

**‘Concerned not only with relief’:  
UNRRA’s work rehabilitating the  
Displaced Persons in the American zone  
of occupation in Germany, 1945-1947**

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the dissertation is to further our knowledge of the process of normalization in the displaced person (DP) camps in the American zone of occupation in Germany after the Second World War. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) welfare workers brought with them their years of education and training in the United States, primarily as professional social workers, to their work in these camps. They believed that their task was not only to feed and clothe the DPs, but to provide rehabilitation as well. They continually emphasized the importance of reinstating prewar social norms as the key element in rehabilitating the DPs. However, once they entered the DP camps in Germany, they soon discovered that the DPs had very different understandings of what constituted “normal life.” As a result, rehabilitation included not only reinstating prewar social norms, but also introducing the DPs to new ones. UNRRA focused their rehabilitation efforts on six aspects of DP care: housing, cleanliness, education, work, and respect for civil and criminal law.

While the DP camps were administered by UNRRA, they existed next to German communities who governed by Military Government and in the midst of their own reconstruction efforts. Given the immense wartime destruction, widespread shortages and the arrival of large numbers of German refugees, resources for all groups were at a premium. As a result, there were numerous opportunities for creative and broad-minded people to work at solving problems in unconventional ways. While UNRRA planning had provided some direction for its welfare workers, staff working in field came to play an important role in defining UNRRA’s policies. At the same time, their competing goals of rehabilitation and repatriation, as well as their at-times difficult relationship with the military, worked to constrain their efforts. Nevertheless, when UNRRA’s tenure as administrator of the DP camps ended in the summer of 1947, they left behind a legacy which highlighted the importance of the successful integration of refugees into their societies, and which made rehabilitation as central as relief in all future humanitarian responses.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CAD (Civil Affairs Division)

COSSAC (Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander)

DP (Displaced Person)

FNA (French National Archives, Paris)

IRO (International Refugee Organization)

NARA (National Archives and Research Administration, College Park, MD)

SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force)

UN (United Nations)

UNA (United Nations Archives, New York City)

UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration)

## Introduction

The United Nations Administration is concerned not only with Relief—that is with making provision for material needs—but also with Rehabilitation—that is with the amelioration of psychological and social suffering and dislocation... we each possess a practical day-to-day system by which we judge or interpret the conduct of others and make assumptions as to the probable motives and feelings which lie behind their actions. Each one of us, then, is something of a psychologist in the sense of possessing a very concrete view of human life.<sup>1</sup>

One of the Second World War's most important legacies was a refugee crisis for which the Allies were unprepared and which would take years to resolve. This crisis was the result of “a violent fantasy of racial mastery,” involving the movements of millions of people in order to create the Third Reich as Hitler envisioned it.<sup>2</sup> While Hitler did not succeed in the reorganization of the entire population of the continent, he did order the movement of millions of people, all in the name of his war of conquest. In the postwar period, it fell to the Allies to deal with the all of those people who had been dislocated by the war, including refugees and displaced persons (DPs). Initially, these two groups were differentiated according to their location: refugees were understood to be those people found within their prewar national borders, while DPs were those people discovered beyond the borders of their homeland. Allied military leaders believed this would be a short-term problem, that they could care for and repatriate all of the DPs in the six months following the war's end. Key, the political leaders agreed, was the need for a systematic and controlled response if the DPs were to be successfully reintegrated into their home communities. While the voluntary agencies in America and Europe would surely play an important role, only a new international organization, with a mandate covering both relief and rehabilitation, could provide the level of care that the DPs would require.

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<sup>1</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, dated June 1945, p. 14, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 12 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Displaced Persons; June 1945.”

<sup>2</sup> Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 2.

Following months of discussions, the agreement to form the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was signed by the representatives of forty-four countries on 9 November 1943.

To care for Europe's DPs, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) employed a staff of social workers with years of training who brought with them their own understandings of what the DPs would require in order to most easily reintegrate into their home countries. This training placed a strong emphasis on the importance of social norms. As sociologist Muzafer Sherif explains, social norms define how individuals fulfill their basic needs:

[w]hen we observe people in search for food, shelter, or mates, we conclude that these activities run in certain prescribed channels. People do eat, mate and enjoy the security of shelter; but how and under what circumstances they will eat, mate and enjoy shelter are, to a great extent, regulated by customs, traditions, laws and social standards. This is true for every individual, living in every society we know, primitive or highly developed. If an individual does not come under this category to any important degree, he cannot be said to be a member of society.<sup>3</sup>

UNRRA's staff continually emphasized the importance of reinstating social norms that had, theoretically, existed before the trauma of their wartime experiences. However, the social norms they sought to reinstitute were based on their years of training and experience working in the United States. When they entered the field in Germany, they soon learned that the (mainly eastern) European DPs had very different understandings of what was considered to be social norms. Despite their shared belief in the importance of normalizing life in the DP camps, the American social workers and the DPs had quite different understandings of how their rehabilitation should be accomplished and what "normal life" looked like.

In their study of the return of civilians to everyday life in the postwar period, Guillaume Piketty and Bruno Cabanes argue that the violence of the Second World War removed the barrier between battle and homefront and made it increasingly difficult for men and women alike to return to

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<sup>3</sup> Muzafer Sherif, *The Psychology of Social Norms* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 1.

pre-war relations in the “*intime*,” the intimate sphere where people build deep relationships and their understanding of self. The destruction of the home, as the space in which these intimate relationships develop, was an attack not only on the physical space, but also on the very identity of its inhabitants. This attack led to a sense of insecurity that was difficult to overcome in the postwar period. At war’s end, the return to civilian life was a chance to rebuild these relationships, but this was a complicated process. Each individual brought with them their memories, often idealized, of what life had been like before the war. The combination of these idealized memories and each individual’s wartime experiences meant that the renewal of intimate relations was a slow process fraught with difficulties. At its heart, each individual had to redefine what it meant to return to “normal life.” One of the fundamental goals of the postwar period was the normalization of relations between individuals. However, recreating these relationships did not mean merely reinstating prewar social norms verbatim in the postwar period; wartime experiences forced the redefinition of these norms. Cabanes and Piketty argue that much work has yet to be done in understanding this normalization of the intimate space in the postwar period.<sup>4</sup>

While this process of normalizing relations was one which all war-torn societies underwent in the postwar period, as soldiers and civilians alike returned home, the DPs struggled especially because their efforts to rebuild their lives began in Europe’s DP camps (referred to at the time as assembly centres), far removed from their homes. This was an especially difficult place to reinstitute normal life because these camps were only meant to be temporary, they were focused on supplying the DPs with the necessities of food and medical care, and the DPs did not govern these camps themselves. Nor were the DPs working to normalize their lives in a vacuum; the camps were peopled by numerous other actors who interacted with the DPs in many different ways. These various actors

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<sup>4</sup> Guillaume Piketty and Bruno Cabanes, “Introduction” in *Retour a L’Intime au Sortir de la Guerre*, ed. Guillaume Piketty and Bruno Cabanes (Paris: Talandier, 2009), 1-18.

included the local Germans who lived outside of the DP camps; the occupying forces who were responsible for food and housing for the DPs, as well as inspecting and policing the camps; and, finally, the welfare workers from UNRRA and other non-governmental organizations who interacted with the DPs on a regular basis. While the camps were initially set up and administered by the army, full responsibility for running the DP camps was passed on to UNRRA in the summer and fall of 1945. UNRRA staff came into contact with the DPs continuously as they worked to feed, clothe, and provide medical care to the DPs residing in their camps. As a result, UNRRA played an important role in helping the DPs normalize their lives.

The care of Europe's DPs was just one, and at first only a small, aspect of UNRRA's work. UNRRA was originally seen as a coordinating body for the postwar distribution of goods. While some nations had stockpiled goods during the war years due to the fact that they had been cut off from their traditional markets, other nations had been ransacked, their economies destroyed, and their food stores eradicated. UNRRA's role was to connect the relief suppliers with those states which required postwar relief. Its mandate also included helping to restore agricultural and industrial production. As the British government made clear, "UNRRA might restore water supply systems damaged by bombing, but could not install a new sewage system in a town which never had a sewage system."<sup>5</sup> In other words, UNRRA's purpose was to help restore essential services, but not to introduce new ones. As an organization, UNRRA had a global scope. It operated in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, although it did not carry out the same mission everywhere. In Asia, UNRRA focused its efforts on supplying much needed food, medical supplies and farming equipment to

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<sup>5</sup> "Helping the People to Help Themselves: the Story of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration," H.M. Stationary Office, (London, 1944) quoted in Jessica Reinisch, "Preparing for a new World Order: UNRRA and the International Management of Refugees" in *Post War Europe: Refugees: Exile and Resettlement, 1945-50*, Gale Digital Collection, [www.gale.com/DigitalCollections](http://www.gale.com/DigitalCollections).

China, although they also organized a public health program, employing 189 staff.<sup>6</sup> In the Middle East, UNRRA took over the administration of refugee camps from the British and American armies in Egypt, Syria and Palestine.

Within Europe, UNRRA carried out two tasks. First, it supplied food, clothing, and other equipment to sixteen receiving countries, of which the largest share of this aid went to Greece, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy and Poland. These countries were also host to small liaison missions which advised on health and welfare as well. UNRRA's second task in Europe was the administration of the DP camps. This was originally envisioned as a short-term task which involved caring for the DPs only until such a time as they could be repatriated. This was in keeping with the wishes of the Soviet Union, who wanted to ensure that all of their nationals were returned to them, regardless of their individual wishes, and who made their own involvement contingent on this point. Despite the short time-frame in which UNRRA was expected to operate, their staff spent much effort planning for not only the relief but also the rehabilitation of those people displaced by the war beyond the borders of their home country. The Soviet Union took no part in the planning for postwar rehabilitation; they did not believe that it was necessary given the short time-frame between liberation and repatriation. Therefore, while they were very involved in overall policymaking, Soviet officials played no part in discussions of welfare. As a result, the welfare work in the DP camps was very much an Anglo-American effort.

This dissertation is an institutional history of UNRRA from the point of view of the welfare workers. It is not a study of DP experiences in Germany. Rather, it seeks to better understand the successes and failures of UNRRA's program of rehabilitation through the welfare workers' interactions with the DPs. This study begins with the postwar planning, which began in 1943, and

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<sup>6</sup> Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 289.

continues until the summer of 1947, when UNRRA handed over responsibility for the DP camps to the International Refugee Organization (IRO). In the intervening period, Germany was invaded and divided into four zones of occupation which were ruled by American, British, French and Soviet forces. Following the initial period of military advance, Military Government was imposed in the American zone of occupation.

As this dissertation makes clear, the majority of displaced persons were repatriated in the spring and summer of 1945, leaving behind a group of so-called hard-core displaced persons in the DP camps in Germany when UNRRA assumed administrative control for them in the autumn of 1945. The hard-core DPs numbered approximately one million in the western zones of occupation in Germany. They were comprised of nationals from across eastern Europe who all shared the same desire to avoid repatriation to their former homes. In the spring of 1946, even as repatriation efforts had started anew, the DP camps witnessed a new influx of arrivals, the so-called ‘infiltrates.’ The infiltrates were those eastern European Jews who had survived the war either in hiding, fighting with the partisans, or in the Soviet Union, and who decided, upon returning to their homes in late 1945 and early 1946, that they could not remain there. Anti-Semitism remained strong throughout much of eastern Europe in the postwar months. The infiltrates traveled to Germany, and the American zone of occupation in particular, in hopes of resettlement abroad (especially to Palestine) – and so added to the number and complexity of the hard-core DP population with whom UNRRA was working and contributing to the “long-term” nature of the DP “problem.”

While UNRRA's mandate was to encourage repatriation first and foremost, the fact that the hard-core DPs were very resistant to any notion of repatriation meant that the reality was that the remaining DPs were going to be in the DP camps in Germany for a while, and this opened up the opportunity for UNRRA to turn its focus to a program of rehabilitation. This dissertation focuses on

the American zone of occupation because this was the zone in which the program of rehabilitation was most fully implemented. Similarly, it focuses on the UNRRA period of administrative responsibility for the DP camps because this was the time in which DP policy was set. The end of the war and the first months of the Allied occupation of Germany was a time of flux. Despite the effort that had gone into postwar planning, conditions on the ground were constantly changing and individuals were forced to respond to problems as they arose. This meant that there was considerable opportunity for army officers and welfare workers alike to institute protocols other than those that had been previously outlined for them. According to its agreement with the military, UNRRA was permitted to operate in the western zones of occupation in Germany, but only at the request of the military. They remained under military command throughout their tenure. However, this did not inhibit UNRRA workers from taking on the challenge of caring for the DPs. Given the mass destruction, widespread shortages and increasingly large numbers of people on the move, those in positions of administrative authority did the best that they could with limited means. Although some struggled with the long hours and primitive conditions, many more rose to the challenge of solving problems in these less than ideal circumstances. Over the course of UNRRA's tenure, as supply lines stabilized and the chain of command was instituted, more formalized operating procedures were introduced.

UNRRA faced political pressures from many sides. As William I. Hitchcock makes clear, “[s]ome American political figures questioned the wisdom of spending money on assisting people such as Poles, Ukrainians and Yugoslavs who seemed increasingly pro-Soviet and ideologically hostile to the West.”<sup>7</sup> Many Americans also saw UNRRA as a Soviet-controlled organization pushing Soviet interests. As relations between the two superpowers cooled and Cold War tensions

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<sup>7</sup> William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 216.

escalated, UNRRA faced increasing pressure to close down the DP camps. The two possible solutions were repatriation, which would have to be achieved through the use of force, or resettlement. The Soviet Union strongly opposed resettlement as the vast majority of the hard-core DPs were either citizens of Poland or from areas controlled by the Soviet Union, and in both cases their governments wished to have them returned. As a signatory to the UNRRA agreement, they vetoed the possibility of altering UNRRA's mandate. Therefore, in 1946 the United Nations created the IRO as a successor agency of UNRRA, and one with a mandate which allowed both repatriation and resettlement abroad; the Soviet Union was not a member. While the handover was first planned for 1 January 1947, the IRO took full control of the DP camps on 1 July 1947. Shortly thereafter UNRRA ceased operations. However, UNRRA had established rehabilitation as a legitimate goal for both this and future humanitarian crises.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first two chapters outline the planning for the postwar period that was conducted by both military and civilian planners. Chapter one examines military plans for the postwar occupation of Germany. The document that outlined the plans, Administrative Memorandum No. 39, was developed as a Standard Operating Procedure for military personnel. This document outlined basic measures to be instituted in the care of civilians found beyond their borders, but these plans failed to take into account the large numbers and the long time frame that their care encompassed. This chapter highlights the strained relationship that existed between UNRRA and the military from the start and the way in which the military attempted to keep UNRRA from playing any role in the planning process. Put simply, the military expected to return all civilians to their homes within six months after the end of the war, and believed that they could accomplish this goal without the help of a civilian organization. Chapter two analyses UNRRA's own efforts at planning for the postwar period. While UNRRA staff in Washington were busy

attempting to connect with the military, staff at UNRRA's European Regional Office in London were busy defining UNRRA's goals in terms of both relief and rehabilitation. They came to understand rehabilitation as the process of normalizing life for the DPs, and they focused on explaining how this might be accomplished. As well, officials in both offices began recruitment campaigns, although these met with limited success in the beginning. Once recruited, staff underwent training at at least one of UNRRA's training facilities, located on the outskirts of Washington D.C., in Reading (just outside of London), or, immediately before deployment into the field, at the UNRRA Training Centre in Granville, France. Despite these efforts, UNRRA staff and military personnel alike arrived in the field ill-prepared for the task of caring for millions of DPs.

Chapter three addresses initial military and UNRRA experiences with the DPs and the handover to UNRRA of full administrative responsibility for the DP camps, focusing on the events of the spring and summer of 1945. When the military arrived in each new town, they implemented a standard procedure for governing the local population and the DPs. They identified buildings to be used for DP housing, and, if necessary, evacuated the local population to make way for them. The military also liberated the concentration camps and provided food and medical care for the survivors. They had expected all civilians to follow the stand still order that they had announced, and were dismayed when former labourers and concentration camp survivors alike took to the roads and headed for home. While the military had expected to empty the DP camps within six months of the end of hostilities, over the course of the summer of 1945 this goal appeared increasingly illusory. Transportation delays and problems receiving large numbers at the border combined to slow the process. As well, soldiers on the ground made it clear that they were not interested in continuing to care for the DPs. As a result, the American military handed increasing responsibility for the DPs over to UNRRA, the organization that they had assumed during the planning phase would be unneeded.

By 1 October 1945 UNRRA had taken over administrative responsibility for all of the DP camps in the American occupation zone of Germany. UNRRA staff could begin implementing their plans for rehabilitation.

The last three chapters explore UNRRA's work rehabilitating the DPs. In the planning period, UNRRA defined rehabilitation as a return to the social norm. Chapter four analyses these initial efforts. UNRRA's first rehabilitative work with the DPs centered on four aspects of daily life: housing, personal hygiene, education, and employment. They met resistance in each of these aspects. In the case of housing, UNRRA was at the mercy of the military authorities, who were responsible for allocating all housing and disagreed with UNRRA on which groups to prioritize. UNRRA's efforts to restore social norms concerning personal hygiene and general camp cleanliness met resistance from the military and the DPs alike. For the military, the DPs were not living up to their exacting standards. For the DPs, UNRRA and military expectations concerning personal cleanliness did not align with their own prewar understandings of personal hygiene. In this case, it is clear that UNRRA was introducing new social norms, not reinstating previous ones. UNRRA and DP goals concerning education were more closely aligned, but again UNRRA met resistance from the military as they sought to provide the DPs with adequate supplies to run DP schools. Finally, the most problematic aspect of rehabilitation in this period proved to be UNRRA's understanding of work. Both UNRRA and the military believed that the DPs should work. However, again the military caused problems when UNRRA requested supplies for camp work projects – there was a limited amount of supplies to go to DPs and German firms alike. The DPs were willing to work inside of the camps, but generally refused to work for German businesses. As a result, rehabilitation through work proved problematic as the DPs proved resistant.

Chapters five and six address UNRRA's efforts to reinforce the importance of law and order amongst the DPs. Chapter five focuses on UNRRA's efforts at reintroducing civil law to the DPs, with a strong emphasis on the importance of legal marriage. According to German law, no marriage was deemed legal unless it had been registered with the proper local officer, the German registrar; the same was true of births and deaths. While the DPs were not at first concerned with obtaining the necessary legal documents, UNRRA saw otherwise. The welfare workers believed that holding proper legal documents which verified an individual DP's identity was not only important for all of that DP's future dealings with their home government, but also as an important part of rehabilitation. "Deviations" such as common law marriage, family desertion, illegitimacy and parental neglect were strongly discouraged. What neither UNRRA nor the DPs were prepared for was the immense difficulties many people faced in their attempts to gain these legal documents. Chapter six addresses UNRRA's efforts to introduce a respect for criminal law. While the military authorities were lenient towards the DPs during the summer of 1945, by the autumn they began prosecuting those DPs who broke the law. UNRRA sought to teach the DPs to be law-abiding citizens. However, they faced numerous challenges in this task, most notably in curbing DP participation in the black market. Even as they sought to discourage the DPs, UNRRA also worked to ensure that DP rights were upheld when they were tried for these crimes.

This project addresses three interrelated bodies of literature, and seeks to fill a void in each of them. The first body focuses on postwar Germany, its occupation and its reconstruction. The first people to write the history of postwar Germany were the soldiers who took part in the occupation and those military historians who were interested in American occupation policy in Germany.<sup>8</sup> These

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<sup>8</sup> See Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956); Forrest C. Pogue, *Supreme Command: United States Army in World War II: the European Theater of Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1954); Franklin M. Davis, *Come as a conqueror: the United States Army's occupation of Germany, 1945-1949* (New York:

early studies focused on institutions and policies. They began their studies with the military phase, describing in detail the invasion of Germany and the collapse of the German army. These studies placed a strong emphasis on the successful cooperation between the British and American governments and armed forces during the invasion (as they worked together under the auspices of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, or SHAEF), in caring for the civilian population and reorganizing local German government, all despite severe shortages. A strong focus was also placed on the policies instituted by Military Government and the relative success of implementing democracy in Germany so soon after the fall of Hitler. While plans for the care and repatriation of the DPs also appeared in these accounts, the role played by UNRRA and later the IRO was criticized in many instances. Emphasis was placed on the fact that it took more UNRRA staff than military personnel to administer the same assembly centres and that these new international organizations were therefore highly inefficient. There was little recognition of the nature of UNRRA's work and the services which they provided. These studies also made clear that in the beginning the care of the DPs was the first priority, but by 1946 the Allied focus had shifted to German reconstruction, especially in the face of the emerging threat of communism. American political leaders believed that the best way of halting the spread of communism was by supporting economic growth and stability in those countries at risk of Soviet interference. The DP question soon fell off the radar.

