift out about what was happening. And the, in any event, the Joint had neither the staff nor the material supplies. It did bring in supplies but it, they were limited. There was one batch of supplies that were brought in from Sweden to Bavaria, which the JDC arranged-food and clothing and whatnot. And the, here I was in Europe wanting to find something to do. My friends the Schaufillers, referred me. They knew Joe Schwartz, from having served with a, on a Quaker mission of evacuating Jewish children from Portugal during the war. They were on that, on a special ship that, and they were not Jewish. They were wonderful people, very good friends. And I looked them up. They were in Paris on this kind of work, after the war, and we of course were happy to see each other in Paris. We had been friends in Philadelphia. And they referred me to the JDC as a poss-, oh, and I hadn't been able to get a job with UNRRA. I just, I never even knew about the JDC. I just hadn't been very active in Jewish affairs and my total experience in America was, well, I was *bar mitzvah* and we went to services on the high holidays, and that sort of thing, and my mother certainly kept kosher. We lived in a, an Italian neighborhood up in Rochester, New York, where I was born. And through my growing up my closest friends were Italian kids or a guy I met in the seventh grade--his name is Joseph Platt--who came from the other side of the tracks so to speak, the older, Protestant side of the tracks in Rochester. And Joe and I became very close friends because we had discovered that we were born on the same day. In the seventh grade we discovered that and we've been close friends ever since. And, but I, and I, through college I didn't, there wasn't mu-, any really Jewish fraternity, there was, but without a fraternity house at Rochester where I went, the University of Rochester. And I had

participated in sports and I just my, we didn't live in the Jewish neighborhood of Rochester. So I was just not, being a Jew was not a major part of my consciousness, at least in terms of athletic and social activities. And the, and here I was, after the war, and the job that was available, which I found, was at the JDC, and I knew very little about the JDC. And I, in the course of the next four or five years where I, during which I worked for the JDC, I became extremely identified and I still kept all my close gentile friends. But my world really changed greatly. And it was the result of these years I worked for the Joint Distribution Committee. And it started with Feldafing, when I dispatched myself from Paris to work in Feldafing with a team of, I was the head of a team of five people, consisting of Henri Heitan, and Ruth Scharlot Heitan. Henri was a doctor, and they were, she was originally a German Jew and I think he was originally a Polish Jew. They had come into the JDC office after the war while I was working there and said they wanted to offer their services. And Henri...

NP: Were these people French? Were they living...

ER: They were living in France.

NP: Oh, I see.

ER: Henri had a successful medical practice and, in, I believe it was southern France but somehow they got to us. And Ruth was a German Jew originally. And they had no children. They were wonderful people. And I have here an article that Henri Heitan wrote.

NP: Oh wonderful.

ER: It's only the top part of it, and it tells ab-, it's not in very good English, but it, I made a copy of it and it tells about Feldafing. The opening sentence for example says, "Feldafing camp, a center of about 5,000 Jewish DPs, has finally, on the end of October, settled down to a stabilized population of about 3600 people. However, etc." So I made this, the copy of his report and I'll give that to you now.

NP: Thank you, thank you, yes.

ER: Now, when I came to Paris after the war and got the job for the JDC, Dr. Joseph Schwartz was the head of the Joint Distribution Committee's European program and he was not there when I initially was hired. I was hired by a man named Arthur Greenly, who had been a social worker in the United States and he was running the Paris office, with its limited facilities and limited services. And that was on *Rue de Teheran*. And Arthur could see that with my having just come out of Germany with my experience there and with a very obvious need to set up some sort of program in Germany, that I could be useful even though my experience had been with the War Labor Board as an administrator in labor management disputes in the United States before I went overseas to drive an ambulance. And, but I was an American. I could also speak better-than-average, well, I could speak fairly good French at that time and again that was--but the main thing is they had no bodies. They hadn't been able to bring over staff or supplies and so he hired me and I was delighted. And I lived there in Paris for a couple of months, until, and helped obtain

permission from the authorities to send in a team to supplement the UNRRA work in Germany. UNRRA did, I mean we could own, we were not a major player. I, well the JDC perhaps indicated that we were important and, the program, and it was certainly helpful for Allied Jewish Appeal fund raising, to indicate that we were important. The fact is we could only supplement UNRRA and...

NP: UNRRA was a major player?

ER: UNRRA had the official responsibility and facilities and staff to administer relief in the displaced persons camps after the war.

NP: Mr. Rock, excuse me-

Tape one, side two:

NP: This is the interview of Eli Rock, with Natalie Packel, side B, tape one. Yes, Mr. Rock, how was it being among the Germans?

ER: Well I'd been in Germany during the war, driving this ambulance. And we, with the French Army, and we would be in isolated places sometimes and we would simply requisition a house or took over a bedroom in a house, this fellow ambulance driver and I. And the Germans were very friendly and they knew they had lost the war and they wanted to ingratiate themselves. But I had no, I quickly developed an acute antipathy for the Germans, and when I got into Bavaria, and worked there for the JDC, and saw the condition of the survivors and heard their stories and realized what a total extermination there had been--by the brothers and husbands of these very nice friendly Germans--I grew extremely, extremely full of hate. I even hated little five-year-old German children, when I saw how healthy and well-nourished they were compared to what few children there were in the DP camps, and with the realization that most of the children, Jewish children, had been killed. And so it was not, it was a long time before I could forget my hatred of the Germans. In any event, the opportunity opened up to do something in Germany and...

NP: Your main aim at Feldafing was...

ER: Was to supplement, to help in any way that we could, to have a presence. We also sent a team into the British occupied zone of Germany near, oh, it had the same name as a big extermina-, a, you know, a concentration camp in northern Germany. I've forgotten. And my friend...

NP: We might use this as a source.

ER: Yeah, that could be. And my friend Jake Trobe worked up there and became the head of the, both sections of Germany. But there was this big concentration camp, which now became a displaced persons camp, in northern Germany. And the other major camp was Feldafing. And these, we're talking these very early days. And as I started to say, there was also an adjacent place called Wolfratshausen, which it had another name. And the, I believe I helped bring about the establishment of Wolfratshausen. There, I was very much aware of the very overcrowded conditions in Feldafing and early on after I arrived there in July, 1945...

NP: Excuse me, I...

ER: Yes.

NP: This, I have this book open...

ER: Yes.

NP: By Yehuda Bauer...

ER: Yes.

NP: And there is a map, and there are, there is Feldafing, I believe, in here.

ER: Yes, Feldafing is the only location shown on this.

NP: I see.

ER: This, they, it does not show the other Jewish DP camps in southern Bavaria at that time. The...

NP: All right, all right. And Feldafing housed 3500 people, did you say?

ER: That's what...

NP: Something like...

ER: The report says, one of our reports. And it had, there isn't a, Feldafing was originally a German Army barracks. And it was a series of multi-level buildings, or maybe they were not multi-level, but anyway it housed many fewer people--but it was a German Army camp--than we now had to place there, because there were such limited facilities in that immediate post-war period. And we had to, people were wandering, first of all there were the people still wearing concentration camp pajamas, who needed to be housed. They were, as I say, UNRRA established camps for the survivors, and we went in to supplement. And Feldafing was one of those camps.

NP: All right, excuse me. I understand that the chaplains of the U.S. Army were really the first persons that the unfortunate souls saw, and bonded with.

ER: Well that's true. There were a number of chaplains in Bavaria. Abe Klausner was particularly active and outstanding. He was everywhere in those early days, finding places to put up survivors. He took over a wonderful monastery, convent, in Bavaria, where, which was never an official place. But for a period of time it was just a great place for a couple of hundred survivors. Chaim Greenberg, I think, stayed there. Abe helped set up a central committee of Jewish survivors in Bavaria. It was, they established themselves, to help govern themselves. This had nothing to do with UNRRA, but they were extremely helpful in whatever relief programs there were. And this guy, Abe Klausner, found supplies. He found places. There was a Dr. Chaim Greenberg, who was chairman of that central committee in those early days in Bavaria. And of course most of these people got out as soon as they could and went to Palestine or they went to the States. And, but they did things, this central committee, and anyway, we set up an office in Munich. Initially my team worked in Feldafing and did whatever we could. And Dr. Heitan's report will give you some description of what our medical people did. And we...

NP: I just, excuse me, that was one of the first concerns, to...

ER: Yes.

NP: ...diagnose the illnesses, the physical...

ER: Yes.

NP: ...illnesses and to get them to hospitals. Were there hospitals where you...

ER: Well, there were medical facilities that, again, had to be set up. UNRRA worked at this, but, and as Dr. Heitan's report points out, there were doctors among the survivors. But also outside doctors were provided by UNRRA or the Joint Distribution Committee, mostly UNRRA, and there were indeed major health needs for the concentration camps survivors. As we know, many of them died even after they were rescued. They were in such terrible condition. Now we, Bavaria was not a major point for

that. The people were found, I think, in Poland and northern Germany. The Russian-occupied, there was also the Russian-occupied zone of Germany, which the Russian Army had taken and held after the war. And we could only work in the western part of Germany where the American Army had come in with part, and the British and the French. So the problem was far broader than what I confronted or could see, in that post-war period.

NP: Mr. Rock, you said there were doctors among the survivors. There were teachers among those survivors I would imagine.

ER: Yes.

NP: Did they organize schools?

ER: Yes, they--there were some, number one there weren't any children.

NP: There weren't any children in Feldafing?

ER: Very few, because these were sole survivors whose families had been wiped out, and they were only beginning to realize it. And I'll never forget some weebegone Jewish survivor in his concentration camp pajamas walking up to me one day. I was in a uniform. I looked official. The JDC people in those camps wore uniforms, like the UNRRA people and military types of uniforms. And he sort of slouched up to me in a weebegone manner and he spoke apologetically. And my initial reaction was rather negative, his whole appearance. And all he wanted to do, and I felt of course very ashamed of my reaction, was to ask me if I could help him find his wife and children that he hadn't seen since he was deported. And he was beginning to realize that maybe they hadn't survived. And it just tore me apart inside when he, I mean at first my initial reaction was so wrong and of course I learned to react differently. But they were really a pitiful remnant, the ones that were found wandering. And they were wandering around on foot! There were no communications. There were--I have mentioned this, I think, in one of my reports--no, everything was chaos after, as it must always be after a war in terms of telephones and buses and public transportation. And the, so...

NP: Excuse me, there were medical needs first and foremost. There were needs to find relatives.

ER: Yes.

NP: Connections.