An important theme to emerge in discussions of the postwar occupation of Germany has been a study of the methods and successes of denazification.<sup>9</sup> The most public form of denazification was

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Macmillan, 1967); John Gimbel, *The American occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968); Harold Zink, *The United States in Germany, 1944-1955* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974); Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944-1946* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1975); and Edward N. Peterson, *The American Occupation of Germany: Retreat to Victory* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1977).

<sup>9</sup> See Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy imposed: U.S. occupation policy and the German public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); David Monod, *Settling Scores: German Music, Denazification, and the*

the Trials of the Major War Criminals by the International Military Tribunal, which took place in Nuremberg between November 1945 and October 1946. Several trials of lesser Nazi officials took place between 1946 and 1949. More generally, the policy of denazification referred to the removal of Nazi party members from positions of power throughout Germany, and also the promotion of democracy in Germany. In the removal of former Nazi Party members, denazification was fraught with difficulties as the occupying forces needed the help of German specialists who were inevitably former Nazis in order to get the government and the economy functioning once more. Thus, Military Government worked to remove high-level policymakers, but left the lower-level civil servants in their positions. Denazification was also a very time-consuming and costly undertaking. As a result, enthusiasm diminished over time.

Another important theme to emerge in the history of the occupation of Germany concerned the experience of defeat and liberation for soldiers, German refugees and civilians alike. Millions of German soldiers never returned from the field, but for those who did, the homecoming was fraught with difficulties.<sup>10</sup> The soldiers did not return all at once. The sick POWs were the first to return, followed by those being held by British and American forces. The majority of German POWs captured by the Red Army were forced to help with Soviet reconstruction efforts, and many did not return until the late 1940s, with the last only coming home in 1955. As a result, the process of reintegrating the soldiers into their communities and their families took place not over weeks and months, but over the course of years. The communities and families to which they were returning had changed dramatically in their absence.

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*Americans, 1945-1953* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005); and Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> See *The Miracle Years: A cultural history of West Germany, 1945-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); and *Retour a L'Intime au Sortir de la Guerre* ed. Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty (Paris, Tallandier, 2009).

Similarly, the arrival and integration of the ethnic German refugees and expellees, known as the *Volksdeutsche*, is a growing field of interest amongst historians.<sup>11</sup> German refugees had begun flooding westward in the advance of the Red Army in early 1945. Ethnic Germans who had been settled by the German government in the east during the war years as part of the goal of *Lebensraum* were forced out of their homes, alongside members of German communities that had existed in eastern Europe for generations. Together, they took to the roads and made their way into Germany or were shipped out by the governments. Upon arrival in Germany the Allies made them the responsibility of the local German authorities. Nearly nine million settled in the western zones of occupation, further straining the already scarce resources.

German women in turn had their own experience of liberation. Several studies point to three important experiences of German women in the postwar period: rape by invading armies, clearing away the rubble, and sexual relations with occupying forces.<sup>12</sup> While never entirely absent, a renewed discussion of the mass rape of German women at the end of the war was sparked by the revelation in 2003 of the identity of the author of *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City*.<sup>13</sup> Discussions surrounding the details of the account have reopened debate over how women experienced and understood defeat and occupation, and especially how these experiences differed from those of men. Those men who were present at the time had no way of protecting the female victims from the invading soldiers. The image of the all-powerful German man that the Nazis had

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<sup>11</sup> See Ian Connor, *Refugees and Expellees in Post-war Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> See Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A history of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Elizabeth Heineman, *What difference does a husband make? Women and marital status in Nazi and postwar Germany* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999); Maria Hohn, *GIs and Frauleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina University Press, 2002); and Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City*, transl. Philip Boehm (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2005).

spent so many years building up was shattered. The experiences of the *Trümmerfrauen* (literally ‘women of the rubble’) also defined the immediate postwar period as a time in which German women alone were the ones clearing the rubble and attempting to put their homes back together. The occupation forces assigned the task to members of former Nazi organizations, while others volunteered for the task as it meant extra rations. Men were noticeably absent.

A third topic of discussion to emerge on women in the postwar period in Germany concerns the relationship between German women and Allied soldiers, especially American soldiers. These women entered into relationships with soldiers for various reasons, including the possible economic benefits as well as the companionship that the soldiers provided. However, to German society as large, these women were labelled fraternizers and prostitutes. Historians emphasize that this period was often seen by Germans at the time as one of ethical decline, in contrast to the supposedly moral era of Nazi rule. This was despite the fact that the DPs – living reminders of German wartime atrocities – continued to live in camps located next to and sometimes in the middle of German cities. While the occupation authorities soon turned their focus away for punishing the Germans and towards fighting the spread of communism, the DPs remained uncomfortable reminders of Nazi wartime policies.

The second historiographical body of literature that this project encompasses is the discussion of the displaced persons themselves. This is a relatively new field of inquiry; little was written which focused directly on the DPs in the decades following the Second World War. The first works to appear were those which focused on individual ethnic or religious groups. This research has brought together discussions of DP experiences during the war, their lives in the DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy, and their postwar emigration. It has focused on each individual ethnic group’s social, political and cultural activity in the DP camps. Historians have examined the foundation of

kindergartens, schools, newspapers, churches and synagogues. The DPs as a whole saw this as a period of religious renewal and the churches became not only centers of worship, but also representations of their national heritage. Many of these historians have also been interested in the artistic output of these groups, including the work of painters, writers, musicians, and playwrights who took advantage of the conditions of relative freedom of expression to continue with work which had often been halted during the war years.

The discussion of Jewish postwar experiences has focused on Jewish displaced persons as Holocaust survivors, on the role of Zionism in the Jewish DP camps, and on the eventual creation of the state of Israel.<sup>14</sup> While much early Holocaust literature spoke of Holocaust survivors as a singular group with a single, shared Holocaust experience, recent studies have emphasized the fact that Jews survived the war years in many different ways: while some experienced life in the ghettos and concentration camps and on the death marches, other took on Aryan identities, joined partisan groups, or were evacuated into Soviet territory. When interviewed about their Holocaust experiences, survivors often mentioned their time in the Allied DP camps as well, but often only as an interlude between their wartime experiences and their postwar resettlement. Another important theme to emerge in this literature has been the contact that the Jewish DPs had with the local German population. While the DP camps were previously depicted as ‘independent enclaves,’ separate from German cities and towns, recently historians have emphasized the fact that the Jewish DPs had contacts with the nearby German population in many instances, whether visiting the local hospital or

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<sup>14</sup> See Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish lives in postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Margarete Myers Feinstein, *Holocaust survivors in postwar Germany, 1945-1957* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Angelika Konigseder and Juliane Wetzel, *Waiting for Hope: Jewish Displaced Persons in Post-World War II Germany* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001); Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and “*We are Here*”: *New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, ed. Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

taking part in black market trading; they did not exist entirely independently of their German neighbours. A third important theme to emerge in the literature on Jewish DPs is the role of Zionism in the DP camps and its effect on resettlement decisions. For many, the goal was resettlement in Palestine. For the vast majority Jewish DPs, return to their homelands was not an option. They waited in the DPs camps in Germany until they could either emigrate to Palestine and help in the building of a Jewish state, or else obtain visas to settle abroad elsewhere. However, recently historians have challenged the argument that the creation of the state of Israel, and especially the role played by Zionists in the DP camps, was an inevitable result of the events of the Second World War. They argue that the communal structure of the kibbutzim (communal farms) begun in Germany in anticipation of a future life in Israel provided the DPs with structure and community, and were less influential in one's final resettlement decision than previously believed.

For the Ukrainian, Polish and Baltic DPs, research has highlighted expanding postwar Soviet influence in eastern Europe and its impact on repatriation options.<sup>15</sup> Much of this literature has focused on political life in the DP camps. The Polish DPs were visited in the DP camps by representatives of both the Communist and exiled Polish governments, until July 1945, when the Western Allies recognized the Communist-led government in Warsaw as the official government. Soviet authorities demanded that repatriation of their own nationals take precedence over peoples from elsewhere. While at first committed to a policy of repatriation regardless of DP wishes, the American government revoked this policy in January 1946 following vehement protests from the

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<sup>15</sup> On Ukrainian DPs, see *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II* ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw et al. (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1992); Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada and the Migration of Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); and Marta Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); on Polish DPs, see Anna Jaroszynska-Kirchmann, "The Mobilization of American Polonia for the Cause of the Displaced Persons" *Polish American Studies* 58:1 (Spring 2001): 29-62; and Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002); on Baltic DPs, see Milda Danys, *DP: Lithuanian immigration to Canada after the second World War* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986).

DPs, including several suicides.<sup>16</sup> This eventual refusal to forcibly repatriate the DPs left the international community responsible for finding resettlement opportunities for them abroad. However, little headway was made in loosening immigration quotas before 1948.

The problem of statelessness has also been an important theme to emerge in the literature. The redrawing of the borders of eastern Europe at the end of the war meant a change in nationality for millions of people. In the territory annexed to the Ukraine, Belorussia and Lithuania, ethnic Poles were forcibly moved into Poland between 1944 and 1946. Former Poles from these regions living in the DP camps in Germany found themselves stateless. The same was true of the DPs from the Baltic states who refused to recognize Soviet control of their homelands. Finally, the scholarship on Ukrainian and Baltic DPs has also emphasized the important role that the experience of the DP camps played in the later lives of DPs who resettled outside of Europe. The DP immigrants brought with them their wartime and postwar experiences, as well as the political beliefs that they had formed in the DP camps. Even after resettlement, Ukrainians, Poles and Balts alike hoped that they would one day live to see their home states freed from Soviet domination.

Alongside the histories of individual DP groups, there have also been several studies focused on specific regions and DP camps. The studies of camps and groups of camps located in the same *Land, Kreis* (county) or even town have allowed historians to focus on the similarities between the different ethnic and religious groups in a way that was not previously possible.<sup>17</sup> Identity has become a particularly important theme in these works. The DP camps proved an important site for defining

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<sup>16</sup> See Mark R. Elliot, *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in their Repatriation* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1982); and Nicholas V. Feodoroff, *Forced Repatriation: The Tragedy of the Civilized World* (Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> See Judith Tydor Baumel, *Kibbutz Buchenwald: Survivors and Pioneers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Laura J. Hilton, "Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1952" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001); and *Jewish Displaced Persons in Camp Bergen-Belsen, 1945-1950*, ed. Erik Somers and Rene Kok (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004).

each group's identity through shared history and culture, as well as their united refusal to accept repatriation. Studies of individual camps have provided a more detailed account of day-to-day life in the DP camps. They describe not only where the DPs slept, what they ate, and what activities they participated in, but also how they felt about life in the camps. While earlier histories have followed a top-down approach, emphasizing policies put in place by the military authorities for their care, historians have begun to ask how the DPs themselves responded to these policies and helped shape them.

The third historiographical body of literature with which this project intersects is a discussion of international organization and the groundbreaking role played by early postwar institutions. This historiography began with institutional histories.<sup>18</sup> In histories of both UNRRA and the IRO, historians have looked at the difficulties associated with the creation of international organizations with no institutional experience and an international staff with disparate understandings of the task before them. Histories of both organizations begin with discussions of the unique nature of the post-WWII refugee crisis. They stress both the scale of displacement and the changing way in which the international community approached the issue of refugees. While efforts during the interwar period were organized by the League of Nations but funded privately, in the postwar period the care of the refugees was funded by governments (the United States was the largest donor to both UNRRA and the IRO) and organized by newly-formed international organizations. Histories of both institutions have worked to highlight their successes while also outlining the many challenges faced. They can be seen in part as responses to the military histories which negatively compared UNRRA's efficiency to that of the military.

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<sup>18</sup> See *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* ed. George Woodbridge et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 3 vols.; and Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialised Agency of the United Nations, Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

The first organizational histories focused on the policies formed at Headquarters and then implemented on the ground by each organization. Alongside these organizational histories, several personal accounts of relief workers stationed in Europe in the postwar period have added to our understanding of the postwar period.<sup>19</sup> These accounts explain not only how relief workers experienced their time serving with UNRRA and the IRO, but also highlight the important relationships that developed between the DPs and those who left their homes to work with them. More recent studies have looked to combine the two approaches, adding the voices of the welfare workers to the history of these organizations, and moving away from the top-down approach used by the authors of the first institutional histories.<sup>20</sup> They make clear that UNRRA staff in particular faced an enormous task with no clear administrative guidelines and only a very short timeframe in which to realize their very ambitious goals. Those people who applied to work with the DPs in Germany did so knowing that this would be neither traditional missionary nor military work, but a new form of international service, and one in which women were encouraged to take part. These histories also shed light on the changing nature of UNRRA's goals. While UNRRA was originally planned as strictly a supply organization in many of its missions, care for the DPs soon became an increasingly important aspect of its work, requiring reorganization at headquarters and the European Regional Office in order to accommodate this change in focus. The fact that welfare workers in the DP camps reported to the director of Displaced Persons Operations, and not the director of the Welfare Division, was just one of the many administrative complications that soon became apparent and problematic.

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<sup>19</sup> See Marvin Klemme, *The Inside Story of UNRRA: An experience in internationalism* (New York: Lifetime Editions, 1949); Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953); Muriel Knox Doherty, *Letters from Belsen: An Australian Nurse's Experiences with the Survivors of War* (London: Allen and Unwin, 2000); Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004); and Bernard Warach, *Hope: A Memoir* (Indiana: iUniverse, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); and Ben Shepherd, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011).

Another important theme to emerge in these histories is the important distinction between UNRRA's mandate to repatriate and the IRO's mandate to repatriate or resettle. While UNRRA's efforts necessarily had to focus on preparing the DPs for reintegration into their home countries, the IRO could turn its attention towards the people and the skills desired by resettlement countries.

The historiography of international organizations has worked to integrate both UNRRA and the IRO into the larger history of the formation of the United Nations system of international organization.<sup>21</sup> This system brings together individuals and organizations to engage in activities not taken up by national governments. UNRRA and the IRO were some of the first such institutions, as these histories make clear. Many of these histories begin by examining the League of Nations, formed in 1919 as part of the peace settlement. The mandate of the League of Nations included security matters, but also issues concerning workers' rights and health care, and the United Nations sought to build upon this precedent by creating a framework of international cooperation for dealing with issues of concern to its members. In their postwar planning, the Allies foresaw the need to have agencies in place even before the end of hostilities. Dealing with the plight of the postwar refugees in particular played heavily in the early discussions for such a postwar framework. However, studies on postwar planning have focused on decisions made at headquarters, and not on the work of those in the field.

Bringing together issues that have been raised separately in each of these historiographical discussions, most recently several scholars have worked to address the changing nature of the

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<sup>21</sup> See Inis L. Claude Jr. *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York: Random House, 1964); *Frameworks for International Cooperation* ed. by A. J. R. Groom and Paul Taylor (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990); Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the making of the contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 2003); and Mark Mazower, *No enchanted palace: The end of empire and the ideological origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

relationships between all of the actors involved in postwar Germany: the military occupation authorities, the local German population, the nascent German government, the non-governmental organizations, and the DPs themselves. This literature addresses the question of how the DPs navigated and negotiated with each of these groups, and therefore asserted their agency. This literature challenges the previous view of the DPs as pawns of the superpowers and it looks to highlight the ways in which the DPs were able to influence policy.

One of the ways in which DP agency has come to the forefront is in discussions of fertility and the recreation of families.<sup>22</sup> The study of Jewish family life in the DP camps has placed a strong emphasis on the relationship between victimization, guilt, sex, and childbirth. Marriage and childbirth was a means of not only proving to oneself that they were capable of having children (and that their wartime experiences had not rendered them barren). It was also proof to the Germans living nearby that Jewish life would continue, despite Hitler's best efforts, and that more generally postwar life was a period of rebirth for everyone who had survived. While earlier histories portrayed the DP camps as autonomous communities, these works have highlighted the many different ways in which the DPs not only came into contact with the German population, but used these interactions to assert their entitlement to victim status. While these interactions were originally downplayed or ignored entirely, historians have pointed out that they had tremendous import in how the DPs understood their wartime experiences and their postwar claims. Similarly, historians have begun to ask questions about how families were reconstructed in the postwar period. Debates raged at the time between UNRRA staff, military officials, the voluntary agencies and the DPs themselves over how best to care for children whose parents had not survived the war or who could not be located. Questions surrounding legal identity and citizenship show that 'the best interests of the child' was a phrase that

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<sup>22</sup> See Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

could be understood in many different ways, depending on who was uttering it. Differences between European and American understandings of child welfare led to conflicts between all of the groups involved over who could legitimately claim the unaccompanied children uncovered in Germany's orphanages and those living with German families.

Alongside discussions of fertility and family life, historians have also begun to reassess the ways in which the DPs identified and represented themselves to the military authorities, the aid organizations, and the German population.<sup>23</sup> While the military and the aid organizations created policies that at least initially treated the DPs as one group, based on their wartime displacement from their homes, the DPs instead formed committees to present specific narratives which differentiated themselves from the other DP nationalities according to their experiences with both National Socialism and Soviet communism. This self-identification emphasized both their unique cultures and their different political goals. These histories make clear that Polish, Ukrainian and Soviet DPs had very different reasons for refusing repatriation. Still other historians have worked to place the experiences of the DPs within the larger Cold War framework. While earlier histories portrayed the DPs as objects of superpower policy, these historians have worked to emphasize the important impact of DP political mobilization on these policies. The DPs presented their own narratives of persecution in order to justify their refusal to repatriate. These narratives in turn helped define who was eligible for aid and how they would relate to the occupation authorities and the humanitarian personnel who supplied it.

This study is in many ways a counterpoint to this literature. While much work has been done on the role played by the DPs in determining their fate, nothing has yet been written on those welfare workers in the field who interacted with them on a daily basis. My goal is to attempt to fill that void.

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<sup>23</sup> Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) and G. Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

This dissertation draws on archival sources, memoirs and secondary literature. The archival sources include the holdings of the United Nations Archive (New York City), the National Archives and Records Administration (College Park, MD), and the International Refugee Organization records, held at the National Archives (Paris, France). This dissertation seeks to address the question of how the welfare workers understood the task of rehabilitation, how they planned for this process, and how this program was modified in the field once the welfare workers began to interact with the DPs. UNRRA was the first international humanitarian agency to see rehabilitation as part of its mission. While its staff had a very idealistic understanding of the task before them as they headed into the field, their interactions with the DPs and the very real, practical constraints that came with operating in the field led them to make many pragmatic choices, thus reshaping their conception of the process of rehabilitation.

# Chapter 1

## Planning for postwar relief

The problem in so far as SHAEF is concerned is that discussions take place at so many levels... discussions at the lower level were purely formative and therefore inconsequential to UNRRA's possible use.<sup>1</sup>

The period till April 1945 was one of difficulty and frustration for every branch of U.N.R.R.A... We were authorized to undertake the care and maintenance of camps and to arrange for sorting out and repatriating the various nationals in them. But we were not allowed to commence operations until the Supreme Army Command authorized us.<sup>2</sup>

In short, the Director General had to collect a staff appropriate, both in numbers and skills, to undertake an unknown number of undefined relief and rehabilitation operations in an unknown number of countries at unknown dates.<sup>3</sup>

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was an organization founded on a belief in international cooperation and goodwill. It was the brainchild of British and American bureaucrats who remembered the problems left behind by the First World War, problems such as displacement, famine and the spread of disease, and who wanted to limit their effects after the Second World War. Despite this foresight in their overall policy, from its start UNRRA was an organization reacting to events. In the period from its founding in November 1943 until it was called into action by SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, the joint Anglo-American military organization) in early 1945, UNRRA struggled to form cogent plans for the displaced persons problem in postwar Europe. Their difficulties sprang from the dependent nature of their relationship with the military authorities: UNRRA could not develop policy independent of SHAEF. From this relationship of reliance arose two main challenges: contacts were being made on too many

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<sup>1</sup> Informal Notes of Meeting of Heads of Divisions, Held in Room 1502, 15, Portland Place, on Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, at 3 p.m., in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 19 "Relations with the Military 1944-1948."

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Leith-Ross, *Money Talks: Fifty Years of International Finance* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1968), 305.

<sup>3</sup> *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* ed. George Woodbridge et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 1:248.

levels, and UNRRA was not kept abreast of military planning in a significant way. For UNRRA, it was particularly difficult to ascertain which agreements were binding, and which were merely “formative.” UNRRA required information from SHAEF in order to begin their planning, but they were consistently kept in the dark on army plans. Requests for information were either postponed or ignored entirely. Despite a lack of information, SHAEF pressed UNRRA early on to have teams ready to go at a moment’s notice, but not before it gave the official nod. As a result, UNRRA had great difficulty recruiting and training enough employees, as well as problems at the beginning with low morale because there was nothing for individual UNRRA officers to do until they were called forward with the army units. No official agreement outlining UNRRA’s relationship with SHAEF was signed until the spring of 1944, finally detailing UNRRA’s responsibilities and role. Even after the agreement was signed, the timing and nature of UNRRA’s work remained unclear. What this meant for UNRRA planners was that they had little understanding of when they would enter the field, what they would be expected to do, how many staff they would require, what their exact duties would be or what to expect on the ground. This made it particularly difficult for them to recruit staff and to formulate policies. Nevertheless, with these questions unanswered, UNRRA did its best to plan for post-war Europe.

On 9 November 1943 the agreement to form the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was signed at the White House. Forty-four nations agreed to take part. However, the discussions that led to such an organization’s formation had begun several years earlier, before the United States had even entered the war. “We shall do our utmost,” declared Winston Churchill, in an August 1940 speech, “to encourage the building up of reserves of food all over the world, so that there will always be held up before the people of Europe... the certainty that the shattering of Nazi

power will bring to them all immediate food, freedom and peace.”<sup>4</sup> Following this speech, Churchill formed the Committee on Surpluses in order to ascertain precisely what such a promise entailed. The Committee had another purpose as well: the British government was made aware that producers throughout the British Commonwealth had been adversely affected by the war which had cut off their traditional trade routes. As a result, these producers had been left with large surpluses of goods which they could not sell locally. The Committee hoped that it could coordinate efforts to buy up these surplus goods and use them in the postwar period as part of their promise to provide “food, freedom and peace.” The British government recognized “the present embarrassments of oversea producers deprived by the war of many of their normal markets” and thus planned to stockpile the goods for postwar relief, thus solving two problems at once.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, they did not have the capital required to buy the surplus goods. Therefore, the British presented this idea to the American government, and together they ultimately created the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-war Requirements to jointly take on this task.

Both the British and the American governments were already engaged in independent relief efforts at the time. The United Kingdom had formed the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration (MERRA) in July 1942 in order to care for more than 35,000 refugees, principally from the Balkans, in six camps. MERRA was administered by some 200 British army officers and soldiers, and provided food, clothing and other necessities to the largely European population of the camps.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the Americans had created the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFFRO) to organize American relief for victims of the war. In November 1942 Herbert H. Lehman, former governor of New York, was appointed director of OFFRO, with the

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<sup>4</sup> *Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, CCCLXIV* (21 August 1940), p. 55, quoted in *UNRRA*, 1:7-8.

<sup>5</sup> *UNRRA*, 1:8.

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 95.

understanding that he would eventually lead the international organization that they were working to create with the British. Both MERRA and OFFRO, then, were unilateral efforts to provide relief for refugees during the war and to begin planning for the postwar period. The Inter-Allied Committee on European Post-War Relief was a third relief effort, the result of an Anglo-American conference in London in 1941; it was the first joint initiative in this respect. The Committee set to work gathering estimates of food and other supplies required for the first six months after the war. They solicited the advice of the European governments-in-exile in London and began to draw up rough estimates.

The Inter-Allied Committee looked at postwar relief and rehabilitation exclusively from the standpoint of supply, but there was also recognition on the part of both the British and American governments that postwar efforts would have to include more than just food. Physicians and welfare workers in particular expressed strong views on postwar rehabilitation. “Relief workers were haunted by memories of the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919,” writes Ben Shephard, in *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War*, “which had killed 40 million people worldwide, many of them in Europe; the typhus which had accounted for another 3 million; the famine which had carried off 5 million people in Ukraine in 1921.”<sup>7</sup> They wanted to avoid the disaster that followed the First World War by ensuring that not only food, but also medical supplies were made available.

At the same time, welfare workers recognized that the refugees’ wartime experiences meant they would need professional counselling, and not just food and shelter, if Europe was going to recover. As will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter, the interwar period witnessed the emergence in the United States of social work as a respected profession. The United States government’s Social Security Act of 1935 transformed public assistance: a host of New Deal programs sought to ‘help people help themselves’ by providing them with counselling and other

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<sup>7</sup> Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 40.

social services. The programs were based on the principle that people should be paid for work rather than given a handout from the government, a central tenet of the emerging social work profession. As one of Roosevelt's most trusted advisers, former social worker Harry Hopkins brought many of these ideas straight to the President.<sup>8</sup> When it came time to organize a postwar relief organization, Hopkins ensured that rehabilitation was a central theme.

The discussions of surpluses and questions of postwar supply and those voices calling for postwar rehabilitation came together in the summer of 1942. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, chief economic adviser to the British government, presented a formal plan to Washington that called for the creation of an international relief organization to organize and distribute the stockpiled goods, as well as provide some form of rehabilitation. The United States responded by drafting an agreement for such an organization. The project was headed by Harry Hawkins of the State Department and received input from Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State. Hawkins presented this draft agreement to the British in the late summer of 1942, and amendments were made. Leith-Ross described the genial nature of the bilateral discussions. "The discussions took place in a very friendly and constructive spirit. On all details of the organizational framework I did not hesitate to accept the American views: clearly they would have to bear the main burden of financing operations and it was important that they should be able to satisfy Congress that the set-up was likely to be efficient."<sup>9</sup> He was agreeable to any American views on organizational structure, but he was firm on the organization's goals. He asserts that he made a point of ensuring that UNRRA did more than just provide food to people who were starving; he wanted the organization to provide rehabilitation as well. "I urged that it was uneconomical to send food (except for immediate needs) to agricultural areas," he writes. "What they needed were farm implements, animals, seeds, etc., so as to get

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>9</sup> Leith-Ross, *Money Talks*, 294.

cultivation restarted. Similarly for industrial areas, it was better to send eg. cotton to the textile mills than clothing.”<sup>10</sup> Leith-Ross was able to convince both his government and the Americans of the necessity of providing more than just basic aid. However, both governments wanted to make it clear that they would not agree to any long-term reconstruction. “They therefore adopted the term ‘rehabilitation’ in the draft Agreement,” explains George Woodbridge in UNRRA’s official history, “and decided that it should cover only those transitional measures needed to restart industrial and agricultural activities and essential services.”<sup>11</sup>

The draft UNRRA agreement was sent to the Chinese and the Soviets for comment in the fall of 1942. The Soviets in particular were hesitant to agree to join, and asked many questions about the organization’s proposed functions. As Michael Marrus explains, the Russian representatives “insisted that all decisions taken by UNRRA had to have its support,” and “that postwar aid should be closely tied to political coloration,” so that only those people who actively took part in fighting the Nazis should have access to aid.<sup>12</sup> The Soviets were wary of any international organization circumventing their autonomy. In the end, the Soviets agreed to join because the British and American negotiators agreed to these demands, and because they would be the beneficiaries of much of the aid. The Americans in particular were willing to concede these points because they did not want to proceed without Soviet participation. Representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, China, and twenty-eight other governments met to sign the agreement in Washington, D.C. on 9 November, 1943.

The UNRRA Constitution, known as the Agreement for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, or simply the Agreement, set out three main functions for the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 295.

<sup>11</sup> *UNRRA*, 1:31.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 318.

organization. First, it authorized UNRRA to “plan, coordinate, administer or arrange for the administration of measures for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of any of the United Nations through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities, medical and other essential services.”<sup>13</sup> Second, it called for UNRRA to “formulate and recommend measures for individual or joint action by any or all of the member governments for the coordination of purchasing, the use of ships and other procurement activities in the period following the cessation of hostilities.”<sup>14</sup> The Agreement also called for UNRRA to coordinate the movement of supplies in order to achieve “an equitable distribution of available supplies.”<sup>15</sup> Third, the Agreement permitted UNRRA to “study, formulate and recommend for individual or joint action by any or all of the member governments measures with respect to such related matter, arising out of its experience in planning and performing the work of relief and rehabilitation, as may be proposed by any of the member governments.”<sup>16</sup>

The Agreement outlined the basic structure of UNRRA. It called for a Council, a Central Committee, a Director General, and various committees. The Council included one representative from each member state, and the Council members were expected to meet at least twice per year, although special sessions could also be called. The Council was the policy-making body of UNRRA, and therefore it suggested and debated the policies to be pursued. Votes in the Council were taken by simple majority. Rules of procedure were left for each section of the organization to define independently. The Director General was responsible for implementing the Council’s decisions and, more generally, the organization’s mandate. He was appointed by the Council on the recommendation of the Central Committee. The Director General had the power to appoint his staff,

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<sup>13</sup> “The Agreement for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration 9 November 1943” in *UNRRA*, 3:23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 3:24.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

including deputy directors. He was responsible for reporting to both the Council and the Central Committee on UNRRA's activities. The Central Committee was a sub-section of the Council, and it contained representatives from China, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States. As the Agreement explained, "Between sessions of the Council, it shall when necessary make policy decisions of an emergency nature."<sup>17</sup> In practice, the Central Committee solved problems when there was a disagreement amongst the member states, (or not). The Agreement mentioned two especially important committees: the Committee on Supplies and the Committee of the Council of Europe. The Committee of Supplies was comprised of representatives of member governments that would be the chief suppliers of the organization. The express purpose of the Committee of Supplies was to "consider, formulate and recommend to the Council and the Central Committee policies designed to assure the provision of required supplies."<sup>18</sup> The Committee of the Council for Europe included representatives of all member states involved in relief and rehabilitation in Europe. The Agreement formally recognized that this committee was officially replacing the Inter-Allied Committee on European Post-War Relief.

After signing the agreement in Washington, the representatives of the signatories immediately moved to Atlantic City, where they began discussions about how such an international organization would operate. Known as UNRRA's First Session, the meetings that took place throughout November and early December 1943 delineated UNRRA's role in postwar Europe and how it would operate. The Council would meet at least twice a year to discuss an agenda prepared by the Director General. At each meeting the Director General would present a report of the operations to date, and the Council was invited to comment. At these meetings its members would also debate new resolutions and discuss UNRRA policy. The Director General could also call together the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 3:25.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Central Committee anytime that he deemed it necessary, in order to address problems of an urgent nature.

At the first meeting of the First Session in Atlantic City, Herbert Lehman (from OFFRO) was officially elected Director General. At that meeting, UNRRA's mandate was refined to include:

relief supplies (essential consumer goods to meet immediate needs, such as food, clothing, and medical supplies); relief services (such as health and welfare); rehabilitation supplies (materials needed to enable a recipient country to produce and transport relief supplies and restore public utilities, to the extent necessary to meet immediate needs); and rehabilitation services (such technical services as might be needed to assure the best use of rehabilitation supplies).<sup>19</sup>

As the conference progressed, the Council outlined more specifically how the organization would look and how it would function. They created committees to focus on four specific aspects of the organization's functions: one committee to create overarching policy; another to organize financing and supplies; a third to look at relief and rehabilitation policies; and a fourth committee to deal with organization and administration. These four committees were in turn supported by a series of subcommittees for more focused problems, such as relief distribution policies, health and medical care policies, welfare services policies, policies relating to agricultural rehabilitation, and policies with respect to displaced persons. All of these groups were to prepare reports for and make recommendations to the Council. By 1 December, the end of the First Council Session, forty-seven resolutions had been adopted by UNRRA. Resolution 10, Section 7, which relates to DP policies, states: "the Director General should establish the earliest possible contact with military authorities of the United Nations with a view to concerting plans for dealing in a uniform and closely coordinated manner with any large groups of displaced persons which may be found in any liberated or occupied territory on the entry of the forces of the United Nations into that territory."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 1:29-30.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 2: 51.

On 1 January 1944, UNRRA Headquarters were established in Washington, DC. The capital city was the logical choice for the headquarters because it was the centre of all military and civilian planning in the United States. It housed not only the White House, but also the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) and the Combined Boards.<sup>21</sup> The Combined Boards consisted of the Combined Production Resources Board, the Combined Food Board, the Combined Raw Material Board and the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board, and together they organized the procurement and shipping of all of the resources necessary for the war effort. UNRRA headquarters was organized in two parts: there were the administrative sections (Bureau of Supply, Bureau of Finance and Administration, Bureau of Areas) and the functional sections (Health, Welfare, Displaced Persons). Lehman began by appointing the Deputy Director General of Supply, Roy F. Hendrickson, and from the start the Bureau of Supply proved to be the most powerful section of the organization. The official history describes “the dominance in Headquarters of the Deputy Director General of Supply;” how Hendrickson had “secured at the outset a clear and wide jurisdiction” which allowed him to create “an empire within an empire.”<sup>22</sup> The other areas never reached the same level of power.

The division of responsibilities was left purposely vague in order that the organization could respond to the inevitably changing requirements. As Sir Arthur Salter, Senior Deputy Director General and the person in charge of outlining the various functions, explained in March 1944, “[n]o set of rules drafted beforehand can determine precisely, and in detail, the part which each of the principal officers will take in discharging the different tasks of UNRRA. To a large extent this will have to be worked out by those concerned as they approach their several tasks.”<sup>23</sup> Both Salter and Lehman wanted the organizational structure to be flexible. However, this flexibility would lead to intense competition within the organization and a constant battle over lines of responsibility. This

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 1:149.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 1:160.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 2: 363.

proved particularly true, as we shall see, in relation to the displaced persons, whose care came under the auspices of both the administrative and the functional sections.

The question of exactly how UNRRA would be funded remained open throughout its initial tenure. “In signing the Agreement,” Woodbridge writes, “each member government pledged itself to contribute to the resources needed to enable the Administration to accomplish the purposes for which it was established.”<sup>24</sup> In reality, it was difficult for the planners to imagine exactly how much would be needed, and therefore they only spoke vaguely about contributions. In the end they agreed on a plan put forward by the United States Treasury’s Harry D. White which called for each member to contribute one percent of one year’s national income, an agreement that was seen as being “reasonably equitable” and providing “a fund more or less the right size.”<sup>25</sup> The administrative budget for the remainder of 1943 and all of the year 1944 was estimated to be approximately \$10 million, and Lehman received his first funds in late 1943.

However, even once the money was appropriated, Lehman faced difficulties in recruiting people and in procuring supplies. He looked primarily to the United States and Britain for personnel, but the able-bodied men were already involved in the war effort, and so he turned to “a limited number of welfare specialists, over-age adults, persons physically disqualified from military service, and women.”<sup>26</sup> Lehman was also hindered by the prospect that any staff he hired might have to sit idle, perhaps for months, until such a time as the military would call them forward. Lehman faced even larger challenges in procuring goods while the war was still going on. All requests for supplies had to be submitted to two bodies for approval: first, the Combined Raw Material Board had to approve the request, then the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board had to allot shipping space to bring it to Europe. The U.S. army’s requests superseded all civilian requests, and this made it nearly

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 1:81.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1:86.

<sup>26</sup> Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 105.

impossible for UNRRA to procure any supplies, let alone the large amounts needed to fully supply their staff and prepare for their responsibilities on the ground.

At the same time, UNRRA was planning the opening of an office in Europe. On 1 February 1944 the European Regional Office was established in London. Three Deputy Directors-General were appointed: Leith-Ross was placed in charge of the Department of Administration; Nicolai I. Feonov of the Soviet Union was named head of Supply; and Lithgow Osborne from the U.S. was placed in charge of Services and Areas. Soon afterwards, three Directors were sent from Headquarters in Washington to head up the Divisions of Health, Welfare, and Displaced Persons. These directors reported back directly to Washington, and were placed on the same level as the Deputy Directors-General. They were responsible for policy in their individual spheres, and they operated apart from the other Departments at the ERO. As Woodbridge explains,

The arrival of the functional directors (Health, Welfare, and Displaced Persons) from Headquarters also had unfortunate results. Although their appearance was a recognition that London was to be the effective centre for work with Allied governments, SHAEF, and the UNRRA technical advisory committees, the authority of the London Office was in no way increased, since the functional directors were instructed to report direct to the Director General and not to anyone in ERO.”<sup>27</sup>

From the start, then, there were two centers of power within UNRRA. The Headquarters in Washington was responsible for policy-level decisions, including contact with SHAEF. At the ERO, the focus was on operations. The Director General wanted headquarters to “remain responsible for the initial determination of principles of policy,” while the ERO was responsible for compiling reports of estimates of European regional requirements, acting as liaison with European member governments and military authorities in Europe, as well as issuing operation instructions to the field missions.<sup>28</sup> Although in theory this arrangement seemed to separate the tasks of both groups, in

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<sup>27</sup> *UNRRA*, 1:169.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 1:167-168.

practice it proved problematic. Individual personalities played an important role in defining spheres of influence. “The amount of consultation between corresponding sections in each Office, of course, varied with the inclination of the individuals concerned. In some cases a strong personality in ERO tended to assume the lead in policy-making, especially when the opposite section in Headquarters had been weakened by frequent turnover of personnel.”<sup>29</sup> This situation was thus one of a certain degree of overlap, as well as no clear chain of command within the organization.

To compound matters, SHAEF was not itself a unified entity; it was comprised of staff from both the British and American armed forces, with important consequences. Trying to organize two separate armies that could both plan and operate as a single unit was no easy task during WWII. They came from separate military traditions and had different ideas about how to fight the war. However, they were in agreement that Nazi Germany and Japan needed to be defeated. Following America’s entry into the war in December 1941, the two governments had begun working together to formulate a plan for defeating the Axis Powers. This strategy-level planning took place within the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), a command structure that was developed in 1942 and included the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the heads of the executive departments of the militaries, and other British and American armed services leaders. The CCS met altogether several times throughout the war: at Casablanca in January 1943; Washington, May 1943; Quebec, August 1943; Cairo-Tehran, November-December 1943; Quebec, September 1944; Yalta, February 1945; and Potsdam, July 1945.

These meetings were a chance for both sides to discuss grand strategy, as well as more pointed problems, such as munitions and transportation allocations. They were also a chance for both sides to meet face to face. These meetings highlighted the myriad difficulties of two separate

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 1:179.

governing systems and two separate military traditions planning and implementing wartime policy. They also highlighted the importance of personality in defining relationships. Roosevelt and Churchill had somewhat different opinions on how closely they should control the military. While Roosevelt took part in determining broad strategy and then allowed his generals to implement it as they saw fit, Churchill had a hands-on approach. When Roosevelt sent Harry Hopkins to London to meet with Churchill, Hopkins observed “Churchill in full flower, issuing a flurry of orders, studying maps, being briefed, firing off instructions to generals and ministers, all the while carrying on discussions of wars and battles of history.”<sup>30</sup> This was in stark contrast to Roosevelt, who “left the details of running the war to others.”<sup>31</sup>

By the fall of 1943, the tide of the war had begun to turn. The Allies had defeated the Germans at the Battle of Alamein in North Africa, and from there they could launch forces into southern Italy. The British and the Americans agreed that they would require an organizational structure to coordinate the major offensive that they were planning to take back the continent from the Germans. However, exactly how this structure would operate, and who would people it, was a matter of considerable debate. When the CCS met at the Casablanca conference, they agreed that they should begin by selecting a Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC) and give him power to choose a staff and to conduct preliminary planning for the cross-Channel operation. They named Lt. Gen. Frederick E. Morgan as the head of COSSAC, and it was assumed that the staff he chose would serve as a core for the future Supreme Headquarters. This was a stop-gap solution until such a time as the British and the Americans could agree on how the nascent Supreme

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<sup>30</sup> Carlo D’Este, *Warlord: A Life of Winston Churchill at War, 1874-1945* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 500-501.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 500.

Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) would function. There was general agreement that whoever supplied the most troops should fill the position.<sup>32</sup>

At first Roosevelt believed that the Supreme Commander would be a British officer if the attack took place soon. The Americans did not have nearly as many troops trained as the British, and there was no easy way to transport hundreds of thousands of men across the Atlantic in time for an early invasion. American planners believed that they needed at least 600,000 ground troops for an invasion in 1942, but calculated that they could only transport 105,000. Therefore, the British would have to supply the bulk of any force used in a 1942 invasion and this would allow them to appoint the Supreme Commander.<sup>33</sup> However, events in the Pacific theatre made a 1942 invasion all but impossible for Roosevelt, and it soon became clear that a later invasion would mean the Americans would shoulder the bulk of the operation's supplies and men. This meant that the Americans would be the ones to choose the Supreme Commander. Both Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and President Roosevelt's unofficial advisor Harry L. Hopkins recommended General George C. Marshall for the job. Marshall was the U.S. Army Chief of Staff and a strong proponent of the cross-Channel approach to defeating the Germans. At the Quebec conference in August 1943 Roosevelt let Churchill know that he was thinking of naming Marshall as Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force (SCAEF), an appointment that Churchill accepted.