ER: That's right. Now the JDC's perhaps major, or most significant contribution was in helping to find relatives. Initially that was very difficult because we didn't have any kind of communication or records. And people were wandering all around Germany looking for each other, or looking for survivors. And they'd come through these camps and stay for a while and then move on because there was no way to find out if anybody had survived. And they'd go on foot. They would hitch rides. They would come in to Paris and it was, we did set up early on a tracing bureau. And I, there was this one story that I used to tell when I worked, when I was making speeches for the Allied Jewish Appeal after the war. I haven't gotten yet to my period in Berlin, but I was in, director of the J, or co-director of the JDC's program in Berlin, starting in January, 1946. And I was in Berlin for the, first

I was in Bavaria for the latter half of '45. Then I went back to the States in December of '45, intending to stay, to return to my profession, which was labor relations. But I had already acquired some valuable experience with this whole problem. I'd been in Germany for this latter half of 1945. The JDC was going to have great burdens and responsibilities. And so Dr. Joseph Schwartz, the head of the JDC's overseas, European program, and a memorable, memorable individual--and as I say I've written a tribute to him in October, 1971 in *The Jewish Exponent* in Philadelphia which describes him--he invited me over to his house in December, 1945. I told him, uneq...

NP: Where was this house?

ER: In New York. I had told him unequivocally that I could not go back. I had to go back to my profession: labor relation arbitration and the law. And, but he persuaded me to come up to his apartment in New York. His wife was there and he had not, she had not seen much of him during the prior years because he was so, going all over Europe working on the JDC programs. Anyway, he was a very persuasive guy and he fed me a couple of scotches and I agreed to go back into Germany and therein was the course of my life changed. I went back to Germany in January of '46 and I worked in Berlin for the Joint. He sent me to Berlin, where the JDC had a big program, or a big need. And I stayed until the spring of '47. I came back to the States in '47. I expected then to go back to my profession but Moses Levitt, the head of the JDC in the States, persuaded me to stay with the JDC office in New York because I was a lawyer and they had these various needs, like the claims that were being made by the people who survived the Warsaw Ghetto, or by the relatives. And there was also a developing new program of restitution for the Jewish survivors in Europe. And that involved setting up, working with the federal government to set up a program in the American occupied areas of Germany.

NP: Excuse me, this restitution program, personal property...

ER: It was both personal and real property, and the problem there, for where there were survivors, there was a Jewish claims conference and if there were surviving individuals or relatives they could make the claims. And, but there was a big problem for the situation in which the, Hitler had been most successful, in other words where he had totally destroyed a family and there were no relatives to claim the property and the Germans held that property. And unless there was some way to reclaim it the Germans would end up holding it and being enriched by the property in those families where they had been most successful in their destruction of Jewish families. Obviously that could not be permitted, everybody agreed, and, but who would claim this? Who would get this property? So I helped set up, in those days, in, when I worked for the JDC in New York, something called the JRSO: Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. And we obtained a kind of legal successorship for the unclaimed property and we set up a program to find and claim the unclaimed property in Germany. And that became a quite important program. And it helped raise money for the embryo new Jewish State in Palestine. And it brought over cultural objects to the States, the religious objects and art. And there was a very valuable

painting by a well-known painter that was unclaimed and it was turned over to this organization, which used it then for Jewish purposes. So that was a second part, I mean, Joe Schwartz persuaded me to go back to Berlin for the year 1946. I came back in the spring of '47 and I, then went to work for the JDC and I stayed with the JDC for another four years or so, in New York. And I worked on these various matters that I've described. And I finally in the early '50s left the JDC and went back to my profession. So that's the extent of my experience with all of this [unclear]. It was an important part of my life.

NP: Just to come back to Feldafing and your observations then, your recollections now. Were you witness to any marriages within the camp?

ER: Uh I must have been. I don't...

NP: Was there a beginning that you were...

ER: There were, certainly, marriages, of people who had never been married, wanted to get married, and people who were widowed wanted to remarry. And there was a great need for children. People wanted to have children. They missed the sound of children's voices they would tell me. And I, in many ways my experience was a more immediate one, when I came back in '46 and went to, was sent to Berlin, where we had a more important role than I had, than the JDC had in Bavaria. But I do want to mention the incident of that second DP camp that was set up in, because other people have claimed credit for this, and...

NP: Is that Wolfratshausen?

ER: Wolfratshausen, or Foehrenwald. It had two names.¹

NP: Oh, it was Foehren-...

ER: Foehren-, it was the same camp. Foehrenwald, F-O-E-R-E-N-... (Foehrebwald)

NP: R-E-N-W-...

ER: W-A-L-D.

NP: All right.

ER: Foehrenwald, or Wolfratshausen. My version of how that was established is as follows. While I was stationed at Feldafing, which was terribly overcrowded, word had gotten back, American visitors came through Feldafing--rabbis from delegations--and they had gone back to the States and brought back horrific stories about the terribly overcrowded conditions in Feldafing or some other camps. Here were the survivors, the pitiful few survivors of Hitler's extermination program, and they were living in rooms where the bunks were four or six tiers high and there were inadequate supplies. And the Germans, who had done all this, were visible on the outside, living a normal life with apparently better food supplies. There were shortages everywhere. And you saw their healthy children walking on the streets or going to school and you, whereas all the Jewish

¹ The armament plant D.S.C. was situated in a fir wood of Foehrenwald, within the triangle Wolfratshausen-Geltwig-Neufohrn according to *Das national sozialistische Laseraystem*, p.19.

children were gone. And this anger communicated itself to Harry Truman, by Jews who came back from visiting. And he directed Eisenhower to look into it. And Eisenhower came to Feldafing in the summer of 1945, with Patton. Now Patton had, Patton's Third Army had conquered Bavaria. And they were left with, there were displaced, DP camps in many parts of Germany. But the ones in Bavaria were under Patton's control and his army, which occupied Bavaria. And he had the responsibility of overseeing these relief camps, these DP camps. Well, he was a fighting General, and these refugees wandering around and being in camps were black marketeers and they were taking things from the Germans. And this was a headache for them. And so he couldn't care less really about what was happening. And he saw them as a negative...