Despite Britain's tacit acceptance of Marshall as Supreme Commander, Roosevelt continued to delay naming the SCAEF. Roosevelt was wary because this new position would take the appointee away from Washington and into the field, where he could not use Marshall as his representative in the meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and in front of Congress. For several months, Roosevelt tried to convince the British to allow the Supreme Commander to continue to sit on the Combined

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<sup>32</sup> Forrest C. Pogue, *Supreme Command: United States Army in World War 2 - the European Theater of Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1954), 23-4.

<sup>33</sup> R.A.C. Parker, *The Second World War: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 119.

Chiefs of Staff, but the British refused to consider such a suggestion.<sup>34</sup> They still had not reached agreement in November 1943 when they met with Stalin at Tehran. As Roosevelt considered how to solve this problem, he came to the conclusion that he needed Marshall to remain in the United States. He had considered placing General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the position of Chief of Staff upon Marshall's move, but in the end decided that Eisenhower would make a better fit leading in the field and Marshall would remain in Washington. He notified Eisenhower on 7 December, and announced it officially on 24 December 1943.

From the beginning, it was clear that the British and Americans had two competing visions of how SHAEF would operate. The British were hoping for a smaller headquarters, based on the one instituted by French General Ferdinand Foch, Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies during the First World War. This headquarters would focus, as Foch had done, on coordinating overall strategy. On the other side were those Americans who believed that the Supreme Commander needed a large headquarters from which he could coordinate all of the ground operations, not just oversee policy.<sup>35</sup> The British also had concerns with SHAEF's overall scope. They were particularly concerned about what SHAEF policies would be instituted in areas formerly under British control, as once they were put in place they would likely not change. They feared that they would lose all possibility of control if the same broad SHAEF policy was applied equally everywhere; in other words, they wanted to protect their pre-war empire, a concern that would shape British attitudes throughout the war.

Disagreement over the morality of controlling overseas colonies was a major point of disagreement between the two powers. The British made it clear from the start that one of the reasons that they were able to continue fighting the war after France's collapse was because they could depend on the British colonies to support the British war effort. However, British imperialism made

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<sup>34</sup> Pogue, *Supreme Command*, 32.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

many Americans uncomfortable. As one historian explains, “Roosevelt himself shared many of these common American suspicions of imperialism, which never ceased to influence his own policy and his own view of Churchill.”<sup>36</sup> In particular, Roosevelt felt strongly about independence for India. He went so far as to send a representative to Delhi to encourage the British to come to agreement with the Indian National Congress. “For Roosevelt, as for many Americans, it was a grievous inconsistency that India should have been mobilized for war in British interests, at the British behest, and with no clear commitment by the British to the principle of self-determination.”<sup>37</sup> Roosevelt believed that India should be offered independence from the British in exchange for their wartime support. He tried on more than one occasion to convince Churchill of this fact, but to no avail. This disagreement resurfaced in deliberations over the British Protectorate in Palestine, although these discussions only moved to the forefront after the war, as will be seen in later chapters. The disagreement over colonialism did not ruin the Anglo-American relationship, but it made clear that on some matters the British and the Americans were coming from very different viewpoints.

The Refugee and Displaced Persons Division of COSSAC, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence W. Cramer, spent the fall and winter of 1943-1944 focusing on two important details: recruiting staff for Civil Affairs and planning for refugee care. They began to recruit people for training in Military Government. At first they selected officers from lists furnished by commanders, but it was clear that the commanders did not want to give up their best officers, and the Civil Affairs program had to deal with a wave of criticism on the quality of their recruits. They switched tactics and instead began to send out letters directly to candidates that they believed had the necessary skills. In particular, they targeted those officers with experience working for the government, especially in the field of welfare, and also those officers with medical training. In a letter to paediatricians serving

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<sup>36</sup> Peter Clarke, *The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 9.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

in the army, they called upon doctors to apply to join the school of military government in order to take part in administering the army's relief program. The letter states:

The medical care of expectant mothers and of infants and children is a very important phase of the relief program of military government. Disturbed social conditions, which are accompanied by malnutrition, crowded housing, and the migration of large groups of the population, contribute to the development of serious child health and welfare problems. Disruption of family life, and the curtailment of medical and social services will have added to the difficulties. Care of numbers of homeless children, in many instances without families, is another phase which will call for wise and skilful child health administration.<sup>38</sup>

COSSAC's Civil Affairs Division explained that they required the expertise of paediatricians in order to advise army medical officers on issues of health care for women and children. Those who were accepted would also liaise with local health officials in the cities and towns across Europe and advise them on similar issues, as required. The letter explains that, "[t]his is an opportunity for pediatricians [sic] to apply their training and experience in their own specialty in a program of practical importance to the war effort, and of great humanitarian significance."<sup>39</sup> Thus, they tried to appeal to each person's moral sense of responsibility and humanitarianism in their recruiting efforts.

The Refugee and Displaced Persons Division of COSSAC also focused on questions specific to refugee care. The challenge was that they were missing several key pieces of information. First, they did not have reliable statistics. They were also grappling with questions of categorization; they were undecided as to how to distinguish between the various groups they expected to encounter: DPs inside and outside of their country of origin, enemy and ex-enemy nationals, neutral nationals, and stateless persons.<sup>40</sup> As well, they were unsure how long it would take national authorities to reestablish governments following the cessation of hostilities in Europe, and also how much help they could expect to receive from these governments. In spite of this, the Refugee and Displaced Persons

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<sup>38</sup> Draft of a letter to be sent from the Civil Affairs Division to pediatricians [sic] now in the Army who have been selected for training in military government, prepared by Mr. Schmidt for Col. Hiscock, about Sept. 43, in UNA, Series 520 Box 389 File 39 "Sub-Committee on Child Care and Maternity (Folder I)."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 108.

Division began planning. One of the first steps was to design a system of registration and identity cards, as they recognized that their first task would be to classify the DPs. They would need to know how many DPs they were dealing with and where they were located. The system that they devised included three cards: one for identity, called an Index Card; one for registration, including health and immigration information, the Medical Clearance Card; and one for administrative purposes in assembly centers, the Assembly Centre Administration Card.<sup>41</sup>

Cramer's group also began looking at how they would accommodate the varied groups of DPs that they expected to encounter. They were particularly worried about how to feed and generally care for the large numbers of children and youth expected. In the fall of 1943 and winter of 1944 they tackled the problem of the availability of food for children and infants. They were concerned specifically that mothers would be unable to breastfeed their children for reasons of poor health, and that consequently the American military would have to provide a substitute infant formula for these children. After months of testing, they recommended that babies be fed a watered-down version of the powdered milk provided to soldiers as part of their rations.<sup>42</sup>

Cramer's group was also concerned about taking care of large numbers of older children. In the summer of 1943, Harry Greenstein submitted a report to COSSAC in which he outlined the general principles that the military should consider in their administration of camps for children, and, in particular, so-called 'wild children,' those children found without any parents or guardians and therefore no one to impose discipline. Greenstein explained, "In the early stages of actual experience

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 109-110.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, William M. Schmidt, M.D., Secretary to Members of the Subcommittee on Maternity Care and Child Health, dated 27 December 1943, in UNA, Series 520, Box 389, File 39 "Sub-Committee on Child Care and Maternity (Folder I)."

with these children, there will of course have to be considerable improvisation.”<sup>43</sup> Greenstein suggested ways in which the military might limit the problems that these “wild children” might cause. He began by arguing that the facilities of any such camps for children should be kept small and separate from other camps that the military administers, for example, prisoner of war camps. This was in order to maintain discipline and halt the spread of disease. The camps also should be segregated according to sex and age, and there was to be an area set aside for those children who “continuously create disorder and problems of discipline.”<sup>44</sup> Constructive work projects and recreational activities were to be introduced as quickly as possible. Greenstein concluded by stating: “As soon as possible the military authorities should bring in civilian personnel equipped to begin planning long-range rehabilitation programs for these children.”<sup>45</sup> Throughout the fall of 1943, then, COSSAC planned for the handover to SHAEF.

SHAEF was formally established at its headquarters in Bushy Park, on the outskirts of London, in February 1944. The CCS had been planning for this for some time. The organizational structure that they created for SHAEF was based on two previous models: Eisenhower’s command post in the Mediterranean, Allied Force Headquarters; and COSSAC in Washington. Within SHAEF, six divisions were created: Personnel Division (G-1), Intelligence Division (G-2), Operations Division (G-3), Supply Division (G-4), Civil Affairs Division (G-5), and Publicity and Psychological Warfare Division (G-6). The alpha-numeric system was introduced in order to differentiate the SHAEF divisions from those belonging solely to the American or British militaries. For example, CAD referred to the American Civil Affairs Division, and in order to avoid any confusion, SHAEF

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<sup>43</sup> Letter, Harry Greenstein, General Consultant on Welfare Programs – Division of Program and Requirements, to George Lewis Warren, Consultant, subject: Care of so-called “Wild Children,” in UNA, Series 520, Box 183, File 199 “P.412.17 Delinquents.”

<sup>44</sup> Suggestions for the Care of ‘Wild Children’ in Military Camps, in UNA, Series 520, Box 183, File 199 “P.412.17 Delinquents.”

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Civil Affairs, made up of both British and American officers, was assigned the code G-5 in order to distinguish it.

Problems associated with refugees and displaced persons fell under the purview of G-5. As Pogue explains, organizing the Civil Affairs Division was more difficult than any of the other divisions in SHAEF. “Unlike the other general staff divisions,” he writes, “G-5 could not be set up simply by copying long-established U.S. or British practices.”<sup>46</sup> Part of the problem was that the British and American members of CCS had not agreed yet on exactly what responsibilities Civil Affairs would assume. After the First World War, the purpose of Civil Affairs had been to take control of existing governmental structures and ensure that they carried out the orders of the occupying army. After WWII, this would not be possible because “the Allies undertook to... root out the political theories which Mussolini and Hitler had put into the legal systems of the two countries, to change Fascist- and Nazi-inspired economic regulations—in short, to effect a political revolution under Allied auspices.”<sup>47</sup> Individuals at every level in the German government would have to be replaced as part of the process of de-Nazification that had been agreed upon by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. New bureaucrats would have to be found to replace Nazi supporters. Thus CAD could not simply take over the political structures that existed. New people would have to be found, and G-5 would have to train them. Therefore, they needed a much more detailed outline of what they hoped to accomplish and how they planned to do so.

They also disagreed over who would lead G-5. For several months, an American and an Englishman held the position jointly. Finally, on 22 April Eisenhower named Lt. General A.E. Grasett, a British General, as the head of G-5. Grasett picked up where COSSAC left off and continued with its plans. G-5 began by compiling reports of estimates of the numbers displaced by

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<sup>46</sup> Pogue, *Supreme Command*, 75.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 75-76.

the war. In January 1944 they released a report detailing the latest figures that the Army had gathered. The figures for Germany were compiled from several different reports, including reports by Psychological Warfare Intelligence (dated 14 December 1943), the Committee on Migration and Resettlement (summer 1943), the Inter-Allied Committee on Displaced Persons (20 October 1943), and the work of American sociologist Eugene Kulischer. Based on this information, G-5 concluded that there were between 6,160,020 and 8,500,500 foreigners in Germany in late 1943, including at least 392,396 prisoners of war and civilian internees.<sup>48</sup>

Kulischer's report, *The Displacement of Population in Europe*, offered the most detailed discussion of foreigners in Germany. In this report Kulischer explained that, through several different policy initiatives, the Germans had redistributed the population of Europe, moving individuals and whole families en masse in order to further their political, economic and demographic goals. Kulischer explained that, "[t]he acknowledged [political] aim of the German Government is to redistribute the population of Europe so as to establish German influence and leadership over the largest possible area."<sup>49</sup> Economically, the Nazis wanted to use the populations in these territories in German industry, most notably in the production of armaments, but in other industries as well. Kulischer explained that there was little demographic data available on the movements, and therefore little way of knowing "the age, sex and occupational distribution of the transferred persons and also their precise whereabouts."<sup>50</sup> At most, he could only distinguish broad movements of people.

Kulischer organized his study into three sections: one on German movements; one on non-German movements; and a third on the German mobilization of foreign labour. Kulischer explained

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<sup>48</sup> Displaced Persons: A Statistical Comparison of Current Sources, Governmental Affairs Branch, Displaced Persons Section, Civil Affairs Division, SHAEF, dated January 1944, p. 11, in NARA RG 260, Box 165, File 9 "Stateless Persons."

<sup>49</sup> Eugene M. Kulischer, *The Displacement of Population in Europe* (Montreal: International Labour Office, 1943), 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

that Germany had always employed a large number of foreign workers, numbering in the hundreds of thousands even in the pre-WWI era, but that number had increased dramatically to several millions following the outbreak of war in 1939. The Germans used many different methods in order to attract workers, ranging from propaganda and indirect pressure to round-ups, arrests and deportations. They also made use of the prisoners of war who they captured. During the first year of the war, workers were used primarily in agriculture, but following the harvest of 1940, workers were increasingly used in non-agricultural work, namely for construction and also in the war industries. Kulischer explained that workers were being moved across all parts of Europe, from east to west and north to south, to work on fortifications and more generally to supply the army. But the majority of workers were sent to work in Germany proper. He stated, “Today a host of foreigners unprecedented in number and unparalleled in character is living and working in Germany; like a gigantic pump, the new German Reich is sucking in all the resources of Europe and masses of Europe’s working population.”<sup>51</sup>

Kulischer estimated that up to the moment of publication of his report in 1943, some thirty million people in Europe had been displaced from their homes. This number included people displaced both within and beyond the borders of their home country, but excluded the movements of soldiers or prisoners of war. It also did not include people who had left their homes in order to escape aerial bombardments. Kulischer was reluctant to predict what any future population movements would look like, but he pointed out that, by 1943, the German army had been halted and that any movements would take place within territories that they already controlled. Within these territories, he explained, “population movements may be expected to become more violent than ever. Recent information shows that the Reich is determined to pursue its demographic policies towards peoples

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 162.

whom Nazi theory condemns as inferior.”<sup>52</sup> He believed that there was little chance that the movements would cease. While the circumstances of the war meant that the German administration would be forced to make do with the people that they had, this would likely lead to a search within areas already occupied for additional reserves of workers. When the German army was finally defeated, he predicted, all of those people working for them would find that they were no longer employed, and would want to leave Germany as soon as possible. While Kulischer believed that most of these people would want to be repatriated, he recognized that there would be certain groups who would not wish to return home: those who experienced persecution at home and those who feared the postwar political situation in their home country. Thus, as early as 1943, there was already some recognition that not everyone would agree to repatriation. This idea was most strongly articulated by the Jewish and Baltic NGOs, who predicted that the people they were mandated to help would not want to return home.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, Kulischer concluded, “Unless there is an organization to provide these people with means of subsistence, and to give them confidence that they have not been forgotten, the highways of Europe will be blocked by long processions of destitute exiles, enduring every kind of privation in an effort to return unaided to their homes.”<sup>54</sup> This, of course, was UNRRA’s stated goal.

Based on this information, SHAEF set out four main goals for dealing with the DPs: to make sure they did not interfere with military operations that were taking place; to control disease; to stop them from roving and pillaging; and to organize them for repatriation.<sup>55</sup> G-5 saw their role as providing short-term relief until such a time as the DPs could be returned to their homes. Although they also recognized that not everyone would want to be repatriated, they assumed that long-term care

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>53</sup> Laura J. Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany 1945-1952” (PhD Dissertation, Ohio State University, 2001), 65.

<sup>54</sup> Kulischer, *The Displacement of Population in Europe*, 167.

<sup>55</sup> Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace,” 78.

would not be their responsibility. The main themes of their postwar DP planning were thus housing and supply, and the problems that were associated with these issues. They spent some time investigating other issues, most notably questions of re-socialization, especially in relation to children, but this was never their main concern. They knew that they would first need to focus on housing, feeding and clothing the DPs, and they believed that by the time these tasks were in hand that they could hand off responsibility for the DPs to some other group or authority. UNRRA was certainly one possibility, though others existed. The American military, in fact, was advocating for the Red Cross, whom they knew and respected from their work together in caring for prisoners of war. However, first they had to come to agreement with the British, and the Red Cross was never their first choice.

SHAEF had been involved in the discussions around the development of UNRRA from the start. It had sent representatives to take part in UNRRA's First Session in Atlantic City, and it followed UNRRA's progress closely, though they had contributed little to the discussion; the American delegates to the First Session came from the State Department, not the War Department. Even before UNRRA was officially established, the American military debated the form in which an agreement with UNRRA might take. Many in the military were against making any formal arrangements with UNRRA at all. In a memorandum dated 2 June 1943, David Marcus, from the Office of the Chief Staff of the American Civil Affairs Division, expressed concern that UNRRA's role was as yet unclear. He explained,

[w]ithin our own Federal agencies there are disputes over the meaning of the very terms that are used in this document, as these terms mean one thing to one agency and something else to another. These disputes will be multiplied many fold when nations interpret the meaning of such elusive terms as 'rehabilitation, essential services, prevention of pestilence... The program of UNRRA is so extensive that of necessity it cannot contain definite provisions

creating specific obligations and duties. The UNRRA may become a forum for individual nations to complain about matters that are of paramount interest to that individual nation.<sup>56</sup>

He echoed the concerns of several military officials that UNRRA would be more of a hindrance than a help to the military. “Although laudible [sic] in every purpose,” he concluded, “I doubt the wisdom of entering into a formal agreement. It might be wiser to issue a simple declaration or statement by responsible persons establishing a committee or council whose ‘modus operandi’ may be the very provisions of the proposed contract.”<sup>57</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, one of Cramer’s assistants at COSSAC and a captain in the American army, concurred that such feelings were widespread in the upper ranks of SHAEF. He explained that “enthusiasm for making use of UNRRA was less pronounced on higher levels. The military authorities had never been directly instructed by their political rulers to co-operate with, or make use of UNRRA, and had little stomach for including civilian personnel who could not be brought directly under their control, under the military umbrella.”<sup>58</sup>

In the official history of UNRRA, George Woodbridge explains that UNRRA was eager to take part in military planning for the postwar era from the start. “They had,” he wrote, “however, no authoritative information on military plans or the actual progress of military operations.”<sup>59</sup> The military had purposely excluded UNRRA from their preparations. The military’s aversion to UNRRA involvement in postwar planning was not unique to the international organization; the military did not take kindly to any civilian interference. The military code of conduct called for respect for the military chain of command, but civilians were not required to respect it. The military had also just won a hard-fought battle with the State Department for control of postwar planning. Throughout the war the military and civilian agencies had tussled over who would control occupation

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<sup>56</sup> Memorandum, David Marcus, Lt. Col., GS, to Colonel Hynes, dated 2 June 1943, in NARA, RG 165, Box 115, File 2 “CAD 334 U.N.R.R.A. (5-25-43)\*(1).”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 114-5.

<sup>59</sup> *UNRRA*, 1: 201.

planning. When the War Department set up a school in Charlottesville to train civil affairs personnel, American newspapers labeled it the “school for Gauleiters,” reflecting a widespread belief that postwar occupation should rest with civilian authorities.<sup>60</sup> Roosevelt also believed that occupation policy should be set by civilian authorities. However, when the State Department had been given control of civil administration in North Africa, it quickly became clear that they were not prepared for the task. In a letter to the Secretary of War, Roosevelt conceded that while “other agencies are preparing themselves for the work that must be done in connection with relief and rehabilitation of liberated areas, it is quite apparent that if prompt results are to be obtained the Army will have to assume the initial burden.”<sup>61</sup> As a result, the military was placed in charge of occupation policy, but with the proviso that they work with civilian organizations.

The army begrudgingly accepted UNRRA’s involvement on the condition that they remained under military control. They made requests for UNRRA to have officers prepared to go into the field, but they hesitated to call them forward. This left UNRRA at a loss as to how many people to recruit and how quickly. “Headquarters and ERO,” Woodbridge explained, “continued to live each day as though the next might find them in the midst of full-scale operations.”<sup>62</sup> This proved an impossible situation for planning. Therefore, UNRRA did the only thing that it could do: it made plans based on Sir Arthur Salter’s theory of administration, a method that outlined broad structures, but avoided “defining precise functions.”<sup>63</sup> When UNRRA representatives were invited to attend meetings with the military authorities, they were forced into the role of largely passive observers as they had nothing concrete to contribute because they had no data on which to base their plans. Instead, they anxiously awaited any opportunity that SHAEF might toss their way.

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<sup>60</sup> Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>62</sup> *UNRRA*, 1: 201.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*.

As the British and American troops pushed eastward in the winter of 1943-1944, German surrender seemed probable, and the question of postwar arrangements which had been secondary while all attention was focused on fighting the war suddenly moved to the forefront. The military wanted to ensure that it was prepared for the anticipated postwar chaos if the German army were to collapse suddenly. Thus, it doubled its efforts for recruitment and training, and it began compiling handbooks and Administrative Orders to prepare for Military Government. In early 1944 the military focused on recruiting and training men and women for the task that lay ahead. G-5 spent the spring of 1944 organizing the European Civil Affairs Training Center at Shrivenham and worked to train as many civil affairs officers as possible leading up to the invasion. While the school originally focused on military law and command structures, the curriculum was later modified to include skills that could be utilized on the ground: language skills and an understanding of cultural differences.<sup>64</sup>

G-5 also worked to create a program for the postwar German Military Government. The plans for this program, however, moved forward very slowly. Not only did the Americans and the British have to coordinate efforts, but this was one matter in which the Soviets also had a vested interest. Following the liberation of France, the French government also wanted a say in the matter. Separately, the Civil Affairs Department of the U.S. military and the Post Hostilities Planning Subcommittee of the British Chiefs of Staff were conducting their own planning. When Eisenhower approached the Combined Civil Affairs Committee for a plan for Germany's military government, they responded that it was still being formulated and instead offered him a directive for the pre-surrender period. This directive would give the Supreme Commander legislative and judicial authority in all areas under his command, with the understanding that this agreement could be

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 1:72.

amended at a later date. The directive also stated that representatives from any civilian agency, including UNRRA, could only participate with the express invitation of SCAEF.<sup>65</sup>

Negotiations between SHAEF and UNRRA on a proposed agreement also began in early 1944. Lehman met with leaders within SHAEF several times in the spring in order to press for a better definition of UNRRA's role. He was particularly concerned about when UNRRA would enter the field and when they would take over from SHAEF. The military refused to make any commitment on either issue. In a February 1944 letter, Hugh R. Jackson wrote to Leith-Ross to update him on the state of negotiations with the military. Jackson explained that while some progress had been made in UNRRA's negotiations with the military, "it cannot be said that everything is buttoned up in the way I would like to see it."<sup>66</sup> UNRRA did not have the details of the Army procurement program, which UNRRA needed in order to adapt their own plans to those of the military. He also mentioned that no specific plans had been made with regards to joint planning for displaced persons or the role of liaison officers, key information that UNRRA required.

Internally, SHAEF circulated several possible agreements with UNRRA for comment. These agreements all touched upon the questions that Lehman had been asking of SHAEF: questions of timeline and questions of supply. None of the responders within the military were enthusiastic about coordinating their efforts with UNRRA, although some accepted that UNRRA should be kept up to date on certain aspects of the planning. W.A. Wood Jr., Deputy Director of the military's Plans and Operations Division, agreed that UNRRA should be apprised of military plans, although he also argued that the military should not agree to take responsibility for the procurement of supplies after the military period had ended. At most, he was willing to offer that "the United Nations will be

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<sup>65</sup> Pogue, *Supreme Command*, 347-348.

<sup>66</sup> Letter, Hugh R. Jackson, UNRRA, to Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, Foreign Office, Relief Department, dated 15 February 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 19 "Relations with the Military 1944-1948."

permitted to take over unexpended supplies procured for civilian use.”<sup>67</sup> Other responders left even less room for UNRRA: they did not believe that UNRRA should be involved at all until the fighting had ended. This open hostility made it impossible for UNRRA to make more than limited inroads with the military.

Despite the military’s reluctance to bring UNRRA up to date on the details of their planning, they were under pressure from lawmakers to begin preparing for the postwar situation in Europe. In response to requests from the House of Representatives, SHAEF was pushed to explain their vision for Europe once the war had ended. In April 1944, the Combined Civil Affairs Committee responded to the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. “Provisions must be made,” they wrote, “to supply the bare necessities of life to these peoples until the time when indigenous governments have established social, political and economic control of their respective areas adequate to allow the return of normal self-sufficiency.”<sup>68</sup> They explained that the United States would contribute to this relief through three entities: the military, the Lend-Lease program, and UNRRA. The military’s responsibility would be for providing relief in areas that experienced fighting. UNRRA would take responsibility when the indigenous governments took control from the military. Lend-Lease would provide supplies in areas that were not under military control but did not have an indigenous government. They explained that UNRRA would meanwhile play a key role in supervising the distribution of supplies, until they were able to take over full responsibility for the displaced persons from the military. They concluded, “[a]ll plans of the affected United States agencies for European civilian supply have been coordinated, and the individual plan of each agency

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<sup>67</sup> Memo, W. A. Wood Jr., Deputy Director, Plans and Operations, and H.S. Struble, Colonel, F. A. Assistant, to General Somervell, Subject: Relations with UNRRA (CCS 451/4), dated 14 March 1944, in NARA, RG 165, Box 155, File 2 “CAD U.N.R.R.A. (5-25-43)\*(1).”

<sup>68</sup> Draft letter, Combined Civil Affairs Committee, to Clarence Cannon, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, dated 24 April 1944, in NARA, RG 165, Box 155, File 2 “CAD 334 U.N.R.R.A. (5-25-43)\* (1).”

has the approval and support of all of the others.”<sup>69</sup> It was an astonishing claim, as, at least with regards to UNRRA, this was far from the truth.

By May 1944, SHAEF recognized that they would have to come to some agreement with UNRRA. The Combined Chiefs of Staff circulated a report entitled “Relations with United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,” written by Colonel H. E. Rounds and Colonel J. Magaw in response to questions raised by Lehman. In this report they outlined the prospective SHAEF-UNRRA relationship. They began by quoting the UNRRA agreement:

the Director General shall ‘in conjunction with the military and other appropriate authorities of the United Nations prepare plans for the emergency relief of the civilian population in any area occupied by the armed forces of any of the United Nations, arrange for the procurement and assembly of the necessary supplies and create or select the emergency organization required for this purpose.’<sup>70</sup>

The agreement, then, required a close collaboration between the military and UNRRA. “In particular, the Director General of UNRRA should have free access to CCAC, so that he may represent the views of UNRRA to the military authorities responsible for relief planning and may raise any questions which, in his opinion, require discussion between UNRRA and the military authorities,” they explained.<sup>71</sup> They did not suggest that the Director General should sit on the board of the Combined Chiefs, but that he should be able to bring all relevant issues to their attention. Rounds and Magaw recognized that the first matter of concern for UNRRA was the issue of procurement of supplies. “It is necessary that UNRRA be informed at a very early date,” they explained, “whether the military authorities accept responsibility for procurement of the necessary relief supplies for the whole of occupied territories of Europe for a period of six months.”<sup>72</sup> If UNRRA was expected to take over control in less than six months after the end of hostilities, then the military had to continue

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Relations with United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Secret, C.C.S. 451/6, dated 2 May 1944, in NARA RG165, Box 115, File 2 “CAD 334 U.N.R.R.A. (5-25-43)\*(1).”

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

to provide supplies. Similarly, if they were expected to take over later than six months after the end of hostilities, then they would likewise need this information in order to plan for that time.

Rounds and Magaw also argued that UNRRA had to make its plans known to the military. They offered three reasons why the military must be involved in UNRRA's planning. First, they explained that if the military period lasted beyond six months, then the military would likely have to draw on UNRRA's supplies. Second, they explain that UNRRA would require the military's support in any presentation to the Combined Boards, and that "it is necessary for UNRRA to be in a position to assure the Combined Boards that there is no overlap between the relief requirements being procured by the military and those specified in UNRRA's program."<sup>73</sup> Third, the military had to ensure that UNRRA's procurement efforts did not compete in any way with the procurement efforts of the army. "Possibilities of competition between UNRRA and the military authorities for available relief supplies can be guarded against only by early and continued collaboration."<sup>74</sup> They concluded that UNRRA's request to stay informed on the state of military procurement of relief supplies was justified, and that, "[w]hile the CCAC is of the opinion that it may not be feasible to assure UNRRA that notice will be given of the anticipated date of termination of military responsibility in any area of country, UNRRA should, nevertheless, be assured of as much advance notice as is practicable."<sup>75</sup> They were careful to point out that UNRRA would only take over from the military in areas where "recognized indigenous authorities have indicated that at the end of the military period they will desire the assistance of UNRRA."<sup>76</sup> Finally, the authors recommended that the military inform UNRRA of these decisions and that joint planning begin immediately. This was, of course, what UNRRA had been waiting for all along.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

SHAEF made minor changes to the Rounds and Magaw draft and composed a letter to Governor Lehman to accompany it. In their letter to the Director General, the Combined Chiefs of Staff outlined the relationship that they foresaw with UNRRA. They explained that if the Director General had any concerns, “it is suggested that such observations or suggestions should be discussed either between your representatives, as designated in your letter of 16 February 1944, and the designated representatives of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee or by approach to the Chairman of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in pursuance of the conclusion set out in paragraph 7 hereunder.”<sup>77</sup> The Combined Civil Affairs Committee, comprised of Civil Affairs staff from both the British and American armies, worked to coordinate the efforts of each staff within SHAEF. It had agreed to take responsibility for the Displaced Persons, including all relief supplies, for the military period, which they defined as a period of six months following hostilities. They asserted that if the military period should last less than six months, that they would continue to provide relief supplies for the first six months. However, they also pledged to give UNRRA as much notice as possible before the end of the military period, and that UNRRA would be apprised of all estimates that the army made in their procurement of relief supplies. The Combined Civil Affairs Committee asked that, in return, they be kept informed of all UNRRA planning with regards to the procurement of relief supplies. They also reminded UNRRA that “the military authorities will not be in a position to negotiate with it [UNRRA] regarding any activities of the Administration in any country unless the recognized indigenous authorities have indicated that at the end of the military period they will desire the assistance of UNRRA.”<sup>78</sup> They concluded the letter by assuring the Director General that UNRRA would have full access to the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in order to discuss any issues arising from planning, except for issues of military security. UNRRA would pick up six

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<sup>77</sup> Draft Letter, from the Combined Civil Affairs Committee, to Herbert H. Lehman, Director-General, UNA, undated, in NARA, RG 165, Box 155, File 2 “CAD 334 U.N.R.R.A. (5-25-43)\* (1).”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

months after hostilities had ended, but again they did not believe that there would be much work left for UNRRA, and therefore no need to worry about issues like procurement.

Lehman responded on 19 May 1944 asking for clarification on several points made by the CCS. He began by asking them to define which geographic areas they were referring to in their discussion of the military period. He asserted,

[i]t is most necessary from the standpoint of planning UNRRA operations that UNRRA receive an indication of the areas of Europe which have been determined to come within the formula just quoted... it is my understanding that the areas of Europe for which a U.S. and U.K. military responsibility for provision or relief supplies has at present been determined are Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania, Germany, Austria, and Italy.<sup>79</sup>

Another concern of Lehman's was the provision that UNRRA must be invited by the local authorities.

"It is my understanding that this condition will be satisfied where UNRRA, after appropriate consultation, receives the invitation or consent of the Government concerned or of the national authority exercising administrative authority in the area in question to administer or assist in the administration of relief."<sup>80</sup> In Germany, where no national authority would remain, this would not be an issue. Lastly, Lehman confirmed that if the military period pushed past six months in length, UNRRA would make available any relief supplies for military use. Although not all of Lehman's concerns were addressed, he accepted the agreement because he recognized that some agreement with the military, even an imperfect one, was better than nothing. UNRRA would now receive enough information to begin planning in earnest. The agreement was officially signed on 25 November 1944.

The summer of 1944 saw the first conference devoted to refugee problems, as well as the compilation of handbooks for use in the field by SHAEF personnel. On 1 June 1944 Fred Hoehler, Deputy Director of the Displaced Persons Division of UNRRA, reported that "we have made

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<sup>79</sup> Letter, Herbert H. Lehman, Director General, UNRRA, to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, dated 19 May 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 19 "Relations with the Military 1944-1948."

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

preliminary arrangements for close working relationships between my division and the Displaced Persons Section of SHAEF under General Gullion.”<sup>81</sup> General Allen W. Gullion was a Judge Advocate General in the American Army, head of School of Military Government, located at the University of Virginia, and also a key figure in early relations between UNRRA and SHAEF.

On 12 June 1944, Lieutenant General Grasett, head of G-5, called a meeting at Norfolk House, just outside of London, which was attended by several members of SHAEF and UNRRA, as well as representatives from the American Treasury Department, the State Department, the British Ministry of Economic Warfare and the British War Office.<sup>82</sup> Grasett opened the meeting by stating that “SHAEF’s responsibility was for an arbitrary period of six months after the collapse of Germany; it might be more or it might be less.”<sup>83</sup> He explained that this decision would be made by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. After the military period, “CAD would be followed ‘possibly and probably’ by UNRRA. Their plans should be framed so as to fit in, as far as possible, with the longer range plans of their successors.”<sup>84</sup> This was a considerable change in attitude from SHAEF’s position of only a few months prior.

General Grasett spent some time discussing the situation that existed in France. “So far there has been no displaced persons problem,” he explained.<sup>85</sup> The Allies had arranged for camps to take care of a possible 40,000 refugees should the need arise. He then turned to the matter of supplies, explaining that the farms were in operation and that there did not appear to be any shortages of food. General Grasett then called on General Scowden to discuss issues of supply. General Scowden explained that the supplies for the first 180 days had already been allocated by the CCAC, with 90

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<sup>81</sup> Letter, Fred K. Hoehler to the Director General, subject: Duties of the Displaced Persons Division in European Areas, dated 1 June 1944, in UNA, Series 517, File 21, Folder 1 “Displaced People 1944-1944.”

<sup>82</sup> Proudfoot, *European Refugees*, 109.

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum, Conference called by Lieut. Gen. Grasett, Room 105, Norfolk House, 1 a.m., June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 19 “Relations with the Military 1944-1948.”

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

days' worth of supplies already stockpiled in Britain, and the second 90 days' in the process of being shipped. He believed "that the first 180 days were fairly well taken care of. He added that army groups will make detailed surveys on the spot and will send in requisitions which may easily result in modification of SHAEF's estimates."<sup>86</sup> General Scowden explained that planning needed to be done for three possible outcomes: the collapse of the German army, German withdrawal and sabotage of remaining supplies, and continued fighting. He placed particular emphasis on the possibility of German collapse, and stated that, in this event, the Allies would be prepared to step in and provide supplies.

After General Grasett, Leith-Ross was invited to speak about UNRRA's role. He stated that UNRRA agreed with "the desirability of dovetailing plans between the two organizations, and he welcomed the action already taken in certain fields to invite representatives of UNRRA to sit with the corresponding planning groups in SHAEF."<sup>87</sup> He reiterated UNRRA's concern that it would be difficult to recruit staff without a definitive timeline for UNRRA's involvement. General Grasett responded that he could not give a definitive answer, but that "SHAEF would want to be assured that the Allied Governments wanted UNRRA's help."<sup>88</sup> This was a continuing point of contention between UNRRA and SHAEF. General Grasett mentioned the French as the first government whose consent UNRRA would require. This was, of course, an excellent example of UNRRA's dilemma and UNRRA representative Feonov, the head of the ERO's Supply Division, asked General Grasett which French government he meant, Vichy or de Gaulle. Grasett was forced to reply "that the answer to that question would have to be determined by other than the military authorities."<sup>89</sup> One of the most difficult problems in the immediate postwar period was identifying which group or groups

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

should be identified as the governing authorities, representatives from the government-in-exile, or, in the case of France, the resistance, or those from the collaborationist governments. Without a clear answer to his question, Leith-Ross moved on to questions of supply and transport. He asked General Grasett if there would be supplies available for all of the three possible outcomes (German collapse, withdrawal or continued fighting), and also if the general had any information on military transport facilities and warehousing. Grasett could not answer these questions in great detail, but agreed to look into them.

One month later, on 12 July, a second meeting was held between representatives of SHAEF and UNRRA. Representing SHAEF at this meeting were Major General Gullion and Brigadier General Frank J. McSherry; UNRRA sent several UNRRA-SHAEF liaison staff; the meeting was chaired by Hoehler. The meeting was an opportunity for the SHAEF representatives, and General Gullion in particular, to explain the organizational structure of SHAEF, and in particular G-5, and he highlighted the importance of integrating UNRRA's liaison staff as quickly as possible "so that the carryover from military to civilian operation would be more easily affected."<sup>90</sup> UNRRA's liaison staff was welcome to begin attending the weekly meetings held at SHAEF headquarters, accompanied by the SHAEF Displaced Persons officers. The military wanted to make it clear that their organizational structure was fixed and UNRRA would have to work within it. General McSherry also took the opportunity to clarify the chain of command. He explained that each person assigned to a country mission was responsible to that commanding officer. "He stressed the point that their principal job should be in relation to the missions to which they are assigned and on displaced persons planning," although they may be asked to take part in special detail as well.<sup>91</sup> Generals McSherry and Gullion were both focused on outlining the separate power structures and chains of command that

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<sup>90</sup> Notes of Meeting held at UNRRA European Regional Office, 12 July 1944, in UNA, Series 517, Box 21, File 1 "Displaced People 1944-1944."

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

existed within SHAEF. The British and American militaries each brought into SHAEF separate histories and operating procedures, and they wanted to ensure that UNRRA was aware of them.

Clearly there was a lack of faith in UNRRA. They both also emphasized the importance of a strong working relationship between the military and civilian authorities. General McSherry “stated that complete integration with the military services would be necessary if this job is to be carried out without embarrassment to the civilians or to the SHAEF organization.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly, General Gullion emphasized the point that the close relationship between UNRRA and SHAEF was presently only in effect for matters concerning Displaced Persons, and that any extension of this relationship to other areas of mutual interest would depend upon “the manner in which these displaced persons officers of UNRRA conduct themselves and perform their duties with the Army.”<sup>93</sup> This was further evidence of the military’s distrust in UNRRA. In his report to the Director General, Hoehler stated that this meeting saw continued improvement in relations with SHAEF. “This conference was a high-water mark in our relations with the military, and from my point of view one of the most satisfactory accomplishments in the Displaced Persons Division.”<sup>94</sup> This was, however, not saying much. He asserted that the clearest advantage to this meeting had come from putting several military officials in the same room, thus allowing UNRRA to ask the same questions to all of them. UNRRA was now clearly involved in the discussion on displaced persons matters, although it would take months for them to collect the information that they required. Hoehler’s evaluation of the situation is perplexing. At every turn it appears as though UNRRA is being side-stepped, and yet he reports that this meeting is a successful step in the right direction. While it appears as though Hoehler had a tin ear, his expectations were set so low that in fact he was just happy that UNRRA was invited.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Confidential Memo, Fred K. Hoehler, to Governor Herbert H. Lehman, subject: UNRRA-SHAEF Displaced Persons Relationship, dated 14 July 1944, in UNA, Series 517, Box 21, File 1 “Displaced People 1944-1944.”

The first clash between SHAEF and UNRRA erupted almost immediately. On 28 July, Brigadier General Julius C. Holmes, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5, and General Grasett's second-in-command, wrote to General Hilldring, the Director of the Civil Affairs Division in Washington, to complain about the way in which the British papers were reporting on UNRRA and its role in postwar Europe. Holmes believed that UNRRA had informed the newspaper that they would be taking over the operation of all DP camps immediately, and that the military would play no role. "One of the senior officers of the French Mission asked General Gullion the other day in all seriousness what his duties were now that UNRRA had taken over the problem of displaced persons in Europe," Holmes wrote.<sup>95</sup> He asked General Hilldring's permission to put out an official press release clarifying UNRRA's role in the initial phase, and explaining that "this matter is a responsibility of the Army during the military phase" and that UNRRA must be invited in by the governments of the liberated countries before they can begin operations. In the end no press release was made. However, this letter makes clear that UNRRA had a long way to go in earning the respect and trust of their counterparts at SHAEF. Civilians generally garnered little respect from the military, and this was not a position that was going to change quickly or easily.