NP: Not...

ER: ...as a problem.

NP: Excuse me, not as victims?

ER: Not Patton. Patton, well, he'd lost a lot of soldiers. They had fought hard, and successfully. There was still a war with Japan. As a military man, refugees were a nuisance. And they, but when the word came back to Truman by visitors, and he directed Eisenhower, who was then stationed in, oh, near Frankfurt I think, in the U.S. Army headquarters, to go visit the DP camps and do something about it. And Patton went along with them, and there was a visit by Eisenhower and Patton to Feldafing in the summer of 1945. And I was one of the people stationed there who accompanied them. And I remember we walked by a room that had these six tiers of bunks and Jews living in them. And the Jews, some of them were still wearing concentration camp pajamas, and they looked terrible. And Patton turned to Eisenhower--Eisenhower said, in my presence, "George, if Harry could see this he would blow his top!" And Patton in my presence said, "General, when I was last here, these conditions were not so [unclear]." And it was a total lie. He'd never been there. One of, oh, I know, what preceded that conversation was, we came to a room where there were some sewing machine heads, the sewing machine parts, sitting on a floor. And Irving Smith, who was the army, a lieutenant who had been assigned to military government to govern Feldafing, over UNRRA, he was Jewish. And he had tried to do his best in Feldafing. And the, Eisenhower and Patton inspecting the camp at Truman's direction, came to this room where there were sewing machine heads sitting on the floor. Now, idleness, and the need for vocational training, were major problems. And obviously those, and clothing, and obviously those sewing machines could be used productively, and they weren't being used at all. So they stopped and looked at those sewing, idle sewing machines, and Eisenhower turned to lieutenant Smith and said, "What are those sewing machines doing there, lieutenant? Why aren't you using them?" And Smith said, "Well we need tables." "Well, why haven't you gotten the tables?" And he said, "Well I, I've tried. I went into Bavaria, to Munich, and went to G-2 or G-4, General Patton's headquarters, to try to get some tables requisitioned or something. And General, nothing has happened on that score." And Eisenhower turned to Smith and he said, "Whom

did you go to?” Well, he named the General so-and-so. “So if I wanted to find out who was responsible for this, I would go to that General?” And Smith sort of, shaking in his boots, because he knew that General was right there and was part of the inspection party. He said, “Yes, General.” Anyway, at that point Patton said, “General, when I was last here, these conditions did not exist.” Oh, one of the things that Eisenhower said to Patton is memorable conversation which I remember once telling friends of mine in California about. There were the sewing machines. Irving Smith hadn’t been able to get tables, and Eisenhower turned to Patton and he said, “George,” he said, “I just don’t understand this. If we had some guns here, some artillery, without foundations, bases for them, and we had some bases over here, now neither one of those things would be any good by themselves, would they, George? And what we would try to do would be to get the two of them together, wouldn’t we, George?” He spoke to him as though Patton was a child. And that was a point in which Patton was wriggling, visibly, with embarrassment, and said, “General, this situation was not like this when I was last here.” And it was a total lie. He’d never been there. And I was standing there. I knew it, and other people knew that he’d never been there. But, you, I could never get angry at General Patton. He should never have been given this kind of responsibility. He didn’t know anything about relief. He was only interested in fighting, which is what he should have done, and they were still gonna have to go over to the Pacific and fight the Japs and lose lots of people. So he and his army, oh, there was a Colonel who came in to me one day when he was in Bavaria, when the criticism was taking place. And he identified himself as a lieutenant colonel so-and-so. And it was a famous name, that I can’t remember at this point. And he said, “Look, reports are going back,” and he was the military guy in charge of this area. And he came in to my office or called me in, I’ve forgotten what. I think he called me in. And he said, “Look,” he said, “my career’s in the army. I’m a West Pointer. I come from a line of military people from Texas. And I am in danger of compromising my career because of these complaints about what is happening in these displaced persons camps under my jurisdiction in Bavaria. And tell me what I can do, and I’ll do whatever I can.” And he did bring in, at that point he-

Tape two, side one:

NP: Natalie Packel, interviewing Eli Rock, on June the 11th. This is side one of tape two, and we continue.

ER: A week later, after all these reports had gotten back and after Truman had directed Eisenhower and Patton to inspect the camps, one of Patton's, each General in each army had General's staffs, I think they were called, of top officers who were the immediate aides and assistants of the commanding General. So Patton, as head of the Third Army, had a group of such officers and after this memorable visit by Eisenhower and Patton, and where all the, and after the criticism, this officer spoke to me. And he said, "We are General Patton's people. I am one of those. He is being hurt by what is, these reports are. And couldn't you issue some official statement, in your role as this American in charge of this American program in Bavaria, that things have greatly improved in the last week or so since the visit by Eisenhower and Patton?" And I couldn't do that, of course. I said, "Well, I'll think about it." But it would, I mean the whole Jewish position was that the army's efforts were woefully inadequate considering the mammoth nature of the problem. I mean these, the extermination of European Jews. And these were among the few survivors. And for me to issue some sort of a statement that things are better or they're O.K. and I wouldn't be comfortable with, I couldn't do it. And it would ruin me with my home office, I'm sure, in New York. So I hemmed and hawed. I never did that. But that was this, the environment. They, these military people, as I say, this one guy who came in and this long, lean Texan who was a West Pointer and was a great fighting officer--I don't remember, as I say, what his rank was, or his name--and just said, "I don't want to ruin my career over this thing. Tell me what I can do and I'll do it. I'll do everything that I can." And, so there was concern by the army. And I had mixed feelings about it because I knew these guys might go on and die fighting Japan.