At a meeting of UNRRA's division heads on 19 July 1944, concerns were expressed on several points of conflict with the military authorities. Feonov, the Soviet representative to UNRRA and the director of supply, reported that he had met with General Scowden to discuss the possibility of UNRRA taking part in supply discussions. Scowden had denied UNRRA any representation at these meetings, arguing that "results of such discussions could be made available by SHAEF to

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<sup>95</sup> Letter, J. C. Holmes, G-5, SHAEF, to Major General John H. Hilldring, Director, Civil Affairs Division, War Department, dated 28 July 1944, in NARA, RG 165, Box 115, File 3 "CAD 334 UNRRA (5-25-43) (1)Section 2."

UNRRA, which should be adequate for UNRRA's purposes."<sup>96</sup> UNRRA was clearly not welcome. Roy F. Hendrikson, UNRRA's deputy director in charge of supply, who had attended the meeting with Scowden alongside Feonov, neatly condensed the whole of UNRRA's problems with SHAEF when he stated:

the problem in so far as SHAEF is concerned is that discussions take place at so many levels. What seemed to be a tacit agreement with a SHAEF country mission was not necessarily final... General Scowden was well disposed towards UNRRA, but took the position that discussions at the lower level were purely formative and therefore inconsequential to UNRRA's possible use. At the level where SHAEF itself agreed to any undertaking this was a different matter.<sup>97</sup>

At the same time as UNRRA liaison officers were trying to integrate into SHAEF, UNRRA also attempted to establish a working relationship with the Soviet Union. Hoehler reported to the Director General that throughout the summer of 1944 there was reason to believe that UNRRA might be able to cooperate closely with the Soviet authorities in matters concerning DPs. "Mr. Illiuschenko came to my office one morning," he reported, "to say that his Government would send several liaison people to work with UNRRA and would hope that they might have some relationship with SHAEF."<sup>98</sup> The Soviets were apparently hoping to use a position within UNRRA to gain entrance into SHAEF. Whether this was for official or for clandestine purposes is never clear. However, at the end of the summer the Soviet government suddenly withdrew this proposal. Hoehler mentioned the possibility of closer cooperation with the Soviet Union based on the overtures made by the Soviets to several officers at SHAEF, including Colonel A. J. Drexel Biddle, a member of Eisenhower's staff at SHAEF Headquarters, who brought the matter to Eisenhower's attention. "I have now been called by SHAEF," Hoehler concluded, "to arrange a conference between Major-

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<sup>96</sup> Informal Notes of Meeting of Heads of Divisions, held at Portland Place, dated 19 July 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 19 "Relations with the Military."

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Copy of Letter from Fred K. Hoehler, ERO, to Director General, no. 6, Personal and Confidential, dated 1 September 1944, in UNA, Series 517, Box 113, File 217 "Displaced Persons: General File No. 1 1943-1945."

General Vasiliev, Brigadier Venable and Colonel Biddle for a discussion of prisoners-of-war matters.”<sup>99</sup> This meeting eventually took place on 31 August. At this meeting General Gullion invited the Soviet government to appoint liaison officers for work with SHAEF, but these plans led to nought.<sup>100</sup>

In the summer of 1944, at the same time as SHAEF was bringing UNRRA officers into their planning discussions, SHAEF also began compiling handbooks on an assortment of subjects related to Military Government for officers in the field. It was in this endeavor that the first major disagreement over postwar policy between the British and the Americans occurred. The German country unit of SHAEF had been working on their Handbook for Military Government in Germany throughout the spring of 1944, and by June 15 they had completed a third draft. Believing that it was ready for publication, they sent it to an editorial board and several hundred copies of it were circulated for review. As Earl F. Ziemke explains in his study of the American occupation of Germany, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau received a copy of the handbook and was incensed at the plans for economic rehabilitation. As Ziemke relates, Morgenthau argued that “[t]he German people had to have it driven home to them that ‘the whole nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracies of modern civilization.’”<sup>101</sup> Morgenthau took his concerns directly to the President, who in turn responded that the Handbook had to be withdrawn. “President Roosevelt expressed displeasure,” Pogue writes, “because so many Americans and Englishmen held that the people of

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> As Malcolm Proudfoot explained, several meetings were held between Soviet and American representatives on the question of liaison officers. The Soviet representatives took part in the discussions, but in the end refused to sign a formal agreement with the Americans. Proudfoot argued that the Soviet Union recognized that SHAEF required the help of their officers, with or without a signed agreement, and that they would be less constrained if they refused to sign it. See Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 114.

<sup>101</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1975), 86.

Germany were not responsible for the war, a view he insisted was not based on fact.”<sup>102</sup> He believed that the Handbook outlined a situation in which the American Military would provide too much aid to the German population, reinforcing the belief that the Germans were not to blame for the war, an idea with which he strongly disagreed. The Handbook had also called for a large-scale public works program, organized by the occupying army, which implicitly promised long-term involvement in postwar reconstruction, a promise that Roosevelt was not willing to make.

SHAEF faced a difficult problem once the President became involved. They could not ignore his concerns. However, Allied soldiers were approaching the German frontier and they required some guidance. The task of reworking the Handbook fell into the lap of G-5, as the Germany country unit had been disbanded, who had to make the best of a bad situation. SHAEF’s first concern was to have something prepared for use by troops in the field as soon as possible, as they believed that Allied forces would soon be entering Germany. They did not have time to rewrite and reprint the guide. Instead, they decided to append a notice to the front of the previously printed handbooks, addressing the President’s concerns. The notice listed three main principles for officers to follow in instituting policy. One of the principles in particular proved problematic: in the original text Germany had been referred to as a ‘liberated’ territory, but this was changed to ‘occupied’ in order to appease the President. However, this change did not translate well into the German language. “In German there is no way of muting the connotations of plunder and annexation of territory [thus] ‘We come as conquerors’ quickly found a place among the durable quotes of the war,” explains Earl Ziemke.<sup>103</sup> As a result, no one was satisfied with the final handbook.

Once the handbook was complete, for better or worse, SHAEF turned its attention toward finalizing a more detailed plan for troops on the ground handling displaced persons. In November

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<sup>102</sup> Pogue, *Supreme Command*, 355.

<sup>103</sup> Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany*, 88-89.

1944, SHAEF released Administrative Memorandum No. 39, a document which outlined its procedure for dealing with displaced persons in Germany. The Refugees, Displaced Persons and Welfare Branch of SHAEF had spent the spring and summer of 1944 working on this memo. The purpose was to define as clearly as possible the roles expected to be played by the military, UNRRA, the German authorities and other groups responsible for the care of the displaced persons in postwar Germany. The document began by stating that “[t]he liberation care and repatriation of United Nations displaced persons is a major Allied objective. Available resources at the disposal of military commanders will be employed to accomplish it as a direct military responsibility.”<sup>104</sup>

The memo established policy for the period of military advance, as well as the period of Military Government. The period of military advance covered the period of fighting. Once the war in Europe ended, the Allies would institute a Military Government and SHAEF would be replaced by a governing body. SHAEF had always been envisioned as just a wartime command structure for coordinating British and American troop movements. With the end of the war, this command structure would no longer be necessary. In its place, Germany would be divided into zones of occupation. Discussion amongst the Big Three over the partition of Germany into separate zones of occupation began when Roosevelt suggested it at the Tehran conference in November 1943, and it was finally agreed upon when they met again at the conference at Yalta in February 1945. They agreed that each power would be responsible for administering its own zone of occupation (including one for France) but the country as a whole would be ruled by a joint commission, the Allied Control Council (ACC). Each zone would also revert to a separate military command structure. In the American zone, SHAEF’s military control would be handed to the United States Forces, European Theatre (USFET), based in Frankfurt, while political control would be placed with the United States

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<sup>104</sup> Administrative Memorandum 39: Displaced Persons and Refugees in Germany, dated 18 November 1944, p. 1, in UNA Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced persons – files No 02 (Nov 44-Jan 45).”

Group, Control Council (USGCC), based in Berlin. The USGCC represented the American element of the ACC, which also included representatives from the other occupying powers.

During the period of military advance, UNRRA would be invited to take part in the care of the DPs. UNRRA would not take responsibility for any enemy or ex-enemy displaced persons; responsibility for these groups would fall to the German authorities. Crucially, the Report delineated the differences between refugees and displaced persons. According to SHAEF, refugees were the internally displaced, those civilians who were “temporarily homeless” and “at some distance from their homes for reasons related to the war,” but who were “not outside the national boundaries of their country.”<sup>105</sup> In contrast, displaced persons were those civilians who were externally displaced and therefore “outside the national boundaries of their country by reason of war.”<sup>106</sup> SHAEF also differentiated the DPs from enemy and ex-enemy territory from the United Nations Displaced Persons (UNDPs), those DPs whose homes lay in countries that were members of the United Nations. Finally, they defined stateless persons as those people who were de-nationalized or whose country of origin could not be determined. This was an important distinction; it distinguished those people who would require short-term care and repatriation from those who did not.

SHAEF planned for the advancing armies to leave behind Military Government detachments to work with the DPs. After Military Government was instituted, Military District Commanders would take over the supervision, control and administration of the DPs and refugees. All questions regarding DPs would then be handled by the Displaced Persons Executive (DPX), a group comprised of SHAEF Headquarters staff, Military Government detachments, combat and service officers, DP staff officers from the British Control Commission and the U.S. Group Control Council, and UNRRA personnel. During the period of military advance, SHAEF would “exercise overall administrative

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

control over the care, control and repatriation of displaced persons and the control of refugees so long as the Supreme Commander has responsibility.”<sup>107</sup> SHAEF would, however, invite Liaison Officers to advise them and assist in the organization and care of the DPs. Chief Liaison Officers would reside at Supreme Headquarters.

The memo outlined the roles expected to be played by each of the main participants in postwar Germany and further emphasized their lack of trust in UNRRA as an organization. The Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force (SCAEF) would be responsible for preventing the hindrance of all military operations, controlling the spread of disease, protecting the DPs from interference by the Germans, ensuring that the Germans supplied care and maintenance for them, and working towards the rapid repatriation of the DPs. The Allied governments would have the responsibility of caring for all DPs and enemy nationals discovered within their borders, as well as their own nationals, once they had been repatriated. SHAEF missions would be responsible for making “[a]rrangements for the repatriation of displaced persons from Processing Centers in Germany to Reception Centers in their own countries, and repatriation of German displaced persons from Assembly Centers in Allied countries to Reception Centers in areas which are a SCAEF responsibility in Germany.”<sup>108</sup>

Once Military Government was instituted, Military District Commanders would take over duties relating to refugees and DPs from fighting formations. District Commanders would be responsible for locating, caring for and controlling UNDPs as well as moving them to Assembly Centers. They would also report to SHAEF on the numbers and locations of the DPs in their area. Most importantly, they would “[f]ree from confinement nationals of the United Nations and of neutral countries confined, interned or otherwise under restraint by German authorities because of race,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 4.

religion or activities in favour of the United Nations, and place them under Allied military control or restriction as may be appropriate pending other disposition.”<sup>109</sup> Thus, there was a clear understanding in 1944 that the military would be liberating concentration camps, as well as a recognition that the people found there would in all likelihood require additional medical and welfare care. The District Commander was responsible for transporting them to facilities that could provide them with this care. SHAEF was also careful to include the possibility of United Nations nationals joining their own military units, or else taking part in labour battalions organized by their military. There would also be opportunities to take part in civilian work at Assembly Centers, though this point was simply touched upon. Military Commanders were also responsible for the health and welfare of the DPs; for their accommodation and registration; for the protection of their property, rights and claims; for security checks; for assisting the Liaison Officers in their repatriation; and for supervising the German authorities. The German authorities would be responsible for paying for all goods, facilities and services for DPs; for their care, maintenance and medical attention; for the special provision for those persons of enemy origin who were persecuted; for the payment of wages and benefits of all foreign workers in Germany; for information regarding the numbers and location of DPs and those people confined to imprisonment and concentration camps; and for disseminating Military Government orders.

Administrative Memo 39 also finally outlined UNRRA’s role in postwar Germany. UNRRA was allowed to care for the DPs in Germany, but it was not authorized to deal with any enemy or ex-enemy DPs, save for those who were stateless or persecuted during the war. “UNRRA staff officers,” SHAEF explained, “will be attached to and form part of all headquarters at which there are Displaced

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 5.

Persons Staff officers.”<sup>110</sup> The plan was to continually increase the number of UNRRA staff members as well as their responsibilities so that the eventual handover would be as smooth as possible. The memo stated, “UNRRA will provide personnel to take over in whole or in part the administration and management of Assembly Centers for United Nations displaced persons as and when desired by military commanders, who will call forward personnel through command channels.”<sup>111</sup> UNRRA would provide medical and welfare specialists, as well as secretarial and administrative personnel, when the military requested them. UNRRA personnel would be required to wear a special uniform so that they could be easily identified by the military. Eventually, “[t]he proportion of UNRRA personnel at all levels will be increased as rapidly as military and other considerations permit in order to facilitate the smooth transfer of full responsibility to UNRRA.”<sup>112</sup> All UNRRA staff would be called forward through the ERO. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) would remain responsible for the resettlement of people who do not desire to return to their homelands.<sup>113</sup> UNRRA would care for these people until such a time as they could be resettled.

The SHAEF plan placed a heavy emphasis on the role of the Liaison Officers. “European Allied national authorities have made available liaison officers empowered to issue repatriation visas, who will assist in the care and repatriation of their displaced nationals. For the most part they will

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> The IGCR was founded in 1938 as a result of the Evian Conference. President Roosevelt had invited representatives from thirty governments to meet in Evian, France, in order to discuss the refugee crisis that stemmed from the German annexation of Austria in March of that year, and more generally from Germany’s anti-Semitic legislation. The IGCR was responsible for negotiating “an orderly emigration scheme with the German government” as well as any countries that agreed to accept refugees. The IGCR did not carry out any resettlement during the war, but in the postwar period they once again took responsibility for the task of resettlement, although they did not achieve much success, largely because wartime immigration quotas remained in place. See Tommie Sjoberg, *The Powers and the Persecuted: The Refugee Problem and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR), 1938-1947* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991), 15-16.

carry out this work in Assembly Centers, but their services may be required at all levels,” the Memo explained.<sup>114</sup> The liaison officers would be accredited to and called forward by SHAEF. They could be moved around at SHAEF’s discretion. They explained that, “Liaison Officers for Repatriation may receive, and after consultation with the appropriate military authority, act upon such instructions of their government as are consistent with the requirements of the military authorities.”<sup>115</sup> The Liaison Officers would have the same privileges as other military personnel, and all matters relating to discipline would be referred to the European Allied Contact Section at SHAEF. The functions of the Liaison Officers included assisting in identifying and registering the DPs; recommending repatriation priorities to SHAEF; issuing repatriation visas to DPs; assisting in the preparation of reports; assisting in the control of their nationals; assisting in the organization of health and welfare programs; furnishing SHAEF with information as necessary; assisting in the selection of staff, the settlement of claims, and the exchange of currency; approving Assembly Center directors; and carrying out security checks on their nationals. Those designated Chief Allied Liaison Officers would work at Supreme Headquarters.<sup>116</sup>

SHAEF foresaw three different types of DP processing centers: assembly centers, reception centers, and border control stations. Assembly Centers would be established to provide DPs with food, clothing, shelter and medical care until they could be repatriated. Reception Centers were not explained in any detail, but were presumably transit and collection points. Border control stations “will be established in Germany, as a military responsibility, on civilian traffic routes, at or near international boundaries, or the lines of demarcation between Allied zones, for the control of

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<sup>114</sup> Administrative Memorandum 39: Displaced Persons and Refugees in Germany, dated 18 November 1944, p. 8, in UNA Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced persons – files No 02 (Nov 44-Jan 45).”

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 9.

movement across these boundaries and demarcation lines.”<sup>117</sup> The Memo also explained that all persons claiming POW or civilian internee status would be accepted as such until SHAEF was able to investigate each case. They explained that

[p]ersons of United Nations nationality found outside Prisoner of War Camps who claim to be prisoners of war, or members of United Nations military forces who have escaped or evaded capture by the enemy and are uncovered in the course of military operations, and British/U.S. civilians found outside civilian internment camps who claim to be civilian internees, will initially be cared for as displaced persons.<sup>118</sup>

SHAEF also addressed legal questions about the displaced persons. They explained that any UNDP arrested by German police was to be handed over to the military or Military Government police, and that they would be tried in military or Military Government courts, and not German courts. This was a reflection of the growing concern over issues of law and order. As well, in cases heard in front of German courts where DP interests are concerned, Military Commanders should ensure that UNDP interests are safeguarded and that the trials are adequately supervised.

Administrative Memo 39 placed the Displaced Persons Executive (DPX), a section of G-5, in charge of all repatriation movements. “When military commanders wish to initiate repatriation movement of displaced United Nations nationals, who can be returned to their countries of origin without interference with military operations,” it explained, “such movement will be coordinated by DPX, Supreme Headquarters, AEF, acting through the Supreme Headquarters, AEF, Mission accredited to the country of reception of the displaced persons.”<sup>119</sup> Designated reception centers were already being arranged in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands, and each center was intended to be able to receive a set number of displaced persons without prior notification. However, above and beyond the set number of DPs, the centers would require warning from SHAEF.

Displaced persons were not to be moved across international borders other than directly into their

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 12.

home country, “except where operational necessity makes it mandatory or when they are in transit to their countries of origin.”<sup>120</sup> Displaced persons did not require visas in order to return to their home country. DPX would keep track of all reception center locations and all groups of displaced persons awaiting repatriation. DPX would also “[c]oordinate movements from Assembly Centers with Reception Center capacities and, in consultation with Movement and Transportation/Transportation Corps, will arrange onward movement.” According to SHAEF policy, DPs would be sent to the closest reception center in their home country. DPX would also be the office responsible for issuing movement orders for groups of nationals at Assembly Centers, copying SHAEF on all movement orders. Assembly Center Directors would be responsible for choosing the groups to be involved in each movement, and they would supply DPX with a list of names and registration information of all displaced persons to be repatriated on the day of movement. These lists would also be furnished to the group leaders of each movement, to ensure full identification when crossing national boundaries.

Administrative Memo 39, then, created a plan for the care of Displaced Persons in Germany, and allocated responsibilities to each of the organizations involved. They envisioned the smooth movement of DPs from the areas that they were located, into assembly centres, and finally in organized repatriation movements to their home countries. For at least six months, the military period, SHAEF would be responsible for the care of all DPs, and also for their repatriation. This responsibility would eventually pass to Military Government, once it was instituted. The German administration would be responsible for providing all food, housing and other services. SHAEF would guarantee that they provided it, and also ensure the security of the assembly centres. If SHAEF needed assistance with the DPs, they would turn to the national liaison officers. Together SHAEF and the LOs would administer an orderly repatriation movement. SHAEF’s plan left very

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

little room for UNRRA. While they would be active in the military period, it would only be in the form of individual UNRRA officials working under the direction of the military. Only after six months would UNRRA take over administration of the DP camps, and by then SHAEF believed that the repatriation movements would be all but complete. Therefore, Memo 39 outlined a plan in which UNRRA was made a minor partner in the postwar care of the DPs.

Thus, by the fall of 1944, as the Allies advanced toward the German border, SHAEF had in place a broad organizational structure for dealing with displaced persons in Germany. UNRRA had spent the first half of the year unsure of the role that they would play, and the second half of the year working for their people to be included in the various meetings and conferences. By the end of the year they had made considerable progress. They had also come to an agreement with SHAEF on the role that they would play. However, this agreement significantly circumscribed UNRRA's role. In the event that there were still DPs in Germany following the military period, UNRRA would take responsibility for their care. However, it is clear from Memo 39 that SHAEF did not expect that much work would remain for UNRRA.

SHAEF believed that they had constructed a workable postwar plan. Following the problems associated with the preparation of the handbook in the summer of 1944, the more detailed administrative memo more clearly outlined the military and Military Government periods and the broad responsibilities of each group in each period. The military believed that they had a plan of action. Unfortunately for UNRRA, they were involved too little and too late to take advantage of much of this information. They were largely passive observers in the planning phase. Therefore, when the time came to begin putting UNRRA staff into the field, they were ill-prepared, as subsequent chapters will show. What is interesting to note is that the military was not prepared either. Despite the plans and the conferences, they were also caught off guard on the ground as well.

## Chapter 2

### **‘Man does not live by bread alone’: planning for rehabilitation, recruitment and training**

What equipment does the social case worker need in order to enter into the social case process, both in direct relationship with the client and in transmission of power through organization of environment? For direct relationship he needs a professional attitude and a habit of understanding a personality or case as a whole... For dealing with the environmental situation he will need besides this a point of view as to community and member, knowledge of social patterns and institutions, and knowledge of a possible range of concrete facts which are to be the materials of environmental change.<sup>1</sup>

[I]t may be worth saying that a majority of displaced persons have led what is in fact a compulsorily parasitic existence... Traces of this situation and its related attitudes are bound to persist in the community of the assembly centre, and may well appear in the form of unthinking selfishness and lack of consideration for others.<sup>2</sup>

The essence of this whole matter lies in patience, and in trying to arrange for the development of sincere human relations which contain elements of genuine affection and tenderness.<sup>3</sup>

When UNRRA's founding charter was signed on 9 November 1943 in Washington, D.C., the task before it was laid out very broadly. The Allies were beginning to see the tide turning in their favour; there was reason to believe that victory was possible. They were aware that victory in Europe would mean the release of millions of non-Germans who would have to be cared for and eventually repatriated. UNRRA had two stated goals: they were to supply not only relief, but also rehabilitation for those people displaced by the war. Exactly what was meant by rehabilitation was initially unclear, but it gradually and necessarily took shape during UNRRA's planning stage, over the course of 1944 and the spring of 1945, before the collapse of the Germany army. As well, before they could begin to

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<sup>1</sup> *Social Case Work. An Outline for Teaching*, ed. Mary Antoinette Canon and Philip Klein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, dated June 1945, p. 24, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 12 "UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Displaced Persons; June 1945."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

place anyone in the field, UNRRA had to recruit field personnel and prepare them for their work in Germany. They also had to more clearly define their goals and outline their practices. For a nascent international organization with no previous experience to draw upon, this was no simple task. Therefore, while staff at UNRRA Headquarters attempted to gain information from the military and tried to coordinate their efforts with them, UNRRA staff in the European Regional Office (ERO) prepared for entry into the field in two ways: they recruited and trained staff, and they formulated welfare policies. They began by developing job descriptions, vetting applicants, and designing a training program.

UNRRA sought to recruit a qualified, international staff to fulfill its mandate. That international character was considered crucial and was mandated in UNRRA Resolution 37 which stated that “the staff of the Administration should be of an international character, and selected upon the basis of individual competence, character, and integrity, without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, or creed, and recruited upon as wide a geographic basis as is possible.”<sup>4</sup> UNRRA also implored all member governments to make available qualified individuals in their countries for employment with UNRRA. “There is no question at all,” Mary McGeachy, director of UNRRA’s Welfare Division, wrote in February 1945, “that UNRRA’s work with regard to Displaced Persons will fail if the welfare programme of Assembly Centres is not well done, and this depends ultimately upon the quality of personnel we are able to recruit to this service.”<sup>5</sup> While she acknowledged the clash between the time required to vet all applicants and the urgency of filling the vacancies, she nevertheless asserted that “we cannot afford to put into this extremely important field

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<sup>4</sup> UNRRA Resolution 37, in *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration ed. George Woodbridge et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 3:74.*

<sup>5</sup> Letter, M. Craig McGeachy to Sir George Reid, dated 6 February 1945, subject: German Mission, in UNA, Series 520, Box 224, Folder 478 “Germany – Team Personnel.”

any but the best material.”<sup>6</sup> For UNRRA’s mission in Germany, “the best material” was professional social workers. Their knowledge of efficient administrative practices along with their experience in helping those in need made them prime candidates for work in UNRRA’s assembly centers in Germany.

UNRRA believed that professional social workers were the group most qualified to take on the task of rehabilitating Europe’s displaced persons. They brought with them both key interpersonal skills and administrative experience. Social work was a relatively new profession. At the turn of the century the term ‘social worker’ was not yet in use. Relief for the poor in the United States in the early twentieth century had been dispensed by private organizations. Before dispensing aid, each applicant received a friendly visitor at their house, who called on the applicant at their home in order to assess the need for relief. The workers distinguished between the deserving and undeserving poor, those who they determined could provide for themselves but chose not to, and those who could not provide for themselves and therefore deserved relief. Successful “friendly visitors,” as they were called, struck up a genuine relationship with the families that they visited. They also gave advice to the applicants. They sought the moral reform of those that they visited. As Mary E. Richmond’s *Friendly Visiting among the Poor* explained, “If outside help is needed, it should be made conditional upon renewed efforts at work or in school, upon willingness to receive training, upon cleanliness, or upon some other development within the family that will aid in their uplifting... we should make our help a ladder rather than a crutch.”<sup>7</sup> Friendly visiting was an opportunity for the visitor to share their own experience and expertise with the poor. They brought with them their class values and their social norms. Friendly visitors were generally women from the middle class: the wives and daughters of wealthy farmers, small businessmen, and self-employed professionals, and, as the composition of

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Mary E. Richmond, *Friendly Visiting among the Poor* (New York: the MacMillan Company, 1907), 189.

the American middle class changed, also the wives and daughters of engineers, managers and other professionals.

At the turn of the century, private organizations dispensing relief became increasingly interested in organizing and rationalizing charity. The Charity Organization Societies (COS) developed with the goal of bringing a scientific approach to requests for aid. Originally founded in Britain in the late 1860s, the COS movement made its way across the Atlantic and in 1877 the first COS was founded in Buffalo, New York. Members of the COS joined together to pay the cost of an agent who investigated applicants seeking relief. This came from a growing fear amongst charitable organizations that people were seeking relief from several different agencies simultaneously. In order to prevent this, the COS collected information on all applicants for relief and kept this information in an index. They also sought to investigate all requests, register all applicants, and supervise the distribution of relief to them. The COS method represented what came to be called 'scientific charity': the application of scientific methods to social welfare. The key was rationalization: the COS leaders sought to replace the existing inefficient system of charity with a rational system that prevented anyone from exploiting the aid system. While the friendly visitor continued to visit the client and offer advice, the decision to offer relief was made by the COS agent, and all records were maintained by them as well. Thus, the paid COS agent brought to the business of charity not only their social work skills, but also their administrative skills. Their ability not only to interview the applicant, but also to report their findings in writing, was seen a skill that all professional social workers should develop.

As a result of the influence of scientific charity, the early twentieth century saw the rise of a new kind of American social work, which encouraged people to become self-sufficient, and the decline of traditional charity work, with its focus on dispensing relief. With it came the

professionalization of social work. The professional social worker focused on helping people help themselves. This was a response to a widespread belief that relief removed the onus on the individual and therefore removed the need to work to provide themselves with life's necessities. "While some critics realized that relief rarely did more than prevent starvation," social worker Beverly Stadum noted, "more lamented how it destroyed self-reliance, threatening community morals and leaving business, the engine of progress, short of workers as they preferred the dole to honest wages."<sup>8</sup> Thus the goal of each agency was "to put its clients into a position which would enable them to achieve the fullest possible measure of self-help."<sup>9</sup> Some social workers referred to this process as one of 'stimulation.' A social worker's goal was to identify each person's strengths and capabilities in order that they might stimulate the applicant (soon referred to as the client), to use these strengths to overcome their difficulties and learn to provide for themselves.<sup>10</sup> In 1922, Robert W. Kelso, President of the National Conference on Social Work, explained that the future of social work lay not in dispensing relief, but instead in stimulating self-reliance:

it is common still to enter the office of a relief agency and stand abashed before a stern old monolith whose business is the mechanical termination of the poor. This sibyl is becoming extinct. The carefully trained case worker with a heart and imagination is taking her place. The dispenser of doles is departing, and in his stead is arising the skilled social worker—the citizen of vision who can glimpse the finished statue in the granite block; who can see the summer blossoms in the snow.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Beverly Stadum, "The Uneasy Marriage of Professional Social Work and Public Relief, 1870-1940," in *The Professionalization of Poverty: Social Work and the Poor in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Gary R. Lowe and P. Nelson Ried (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1999), 31.

<sup>9</sup> *Social Case Work. An Outline for Teaching* ed. Mary Antoinette Canon and Philip Klein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Levy Simon, *The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History* (New York: Columbia University, 1994), 107-108.

<sup>11</sup> Robert W. Kelso, "Changing Fundamentals of Social Work," in *Readings in Social Case Work, 1920-1938*, ed. Fern Lowry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 7.

In order to be able to stimulate this self-reliance, social workers shared important qualities, including “[f]aith and interest in people, insight, balance, patience, freedom, from prejudice; power to suspend judgement, to lead, to evaluate findings, to organize.”<sup>12</sup>

The increasingly widespread belief that social workers were there to help their clients become self-sufficient was elaborated upon by the Milford Committee in their 1929 *Social Case Work, Generic and Specific: A Report of the Milford Conference*. The Milford Committee consisted of a group of executives and board members from six national social work organizations in the United States, and their report sought to identify the key practices used by American social workers. One of the key tools that they highlighted was the social worker’s understanding of social norms and deviations. Norms were understood as desirable social activities, aspects of everyday life that were beneficial to the individual and to society as a whole. These norms included certain understandings of aesthetics, education, family, home, law, literacy, marriage, parenthood, recreation, religion, self-support, social behaviour, voluntary associations, and work. For example, each individual should maintain personal cleanliness, including bathing regularly, cleaning their clothes, and brushing their hair and teeth. They should also strive to marry, have children and maintain a family unit, as well as work and be self-supporting, and consider involvement in other organizations, such as their local church, service club, or recreational sports league. In contrast, they defined deviations as undesirable social activities, and included any actions that might inhibit “the capacity of the individual to organize his own normal social activities in a given environment.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, the social case worker was concerned with those deviations from the social norm that prevented an individual from living successfully on a day-to-day basis in society. These deviations did not automatically require the

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<sup>12</sup> Mary Willcox Glenn, “The Growth of Social Case Work in the United States,” in *Readings in Social Case Work*, 74.

<sup>13</sup> *Social Case Work, Generic and Specific. A Report of the Milford Conference* (New York: American Association of Social Workers, 1929), 16.

assistance of a social case worker, but a social case worker's help was required when a deviation inhibited a person's "capacity for self-maintenance."<sup>14</sup> The Committee differentiated between deviations concerning the individual alone, and those which also had an impact upon the family. Deviations concerning the family included bigamy, common law marriage, family desertion, illegitimacy, non-support, and parental neglect. Deviations concerning the individual included communicable disease, crime, delinquency, destructive behaviour, illiteracy, lack of skill in trade, mental ill health, non-conformity, prostitution, unemployment, and vagrancy.

According to the Milford Committee, generic social work was best understood as the differentiation between "norms of human life and human relationships" and "typical deviations from accepted standards of social life."<sup>15</sup> Social work identified those people who deviated from social norms and established methods of study and treatment. In order to assess an individual's adherence to social norms and their deviations from them, a social case worker had to accumulate information from the client including a personal history, complete with their education and family background; their personal data, including their marital and social status; their economic situation; the nature of their relationships to others in their family, social circle and workplace; and their environmental data, with reference to their housing, community facilities, and their standard of living.<sup>16</sup> Interviewing was the main method of obtaining this information. Face-to-face meetings with clients allowed the social worker to examine each client's situation and determine any deviations inherent in their lifestyle. Accurate interviewing required a certain level of finesse, "an alertness by the interviewer for leads to information which can be followed without antagonizing the person interviewed," as well as "the establishment of a relationship through the interview which will insure whole-hearted co-operation and an ability to cover as much ground as possible in as little time as possible without sacrificing the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

essential requirements of the relationship between the person interviewed and the organization.”<sup>17</sup>

The ultimate goal of each social worker, according to the Milford Committee, was to give their clients the tools necessary to make themselves self-sufficient. The Committee asserted that social work “has made its highest contribution when its clients no longer needs the social case worker, not because he no longer faces these deviations but because his developed capacity for self-maintenance is equal to the task of dealing with them unaided by a social case worker.”<sup>18</sup> This became known as the case work approach to social work, requiring intimate one-on-one involvement at the level of the individual. It was time-consuming and geared toward long-term social rehabilitation.

Most Americans believed that charity was best dispensed by private organizations rather than the government. They believed that charities would be better administered than government operations because the trustees were generally businessmen with administrative experience and because charity directors could be fired if they did a poor job. Many argued that “local relief often had more to do with politics than with charity or justice” when undertaken by public agencies, and that in many cases those who handed out public relief were corrupt.<sup>19</sup> The stock market crash in November 1929 and the Depression that followed gradually changed this opinion of the government’s ability to administer relief. At first many Americans, including President Herbert Hoover, believed that the economic downturn was just a normal phase of the business cycle, and that the surest way to recover was to encourage investment and continued production. The responsibility for providing relief to the poor thus remained in the hands of the private charities, but they did not have the resources to help the millions of unemployed Americans who sought their help. “The present economic emergency,” faculty at the New York School of Social Work explained, “has brought all

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>19</sup> Beverly Stadum, “The Uneasy Marriage of Professional Social Work and Public Relief, 1870-1940” in *The Professionalization of Poverty*, 46.

social work into touch with a wider range of interests in American life than ever. It has been subjected to critical scrutiny in some quarters; it has been welcomed as a collaborator in others. It faces a period of reduced resources.”<sup>20</sup> The Depression also challenged the assumptions on the root causes of poverty. “‘The new poor’ are different from the old poor,” social worker Antoinette Cannon wrote, “in that their poverty is clearly the result of outer social circumstance and not of their individual inadequacy.”<sup>21</sup> This challenged the logic of the prevailing social welfare system.

In 1932, the National Conference of Social Work called for the federal government to take a leading role in providing funds for the needy, and for a move from private relief provided by private charities to public relief organized by the government. Social workers and their organizations changed their minds about the evils of public relief, and they began lobbying for increased government involvement. “The truth is, the depression has swamped social work,” explained June Purcell Guild, a Virginia social worker.

I believe the time has come for social workers to meet existing issues with a comprehensive program of social reform. Aiding individuals one by one is essential. Organizing community-welfare plans is also well and good. Clearly, however, something more far-reaching is also needed. For those who would call themselves social workers, there is no escaping the social challenge of the times.<sup>22</sup>

President Hoover resisted federal government involvement in relief, but in March 1933 Franklin Delano Roosevelt succeeded him and he brought a very different understanding of the Depression, its causes and possible resolutions to the White House. In May 1933, Congress approved the creation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and earmarked nearly \$500 million for relief. At the helm of this massive new government organization was Harry Hopkins, a New York social worker with several years’ experience working for private charities. Hopkins believed strongly in

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<sup>20</sup> *Social Case Work. An Outline for Teaching*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> M. Antoinette Cannon, “Recent Changes in the Philosophy of Social Workers” in *Readings in Social Case Work*, 102.

<sup>22</sup> June Purcell Guild, “The Social Worker and the Depression” quoted in M. Antoinette Cannon, “Recent Changes in the Philosophy of Social Workers” in *Readings in Social Case Work*, 104.

work relief: providing the unemployed with work and then paying them for it, instead of simply doling out charity. The Public Works Administration (PWA) was founded in November 1933 in order to provide work relief jobs. The PWA organized the construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, dams, hospitals and schools and used FERA funds to provide work for the unemployed. This was the first time in which the American government had financed and organized large-scale relief for the poor.

Thousands of new public agencies were created at the federal, state, and local levels, and these agencies in turn recruited large numbers of social workers to administer them. While the first university program in social work began in 1889 with the Summer School of Philanthropy in New York, programs were soon founded in Boston, Chicago, Missouri and Philadelphia as well. In the early years social work programs attempted to teach both individual treatment and social reform; curriculums endeavoured to cover social worker techniques for resolving individual problems and resolving societal problems. However, in 1915, following Abraham Flexner's report to the program planning committee of the National Conference of Charity and Correction entitled "Is Social Work a Profession?," social work increasingly focused on case work and individual treatment. Flexner argued that social work was not a profession because it did not have an "educationally communicable technique" and its boundaries were generally too broad.<sup>23</sup> From that point on, social work education focused on defining a methodology of case work and spent increasingly less time discussing societal change. While other forms of relief work continued to operate within charity organizations in the United States, professional social work became increasingly synonymous with social case work. As part of this new emphasis, university courses in social work taught students the language of social case work and an administrative process to follow while strongly emphasizing the importance of

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<sup>23</sup> Phillip Popple and P. Nelson Reid, "A profession of the poor? A History of Social Work in the United States" in *The Professionalization of Poverty*, 14-16.

proper and accurate record-keeping. These were skills that UNRRA would soon draw heavily upon. Case work and report-writing were necessary prerequisites for a nascent international organization requiring a common administrative language and operating procedures, as will be seen. In the interwar period, those social workers who had trained at universities filled the managerial positions in the developing American agencies, while younger, untrained recruits worked directly with clients. James Leiby explains that “[i]t was out of the question that professionals hold the line jobs—they were too few and too expensive—but they took a place as supervisors or administrators, and as such they tried to infuse their values into the organization.”<sup>24</sup> Between the professional social workers and the new recruits, known as the rank-and-file, social work in the United States expanded dramatically in the decade before the Second World War and provided a large pool of qualified staff from which UNRRA hoped to draw.

Britain had not seen the same expansion of social work as a profession in the interwar years. The American experience of the Great Depression and the work of FERA and the WPA greatly expanded the role of the professional social worker in American society. British welfare practices were based on the old English poor laws which separated the poor into three groups: the able-bodied poor, those who were capable of working but could not find work; the impotent poor, those who were incapable of working due to illness or age; and the idle poor, or those who were unwilling to work. Those who were incapable of work were provided with relief, but for those who were capable of work, the government organized indoor relief and the workhouse. The only form of relief available to them was in the workhouse, where conditions were harsh in order to discourage anyone from turning to this form of relief. By the early twentieth century this form of relief had been largely discredited due to the appalling conditions. In the interwar period workhouses were abolished. Private charities,

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<sup>24</sup> James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 241.

known as voluntary societies, came to play an increasingly important role. As had been the case in the United States, they were generally run by volunteers from the middle class without formal social work education. “The days are, it is to be hoped, past,” wrote future British Prime Minister Clement Attlee in his 1920 study *The Social Worker*, “when people without any qualifications other than a good heart and the means of obtaining money plunged straight into social work.”<sup>25</sup> British universities were beginning to offer social work programs of study.<sup>26</sup> Although the drive toward professionalization thus was beginning in Britain as well, the voluntary societies continued to retain control over providing relief to Britain’s poor. Despite the growth in university-educated social workers, “the amateur can still find plenty of work to do.”<sup>27</sup>

As a result of the different historical circumstances, American and British social workers brought very different understandings of social work to their employment with UNRRA. The traditional British view of social work focused on poor living conditions and hunger as the primary causes of social disorder. These problems were best solved by focusing on ameliorating the worst housing conditions, as well as providing adequate food and health care. In contrast, American social workers, who were university-trained and aware of the latest scientific theories and developments in psychology, saw the crucial role of the social worker as fostering an overall sense of self-worth and instilling personal initiative in the individual. American social work had accepted the centrality of case work, while British social work had not. These differing understandings of social work created tension among those involved in UNRRA recruitment, training and planning. Historians Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray stress the importance of this distinction in understanding the working relationship between members of the two schools of thought. They explain that “Americans

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<sup>25</sup> C. R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), 144-145.

<sup>26</sup> Universities in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow all offered programs in social work in 1920.

<sup>27</sup> Attlee, *The Social Worker*, 14.

trained in the modern concept of welfare work tended to disparage, whether justly or not, the British voluntary societies for their non-professional, un-theoretical, and haphazard approach to welfare.”<sup>28</sup>

Although ultimately in the US Zone, at least, the American casework methodology and social work philosophy would win out, this debate played itself out in UNRRA’s various planning committees and sub-committees, and later between individuals in the field as well. In a memorandum submitted to UNRRA by the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad (CBSRA), the differences between American and British social work practices were highlighted. While acknowledging that social workers from both countries shared many of the same beliefs, including the importance of cooperation between all groups involved in the relief and rehabilitation of Europe’s displaced populations and respect for individual cultures and social practices, on other issues they saw things quite differently. CBSRA emphasized the importance of group relationships as they explained that “[i]t will be of the greatest importance to preserve the spirit of co-operation between groups that had developed through the resistance movement and find new scope for its practical application after the war.”<sup>29</sup> They also noted that “welfare operations should always allow for practical responsible participation by those who benefit from them.”<sup>30</sup> This was very much in keeping with the traditional voluntary society view of relief work. “Ordinary citizens may lack expert knowledge or technical skill as welfare organisers,” they wrote, “but they can do a surprising amount of good welfare work in association with experts.”<sup>31</sup>

CBSRA feared that UNRRA’s staff of professional social workers would not welcome the help of the voluntary societies’ recommended recruits, in spite of the fact that they held years of

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<sup>28</sup> Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 103.