NP: In this interview you have spoken of the job of the Joint Distribution Committee, the job of UNRRA, as you describe, a major player. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS...

ER: They worked through us. We were really HIAS in those early days. We had an immigration, on our staff I had in Bavaria somebody who worked on immigration. And I don't remember that HIAS had anybody in Europe in those early days. Now, I haven't reached the Berlin part of my experience. I came back in late 1945 and agreed to go back and, under the persuasion of Joe Schwartz. And he sent me this time to Berlin where I was co-director in effect of the JDC program in Berlin and where I stayed until early '47 when I ended my career with overseas JDC and came back to the States and ended up working in the JDC New York office for another four years on these matters which I talked to you about. But that fourteen months in Berlin were much more satisfying in a way, in certain ways, than were those frustrating five months at the end of '45 in Bavaria. We were able to do more in Berlin. We were able to bring in more supplies. We were able to help the

people, particularly with their tracing relatives and immigration needs. We set up a program in our Berlin office for that sort of thing. I just wanted to illustrate earlier the problem of people finding each other. And this is the story I've told quite often. We had a tracing office in Berlin. And we would be in, we had the advantage of being able to communicate directly with the JDC office in New York which then could carry out our requests. And one of the problems was people in Germany, survivors, finding out who their fellow survivors, if any, were in their families, and getting in touch with family in the United States as well as in other countries. But the, a lot of people had relatives in the United States who often didn't know whether these relatives--they were cousins or nephews, whatnot--didn't know whether their relatives in Europe had survived, and were anxious for word about that. And in turn, the people who survived were anxious to find relatives in the States who could help them by sending over money perhaps or helping them immigrate and to stay with them when they got to the States. And so this was why we couldn't, and we, though we brought in more supplies, we still could not, well, it was really never the Joint Distribution Committee's competency or responsibility to furnish the basic supplies for these various DP camps. There was an UNRRA, and it was an international responsibility. But we could supplement in various ways, and again, we did the tracing, which was so important. And one day our, Larry Lubetsky who was in charge, who was himself a survivor, had put up a notice. Somebody had come into his office, in our Berlin office, and asked for help in finding a relative in the States. Larry found that relative and he put a notice up on the bulletin board, "Chaim Grossman, or Mr. Grossman, we have found your relative in Chicago. Please come in." Now this was weeks after, or maybe several weeks after, the relative in Schlachtensee, which was the big Jewish DP camp in Berlin, had come in and asked for this help. So now two weeks later or so Larry puts up a notice on the bulletin board in this DP camp saying, "Chaim Weinberg, or Mr., or whatnot, or Mr. Weinberg, that's it, will the individual who had asked us to find his relative in Chicago please come in? We have found that relative." And he puts this notice on. And somebody comes in to the office and says, "I'm so glad to hear that I have my relatives, I have relatives in Chicago and you have established this contact with them. But how did you know I was looking for them?" And Larry said, "Somebody with your last name was just here a couple of weeks ago." And he said, "That had to be my brother!" And this was the first time he knew his brother had survived. The brother, meanwhile, had moved on into Bavaria, because Berlin was just a place that people came to on foot and whatnot, to the American sector of Berlin, because of, or the French sector, but there was this DP camp in the American sector. The British were trying to discourage this because they knew a lot of these people were going to end up in Palestine and they didn't want that, of course, in those days. So we had an operation in Berlin where the people could, who were brought in late at night on the back of trucks by the *B'richa*, which was this great, great organization. And I...

NP: Could you tell, tell me...

ER: I'm gonna tell you in a minute...

NP: All right.

ER: About them.

NP: *B'richa*, B-R-I...

ER: B-, B apostrophe, R-I-C-H-A. And Yehuda Bauer has written a book about them. And anyway, Berlin in the year 1946, when I was there, was in the middle of a Russian sea, and Berlin was a four-powered city. There was a Russian sector of Berlin, a French sector of Berlin, a British sector of Berlin, and an American sector of Berlin. And we were, our office was in the American sector of Berlin. But we could move through the other sectors. But certainly the British would not have allowed us to carry on our program and the Russians couldn't--they just didn't care. But we set up a little operation in the French sector of Berlin, called Wittenau, W-I-T-T-E-N-A-U. And that was on the edge of the city, in the...

NP: Edge of Berlin.

ER: Of Berlin, in the French sector of Berlin. Now, this wonderful organization called the *B'richa* was working at a vital task at that time of finding surviving Jews in the Russian occupied zone of Germany and in Poland. Now the *B'richa*, were consisted of former members of the Jewish Brigade in the British Army. The British had recruited Jews in Palestine to fight with the British against the Germans, which of course the Jews couldn't wait to be part of a, I mean after, this was late in the war, or no, I mean, well, the Allied armies didn't into Germany until after the invasion on D-Day, and so much had taken place before that. And as I say, most Jews had been killed but there was a tremendous, tremendous need to find the survivors. Many Jews had gone into hiding. Many of them had placed their children with gentile neighbors as babies, as they were being deported. Gentile friends. And with so much, and so so few survivors, there was a tremendous emphasis--there would have been in any event--on finding those Jewish survivors and those children that were now in occupied Poland. And there were also many Jews, a large number, maybe a couple of hundred thousand, who had survived the Nazis. And they were living in the eastern part of Poland. And as the Nazis moved across Poland they fled into Russia, where they were interned but their lives were saved. There were maybe 200,000. And that was the biggest group of survivors. And they now came back after the war. They came back to their homes in Poland, where they found that the antisemitism was as strong as ever. And there had been this horrible incident in a...

NP: Kielce?

ER: Town...

NP: Kielce? Where the pogrom...

ER: Kielce, yeah, yeah, what's the word again?

NP: Kielce.

ER: Kelce, Kelce, K-E-...

NP: K-I-E-L-C-E.

ER: Yes, yeah.

NP: The pogroms at that time.

ER: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Post-war.

ER: That's right. And Jews--these Polish bandits who had been bandits under the Nazis and who still could not get over their antisemitism, and they would stop trains and take men off the trains and ask them to lower their pants to indicate whether they were circumcised, and they killed them. And it was, I mean, the hatred. You could understand why you couldn't put Jewish DPs in the same camp with Polish DPs. I mean, all these, after everything that had happened, for the Poles *still* to be giving vent to their antisemitism was horrible. And anyway, one group, a large number that had survived, came through Poland, or realized that they, the Jewish communities were a graveyard; nobody was there anymore in these various Jewish towns and they just kept coming. And they, some of them, a large number, went south from Warsaw and got to Czechoslovakia and went into Bavaria for the UNRRA programs in Bavarian camps. But a substantial number at one time, this really is [unclear] came west to Berlin and they were brought in by, on the backs of trucks at night by *B'richa* people who had found them and, or, I mean they found children that had been placed with Christian Polish families as their families, as their, the parents were being deported. And these were nice people. In some cases they adopted and converted the children, but in many cases they had taken good care of them *and* they perhaps saw some chance for financial remuneration. They didn't want to keep the children. And they would turn them over to the *B'richa* people. And between these various sources, the *B'richa* would put people on the backs of trucks and come into Berlin, into the French sector of Berlin, late at night, because they didn't want to be caught by the British occupation authorities. And there was this camp, Wittenau, in the French sector of Berlin, which we maintained. That was a major function of the JDC. It was a necessary place. It didn't hold large numbers of people, but it was a place a truck coming in at night could deposit its people and then the next morning in broad daylight we could transfer them to the American sector of Berlin and they'd be lost in the traffic and what not and the British would not interfere with it. Whereas if we did this late at night when cars were not even permitted on the highways, the British would surely intercept them.

NP: Excuse me, if I may, *B'richa* means "flight."

ER: Yes.

NP: Was this a legal or illegal operation?

ER: It was probably illegal as far as the British were concerned. The Russians and the French, I mean there were so many people wandering around there was, really there were no controls. They didn't, couldn't care less. And they were wonderful guys. We got to know them. And as I say, they came to Berlin and we supplied them with food and what not. But this was a...

NP: And were they all from Palestine?

ER: Yeah, yeah, the *B'richa*...

NP: They were all from Palestine, the *B'richa*.

ER: Almost all of them were Palestinians who had been in the British Army...

NP: Jewish Palestinians.

ER: Jewish Palestinians, and who then gave the British Army uniforms to concentration camp survivors, who were then brought back as British soldiers to Palestine, and this got people into Palestine. We had no qualms about doing this, because the British were trying to prevent any kind of migration to Palestine. And the one thing that was unacceptable in these early days was trying to prevent these people from finding relatives, from migrating and what not. And so the *B'richa* turned over its uniforms. And then these guys came back to Palestine as British Army soldiers. The *B'richa* guys stayed on. Some of them had already been in the British Army for years and had been in battles and what not, and hadn't seen their families for years. And now they were here in Germany maybe for another four years, doing this work, without seeing their families. And they were wonderful. I remember looking up a few, I became so enamored of these guys, and their idealism and their courage. And we would see them in Berlin and we would help them in any ways that we could. Max Helvarg, our supply guy, whom I have a picture of here and who has died--he died quite a long time ago...

NP: What was his name?

ER: Max Helvarg, H-E-L-V-A-R-G. He was our supply guy in Berlin. He made sure that the *B'richa* guys got plenty of supplies. Max also, this was when the Palestinian Jews were fighting the Arabs for their lives and survival in the late '40s, and, or middle '40s, and Max would also get some revolvers and what not, without my knowledge [chuckles] and smuggle them to the Palestinian Jews. A wonderful guy. And we became very close friends.

NP: Without *B'richa* where would so many...

ER: That's right.

NP: ...displaced persons be? I...

ER: Oh, I don't know. I suppose that in time, I mean, the Poles were glad to get rid of the Jews. The Russians--but it was a question of time. I mean, nobody, who the, some Jews had gone back to Poland. They went back and they found that life was much easier in Poland than struggling for an existence in Palestine, say. One guy once said, "How can I make a, as a Jew, can I make a living off of other Jews?" He was, you know, a business man, a trader. He sold. And so a good deal of the original Jewish community came back. I don't know, in the population of Poland, at best, it can only be a small fraction. There were like three million Jews in Poland before the war. I mean it was a tremendously large community.

NP: Incredible.

ER: And they dispersed, but most of them were killed. And where, how, you know, how we get the number of six million. And, but anyway, so we got, the *B'richa* people were bringing people through Berlin at night at this one camp, and then the next

day they'd go into the UNRRA camp under Harold Fishbein, who was the director of the UNRRA camp and whom I have a picture of there.

NP: F-I-S-H-B-E-I-N.

ER: Yeah, yeah, and he was the brother of Morris Fishbein, the head of the American Medical Association in those days and kind of a controversial figure who was against what they thought was socialized medicine. Anyway, Harold, who has long since died, and I, worked together on a lot of these things. And there was recently a reunion in Lancaster, just a few months ago, of people who were in Berlin, Jewish survivors and what not, who were in Berlin in 1946, or their relatives. Because that was 50 years ago. So unless they are pretty high up in years, and there weren't many that I saw in Lancaster that had little children in those days, but they always remembered that, and there were 40 people or so who had been in Berlin in '46 and we had this reunion. And now one of the people I got to be very close to in those days was Rabbi Friedman--oh, what's his first name? I know it as well as my name--who was chaplain there in those days who had, he was succeeded by Mike Abramowitz. And...

NP: He was chaplain in the camp?

ER: For the army.

NP: For the army, in Berlin?

ER: Army, in Berlin.

NP: In Berlin.

ER: And he was succeeded by Mayer Abramovitz who was a rabbi in, now, in, he's retired, in Florida. But Herbert Friedman, who later became the head of the United Jewish Appeal, and was also, is now the director of the Wexner Foundation in New York, and Herb Friedman was the army chaplain there in those days. And he was later, he was transferred elsewhere during that year and he was succeeded by Mayer Abramovitz as the army chaplain. Well, there were, their job was to serve the army. But of course the Jewish soldiers who were in Berlin at that time, the chaplains, were much more interested in these Jewish survivors who were coming through Berlin. And they, each, there were stories of events that I just, now General, there is a different General in Berlin. And Clay, General Clay was in charge of the army in Berlin. And he just looked the other way as we were smuggling people into Berlin and, survivors, and he knew the British objected to it. But he was a wonderful man and as an illustration, in October of 1946 it was Rosh Hashanah. And there were services in Schlachtensee, this big DP camp, Jewish DP camp. And they put up a big tent, or they already had that tent and there was a stage. I guess they'd used this tent. It could hold about 500 people or more. And the, Harold Fishbein had used it for putting on plays and things to help the morale of these survivors. And it was a hot day. And we got to the *Yiskor* services, part of the service, where you say prayers for...

NP: *Kaddish*.

ER: *Kaddish* for the individual survivors, individual relatives. Now normally one says a prayer for his father, or an uncle maybe. But that would be all. In this prayer--

and maybe this is normal--you go through, well at least in those days, and it was an Orthodox ceremony, prayers were said for one's father, one's mother, one's brother, one's children. And the prayers were started. And everybody in that room practically was a sole survivor. And they started to weep as the individual prayers were said, and brought back to mind what terrible losses they had suffered. And it was an enormously emotional scene. One could not help but weep. And I looked at General Clay, and he was weeping. And I just thought what a wonderful man, to be so understanding. I mean, an army general, not like Patton, but he was maybe a military government I think type of general, so it was of a different stripe, yeah.

NP: Humanitarian?

ER: Well he had a different, you use different people I guess for that. But we needed for the fighting, generals like Patton. But that was a scene I'll never forget, 50 years ago.

NP: Most memorable.

ER: Yeah.

NP: These displaced persons were really guardians of fragments of their culture, whatever survived. Was there a cultural renaissance that you, in the theater or music or anything?

ER: Oh there was theater and music. We helped a couple of young guys, and I met one of them at this reunion in Lancaster. He's a successful business, a retired engineer consultant. And he had mentioned, I heard him tell somebody that he had been there in Berlin in '46 and he had set up, when he was 16 years old, some kind of little business with another 16-year-old kid, in Berlin! And I mean, he had been in Auschwitz. He'd lost his family. He and this other 16-year-old kid were there in Berlin without a family and what not but they--the survival, the reconstruction, the rebuilding your life instinct was so strong. There they were setting up a little business, which I didn't know about, in that camp. And they went out into the larger city and did a little bit of business from [unclear]. Oh, he told me and I forgot. So, it was really something to go back 50 years when they did it, and...

NP: Yes, indeed. Do you keep...

ER: In Germany...

NP: ...together the organization of Berliners that met in Lancaster?

ER: There is a notice I received from somebody, and it's called, maybe I have it here. 1946 survivors, Jewish survivors of, or 1946 Jewish Survivors in Berlin. And, or displaced persons in Berlin. But let me give you...

NP: I know you have a luncheon appointment and...

ER: Well that's all right. I've still got time.

NP: You just tell me and we will...

ER: Let me turn over to some of the things that I have. Now one is, this is--I was on the Board of Directors of *The Jewish Exponent* when I came back to Philadelphia. And this is, and I have remained here ever since, and this is dated 19-, October 29th, 1971. And

one of the things I was instrumental in was starting a little supplement to *The Exponent* called "Fourth Friday." Now that has long since gone out of existence, but I felt, and a couple of other people felt, that *The Exponent* was just insufficiently intellectual. They were just not getting the young members of the Jewish families, the educated, sophisticated people would not read *The Jewish Exponent*. It just didn't have the literary stuff. Anyway, for a short period we, I think primarily pressured *The Jewish Exponent* committee into starting something called "The Fourth Friday." And it did try to publish better stuff than you got just in *The Exponent*. And one of the things that we succeeded in getting published was this article on Dr. Joseph Schwartz, which I have copies of. Now Joe Schwartz was the-

Tape two, side two:

NP: ...side two, with Eli Rock.

ER: Dr. Joseph Schwartz was director of the JDC in post-, even in, of overseas, the overseas program of the JDC, the European program of the JDC in Europe, in the, and he worked behind the lines even before the end of the war. He performed a memorable, memorable service. And as I mentioned earlier he persuaded me to go back. He was my boss. Arthur Greenly was--and another guy who, and Jake Trobe, were supervisors. The, Herb Katsky, Jake Trobe, Arthur Greenly at various times were my supervisors when I worked in Europe. But Joe Schwartz was over all the head of the whole European program. And he had been operating before the end of the war underground to try to help Hungarian Jews and what not.

NP: Arthur Greenly?

ER: No, Joe Schwartz.

NP: Joe Schwartz, I'm sorry.

ER: Joe Schwartz was in Europe before the end of the war and, well, I was too. But I mean, earlier I--and behind the Nazi lines, and he'd go back and forth to help underground communities in various places. Just, I think I referred to him as a kind of Scarlet Pimpernel kind of character. Anyway, he came to Berlin on behalf of the Allied Jewish Appeal in 1971 and I wrote for *The Jewish Exponent*, or what was then what we called "The Fourth Friday," an article about Joe Schwartz. Now...

NP: I would like to have a copy. The Archive would.

ER: I made copies. I made copies. And I'm trying to find, in the first page [pause; noise] Now this is a summary of this article that was published by the *Jewish Digest*, condensed from *The Jewish Exponent*, all right? You...

NP: Thank you. Thank you.

ER: You can, that is the only copy I have of that, so if you could make copies of that and...

NP: And send it back to you.

ER: Yeah.

NP: O.K.

ER: Yeah. And this is "The Fourth Friday" [pause]. Now this is an excerpt from Yehuda Bauer's book, which refers to some of the work we did.

NP: Thank you.

ER: And I think I'll need to have that returned.

NP: Both of them, O.K. [pause] I will be in the Archive next Tuesday, and so I will copy everything and...

ER: Sure.

NP: Send it back immediately.

ER: All right, now this is in very poor condition. This is the first page of the

article I wrote about Joe Schwartz, continued on page seven. This is "The Fourth Friday" and here's page seven, and there was a page eight, which I was trying to find yesterday. This is page seven. Well I guess, no this is let me see, the first page.

NP: Would that be the page, this page here, right here?

ER: No, wait. No.

NP: No.

ER: No, wait a minute. What page is this? [pause; mumbling] Why don't we just turn it off.

NP: Certainly. Is there anything more that you would wish to add to the interview itself? You returned in 1950? Or your, you terminated...

ER: Well I returned to the States in '47.

NP: '47, and then with the Joint...

ER: And then I worked for the Joint for another three-and-a-half years, in New York, on these two areas, one being the Jewish claims from the people who had survived the ghetto...

NP: Yes.

ER: ...and the other, my major role, was to, there were some legal matters that I may not remember that I dealt with.

NP: That's O.K. That's all right.

ER: But the major function was helping to set up the Jewish restitution program, where particularly for heirless Jewish property, and in helping to set up this successor organization, which could then claim the unclaimed heirless Jewish property and which used it for Jewish purposes. Now I worked closely, that was a very satisfying kind of job, because we were successful for a while. We don't know how much we could never find, that the Germans kept, but we...

NP: I've seen, excuse me, have seen some press on the Swiss bank accounts.

ER: Even recently, yes, yeah. I don't, I never had any, and this is years later. But it's an indication of how difficult recovering Jewish property has been. They are still finding it in places like Switzerland that, because families were wiped out and nobody could claim, nobody knew about some of these assets because the whole family had been wiped out. And...

NP: Right. And I understand, you know, the original name was not the names on the account and...

ER: That's another, you're right. You're right, that's another problem.

NP: And so how to identify...

ER: Yeah, yeah. It's amazing that after, all these years after Hitler we're still finding effects of this total destruction what the various courses of damage that flow from something like this when you wipe out a whole community, including possible relatives and heirs who cannot know what the property was. And so the people who confiscated the property have often kept it. And we know there was, there were outbreaks of antisemitism

when people came back to Poland and wanted their houses. And they were, those houses were now occupied by other Poles who were angry at the Jews, who dared come back and reclaim this property. I mean it's...

NP: Elie Wiesel himself has often said that...

ER: Yeah, yeah.

NP: ...that you know, when he returned to his hometown...

ER: Yeah, yeah.

NP: Peered in in his window and saw people...

ER: Oh, really?

NP: ...in his house with the furniture.

ER: Ah, so you know that story.

NP: Extraordinary feeling.

ER: But let--go ahead.

NP: Your testimony will be used for generations to come.

ER: Really? Well I hope so!

NP: For scholarly research, and I guess history is just now being written, and more facts are being revealed. And every testimony is most important. And we thank you. We will send you a copy of this if you wish.

ER: Yes.

NP: And later on, as we have it transcribed, the transcription itself. And I thank you.

ER: Now Gratz is running this whole program?

NP: Yes, uh huh. I have some information here which I can leave you, about the Holocaust Oral History Archive at Gratz.

ER: Yeah. Now, I may find some stuff here that I'll want to send you. Do I have your address.

NP: Let me take this...

ER: Just write it on this. Just write it on this.

NP: All right, thank you.

ER: Let me just- [tape off]