<sup>29</sup> Letter, Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad, to UNRRA, dated May 1944, in UNA, Series 517, Box 44, File 3 “Welfare Branch 1944-1945.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

welfare experience amongst them. They also encouraged UNRRA to create displaced persons committees as early as possible. “CBSRA submits that a welfare policy based on these considerations will be more fruitful than one which on the one hand limits itself to mere negative toleration of established social groupings, and on the other seeks to secure the endorsement of its action merely from advisory groups composed of so-called ‘representative leaders.’”<sup>32</sup> CBSRA was afraid that UNRRA would not allow the DPs themselves to play any meaningful role. They were also concerned about the role of indigenous voluntary agencies. They wanted to ensure that no voluntary agencies, foreign or indigenous, were left out. In their effort to privilege the practices of British social work from those of social workers in America, the Council also quote at length the British Board of Education’s Circular 1516. “Any attempt at a State-controlled uniformity or regimentation would be both stupid and perilous; more than that, it would be wholly alien to the spirit of this country” they wrote.<sup>33</sup> They explained that the initiative always stemmed from those working on the ground; the federal government’s goal was merely to support these grass-roots efforts. “The function of the State in this work is to focus and lead the efforts of all engaged in Youth Welfare; to supplement the resources of existing national organisations without impairing their independence; and to ensure through co-operation that the ground is covered in a way never so far attained.”<sup>34</sup> It was the responsibility of the local authorities, those who best understood local conditions, “to take the initiative in their local areas; provide the machinery for local co-operation; encourage existing organisations to extend their work; and fill the gaps not covered by such organisations.”<sup>35</sup> The Council wanted to discourage UNRRA from taking a top-down approach and dictating professional

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

social work practices to those social workers who had not been university-educated but nevertheless brought to the table several years of community experience.

UNRRA initially believed that there was a place for both British and American social workers in Germany's DP camps, despite their very different principles, and they set their sights on recruiting social workers from both Britain and the United States to administer Germany's DP camps. This was certainly a pragmatic move—they needed as many qualified individuals as possible to join the organization. In 1944, recruitment began at UNRRA Headquarters in Washington. It was managed by a group of personnel officers from Headquarters, but included staff from the other UNRRA divisions, as well as representatives on loan from the United States Civil Service Commission.<sup>36</sup> From Washington they recruited for positions for all of UNRRA's field missions. In March 1944 they began to formulate the job descriptions for missions throughout Europe. They outlined several positions, beginning with the General Relief Welfare workers, and soon adding specialists in fields such as child care, emergency shelter, emergency feeding, occupational training, registration, information and advice services, community organization, and camp welfare programs. The specialist in charge of camp welfare programs would be responsible for estimating the need for welfare programs, supplies and facilities and to formulate plans for implementation of these programs. These programs would cater to specific groups within the camps, including pregnant women and those with young children; youths and adolescents, including recreation and education programs; adults requiring vocation training; those requiring counseling services; and general work programs and recreational activities for the camp population at large. The camp welfare specialist

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<sup>36</sup> *UNRRA*, 1: 249.

would also be responsible for advising the camp administrators on all welfare questions, helping to prepare material for manuals, and reporting to Welfare Division Headquarters in Washington.<sup>37</sup>

The call for applications from UNRRA described the candidates they sought and the rigours of the job. Each candidate would have to be prepared to work in an assembly centre of 3,000 – 10,000 Allied nationals, consisting mainly of men, but also of women and children. According to the advertisement, UNRRA sought both Principal Welfare Officers and Deputy Welfare Officers. Principal Welfare Officer duties included organizing and directing welfare activities in Assembly Centres and training welfare staff. They sought candidates between 30 and 55 years of age with a minimum of five years' experience in social work in either government or voluntary agencies. While they preferred candidates with general social work experience, they also invited applications from social workers with specialized experience as well. Candidates had to be proficient in English, and a knowledge of French or German was considered beneficial. Candidates were also required to pass a medical examination. Finally, they sought candidates with a "good educational standard."<sup>38</sup> The duties of the Deputy Welfare Officer consisted of assisting the Principal Welfare Officer, and UNRRA sought candidates under twenty-six years of age with at least three years of welfare work experience.

These qualifications were discussed in detail with both the Allied armed forces and the voluntary agencies. The Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, a group of specialists who focused on the psychological effects of the DPs' diverse wartime experiences, argued that "any success in the psychological handling of the vast problem of displaced persons ultimately depended on the quality of the individuals you would entrust with carrying out your plans in actual contact with the distressed

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<sup>37</sup> "Job Descriptions for Greek and other Country Missions," dated 17 March 1944, in UNA, Series 520, Box 252, File 118 "Job Descriptions."

<sup>38</sup> Welfare Work abroad among Displaced Persons, UNRRA, undated, in UNA, Series 520, Box 224, File 478 "German Mission – Personnel."

people.”<sup>39</sup> They strongly recommended that UNRRA utilize specialists in their selection process, as “rejection of poor material and selection of valuable personnel is done much more reliably by expert teams using scientific techniques, than if left to ‘amateur’ interviewing.”<sup>40</sup> They also suggested that UNRRA seek out a psychological consultant to advise on all psychological matters, including personnel recruitment but also once staff have entered the field, “when countless human relations problems are liable to threaten the success of your work.”<sup>41</sup> These proved to be impossibly high standards for recruitment in the end.

UNRRA also discussed its call for applications with several voluntary agencies, who UNRRA expected would help with their recruitment. In May 1944 Mary Craig McGeachy sat down with members of the Personnel Committee of the American Council of Voluntary Societies for Relief Abroad in order to discuss the standards of recruitment for UNRRA personnel. The American Council included representatives from the American Red Cross, the Catholic War Relief Services and the American Joint Distribution Committee. The American Council was in strong agreement with McGeachy that relief work abroad required both education and experience. In their joint statement of Personnel Standards, they agreed to seek out social workers with a Bachelor’s degree and no less than three years’ work experience. They were also willing to accept applicants with no formal education but with five years of experience, provided that they had “foreign relief experience involving administrative responsibility” or “a minimum five years’ significant experience in a recognized social agency performing functions similar to those likely to be undertaken by or in cooperation with UNRRA.” In other words, they were willing to accept social workers without formal degrees from universities, but they had to have significant experience in lieu of formal education. Both the

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<sup>39</sup> Letter, Lt. Col. H. V. Dicks, to Miss McGeachy, dated 21 August 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 594, File 100 “Interallied Psychological Study Groups 1944-1948.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

American Council and UNRRA also agreed that knowledge of a foreign language would be beneficial, and that they also must be physically fit, especially those applicants over fifty years of age. “Because of the arduous nature of the work to be done and the conditions of living likely to prevail,” they asserted, “persons should be required to be physically fit and such fitness should be determined by examination in accordance with requirements prescribed by UNRRA.”<sup>42</sup> Based on this agreement on Personnel Standards, UNRRA expected the American Council to recommend suitable candidates for UNRRA’s work in Europe. McGeachy also organized a recruitment drive in Canada under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Voluntary Societies.<sup>43</sup>

While recruitment for all missions began in UNRRA Headquarters, the ERO took over recruitment for the German Mission in September 1944. Just as McGeachy had done in the United States, the ERO also turned to Britain’s Voluntary Societies for help in identifying suitable candidates. However, neither the American nor the British Voluntary Societies were able to provide the numbers of qualified staff UNRRA sought. It was June 1945 before the required 5,880 personnel for work in Germany were recruited.<sup>44</sup> In the first months recruits came almost entirely from the United States, Britain and the British dominions and colonies. However, by the end of December 1945, UNRRA staff working in DP Operations in Germany was more evenly distributed, including staff from across Europe.<sup>45</sup> One remarkable aspect of UNRRA’s composition was the large number of women that were hired. In June 1946, at the height of its personnel count, 42 percent of staff were women.<sup>46</sup> This was a remarkable feat for an organization at the time.

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<sup>42</sup> *Personal Standards Agreed Upon by American Council of Voluntary Agencies and the Welfare Division of UNRRA for the General Relief Workers to Serve Abroad*, in UNA, Series 517, Box 44, File 2 “Welfare 1944.”

<sup>43</sup> Armstrong-Reid and Murray, *Armies of Peace*, 116-118.

<sup>44</sup> *Report of the Director General to the Council for the period 1 April 1945 to 30 June 1945*, UNRRA, 89.

<sup>45</sup> On the changing composition of UNRRA’s staff, see “Class I Personnel by Nationality at Selected Stations,” *UNRRA*, 3:415-417.

<sup>46</sup> “Class I Personnel by Sex at Selected Stations,” *UNRRA*, 3:418.

There are several reasons for UNRRA's slow initial recruitment. The most obvious was the fact that much of Europe had been occupied, eliminating this population from the pool of possible candidates. In parts of the world not occupied, many qualified personnel were nevertheless involved in the war effort, either working directly for the armed forces, or for their governments, or else involved in wartime production. Thus there was little qualified surplus labour available. A second reason for the slow pace was the fact that UNRRA could not explain to those it hoped to recruit how long their services would be required, nor where they would be working. This certainly hampered the recruitment of those individuals who were already employed and who did not want to leave their current posts without some understanding of UNRRA's operational timeline.

A third, and related, reason for the early recruitment shortfall was the fact that UNRRA had no large recruitment staff of its own and therefore relied on the voluntary agencies to do this work for them. While this might have seemed the least expensive option at the time it meant that UNRRA was at the mercy of the voluntary agencies. UNRRA had failed to take into account the animosity that resulted from the nascent organization's agreement with SHAEF. Before UNRRA and SHAEF came to agreement in November 1944 on UNRRA's role as agent for the military authorities, SHAEF had tentatively placed the American Red Cross society in charge of civilian relief in the summer of 1944. The decision to hand over control to UNRRA came about after discussions over the meaning of relief and, in particular, rehabilitation. The Red Cross was solely concerned with crisis management. They provided short-term relief and aid in the form of food and medical supplies and care. As the historian of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Caroline Moorehead, explains, in 1945 Red Cross workers "follow[ed] behind the troops, like the early Red Cross commissioners of the Franco-

Prussian war, to survey what would be needed and hand out instant emergency help.”<sup>47</sup> The Red Cross was focused on providing the basic necessities in order to stave off starvation and prevent the spread of disease. Discussions between the British and American governments over the meaning and extent of rehabilitation soon made clear that they planned a more extensive rehabilitation process than could be provided by the Red Cross. Harry Hopkins, one of President Roosevelt’s key advisers, also influenced the President’s understanding of rehabilitation. Hopkins strongly supported a program of rehabilitation that went far beyond food and medical care. As a social worker and, later, administrator of FERA, Hopkins believed strongly in American social work’s emphasis on helping people to help themselves. Hopkins also strongly supported the creation of a postwar international organization based on these principles.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, a new international organization which would administer this expanded mandate for both relief and rehabilitation also provided an opportunity to include the Soviet government, which the American President likewise supported.<sup>49</sup> These factors all came together to encourage handing over responsibility for relief in Germany to a new organization, international in character and considerably broader in scope, and the exclusion of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross objected to SHAEF’s decision to give a newly-founded organization such as UNRRA such an important responsibility. They questioned UNRRA’s legitimacy and its ability to supervise all of the aid agencies working in Germany, and especially those that had already been working on the ground in other parts of Europe, as the Red Cross had. In fact, the American Red Cross withdrew from Germany because it was so incensed, although the British Red Cross remained

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<sup>47</sup> Caroline Moorehead, *Dunant’s Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1998), 505.

<sup>48</sup> Robert E. Sherwood, *The White House Papers of Harry L. Hopkins* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948), 1: 361.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 47.

active in Germany under UNRRA supervision (as was required of all voluntary agencies who wished to operate in Germany). Thus, from the beginning, UNRRA-voluntary agency relationships were strained. Even when UNRRA was able to coordinate recruitment efforts with the other voluntary agencies, they generally preferred that their own personnel remain independent of UNRRA, working alongside it, but not as UNRRA employees. In addition, all negotiations and agreements with SHAEF over payment, allowances and procedures to be followed were made with UNRRA, which infuriated the voluntary agencies, who saw UNRRA as an interloper and a hindrance to their free action. The hostility was apparent in the Red Cross workers' play of words on the acronym UNRRA, as "You never really relieved anybody."<sup>50</sup> Armstrong-Reid and Murray argue that "the Administration's early relationships with both the British and American voluntary associations, upon whom it had counted as its chief recruiting source, were [thus] fractured by hostility and misunderstanding. As a result, the number of recruits from the voluntary agencies did not come close to expected levels."<sup>51</sup>

In March 1945, with the end of the war in Europe in sight, a large reserve of personnel opened up and UNRRA focused its efforts anew on recruiting from military personnel already on the continent. On 24 March the War Department sent out a memo on behalf of UNRRA to encourage applicants from the American military. The memo explained that UNRRA sought to fill several positions at the earliest possible date, including assembly center directors and assistant directors, welfare, supply and store officers, stewards (cooks), as well as accountants and financial officers. The War Department called upon qualified individuals to submit applications, and explained that soldiers on active duty could be relieved under the War Department's Circular No. 485, section III. In order to ensure that this memo reached the widest circulation, the War Department called upon all

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<sup>50</sup> Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream*, 506.

<sup>51</sup> Armstrong-Reid and Murray, *Armies of Peace*, 116-117.

military companies to post the memo for thirty days.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, UNRRA sought to compile lists of military personnel they believed were qualified. “Although final arrangements with the Army for release of such personnel have not been completed,” a March 1945 UNRRA Personnel Division officer noted, “it is necessary to go ahead with our plans for obtaining lists of suitable personnel now on military furlough.”<sup>53</sup> By 1 May 1945, UNRRA had recruited a total of 170 assembly center directors and assistant directors and 160 welfare and assistant welfare officers, although they were seeking a further 123 directors and 139 welfare officers.<sup>54</sup>

UNRRA also took advantage of another group of teams working in the field: French volunteers of the Mission Militaire de Liaison Administrative (MMLA). The Free French Headquarters in London had organized the MMLA to accompany the Allied troops during the Normandy invasion, and in October 1943, the MMLA created a women’s section, known as the Section Féminine. These women participated in a six-week course alongside the male members of the MMLA, who were training as liaison officers. When the training course was complete, they were given practical experience in vehicle maintenance, first aid, as well as messing and delousing practices for large groups of people. They were called to accompany the Allied troops on 25 June 1944, less than three weeks after D-Day. They were divided into teams of five members, and they traveled alongside the Civil Affairs detachments of the Allied armies. They began taking control of the refugee camps that the Allied armies had organized in Normandy, generally situated in factories, schools, or monasteries. They were soon called forward to accompany the troops as they moved through France. When Paris was recaptured from the Germans in August 1944, the Section Feminine

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<sup>52</sup> Memo, War Department, subject: Employment with UNRRA, dated 24 March 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 276, File 27 “Recruitment.”

<sup>53</sup> Letter, Sue Whitman to Placement Staff, dated 31 March 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 276, File 27 “Recruitment.”

<sup>54</sup> Report, Progress of Recruitment for Assembly Centers – Through 1 May 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 276, File 27 “Recruitment.”

of the MMLA consisted of 120 women working in the field. These women continued on with the Allied armies beyond France, into Belgium and Holland, and finally into Germany as well, where those who wished to remain in the field were recruited by UNRRA.<sup>55</sup>

In order to supplement the skills and experience of the international staff that it was recruiting, UNRRA sought to compile information on conditions that their staff could expect to encounter in the field, and general guidelines as to how UNRRA's welfare workers should approach them. The ERO commissioned a series of reports which looked at both the initial relief and also the more lengthy rehabilitation of the DPs. These reports included the contributions of psychiatrists, sociologists, social workers and doctors, both from the armed services and voluntary agencies, primarily from Britain and North America. Two key reports underlined UNRRA's goals with respect to the DPs: *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* and *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation*.

*Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* was issued in June 1945 by the Welfare Division of ERO. It outlined the difficulties that they expected UNRRA welfare workers to encounter regarding the mental health of the individual DPs. The report comprised ten chapters, each contributed by a different expert. The first section focused on individual groups of DPs: the categories of adult DPs, as well as children DPs. The second discussed what the experts anticipated the DPs had been through and how it may have affected them, including a special chapter on demoralisation, promiscuity and prostitution. The last chapters looked at the psychology of the DPs: 'The Way Home,' 'Going Home' and 'Recovery.' Particular emphasis was placed on the ways in which different psychological problems might present themselves amongst the DP population and how welfare workers could identify them in order to respond appropriately.

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<sup>55</sup> See George W. Davis, "Handling the Refugees and Displaced Persons by the French M.M.L.A. (Section Feminine)" *The Social Service Review* 22:1 (March 1948): 34-39.

Also in June 1945, a second report was submitted to the Welfare Division of the ERO entitled *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation*. This report was also a compilation of individual papers submitted by experts in the field, divided into three sections: General Background, Assembly and Repatriation Centers, and Individual Physical and Psychological Problems. As the Report explained, a working party had been created in the fall of 1944 to “suggest services to meet the special needs of women and girls” living in assembly centers.<sup>56</sup> Although it was impossible to estimate what percentage of the displaced persons would be women, there was a general understanding that significant numbers of women had been removed from their homes in the occupied territories and brought to Germany. The largest group of women would almost certainly be those aged 20 to 35, as they were deemed the most productive age group, but there was also an acknowledgement that women of all ages were likely to be encountered.

Together, these two reports examined several key themes, including the wartime experiences of the DPs, the developing relationship between the DPs and UNRRA welfare workers, the process of rehabilitation, and suggestions for a smooth repatriation. *Special Needs of Women and Girls* highlighted the varying experiences of women during the war. Some had been housed in barracks, while others lived in German homes. Foreign women in Germany could have spent the war in a variety of ways: as agricultural workers, as factory workers, domestic help, and still others in concentration camps. “Some women went voluntarily to Germany,” the working group explained, “and perhaps not unwillingly; and some went with their husbands and families, maintaining the normal family unit intact.”<sup>57</sup> In other words, their experiences varied enormously. What they had in common, however, was the loss of personal dignity. “The economic and other inequalities between

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<sup>56</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an International Working Party of Social Workers, Psychiatric Social Workers, Doctors and Psychiatrist [sic], dated June 1945, p. ii, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 13 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Special Needs of Women and Girls; June 1945.”

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

groups of foreign workers, the demoralising conditions under which they were forced to live, their isolation from families and home influences, and the severe deprivations suffered by many, were all aimed at breaking down social standards among both men and women, particularly in the less privileged groups.”<sup>58</sup> The authors pointed to a number of groups requiring special attention. These groups included women liberated from concentration camps, women forced into a life of degradation, women with young children, and young girls.

Both reports also examined the loss of family and community that all DPs had experienced. By removing individuals from their environment, people had lost the comfort and structure of their daily lives. This structure had been replaced by a life that was not of their choosing. There had been a loss of privacy, a loss of individuality, and a loss of respect for all forms of authority. According to the authors, the displaced persons might be expected to revert, at least in part, to “the dependent attitudes of childhood” in response to their experiences. Others may have dealt with “painful emotional conflicts” by repressing any memory of them. Still others would have more overt responses, including a breakdown of self-control; bitterness and touchiness; greed; undercurrents of hostility; self-destructive actions; forced pleasure-seeking; and immorality. Many displaced persons were also expected to experience depression, which the authors described as “a generalised and embittered withdrawal from social relationships” and which may, in severe cases, lead to suicide.<sup>59</sup> Welfare workers were going to have to identify these responses and respond to them accordingly.

Both reports also presented some of the pitfalls that the welfare workers were expected to encounter in their work. One of the first problems anticipated were the misconceptions that the welfare worker had about the displaced person. The authors encouraged welfare workers to avoid

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, dated June 1945, p. 5, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 12 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Displaced Persons; June 1945.”

thinking in terms of “typical nationals,” because “[t]he fact that people belong to a particular national group does not necessarily mean that they will correspond in any way to what one inevitably has in mind as a typical member of that group.”<sup>60</sup> UNRRA welfare workers had to remember that individual displaced persons from the same national group would each have had their own experiences and their own personality. In other words, they wanted to warn welfare workers against stereotyping. There would also be many problems associated with language. Even when two people spoke the same language, they would be bringing to the conversation two different sets of values. Individual words and phrases would be understood differently because of these values. In order to address these issues, UNRRA welfare workers required a clear understanding of the process of rehabilitation.

In the introduction to *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, the authors explained that UNRRA would not only be responsible for the relief of the displaced persons, but, just as importantly, with their rehabilitation. “For man does not live by bread alone,” they explained. “We are social animals, and are only content if our various strivings are harmonised with each other and with the interests of the group in which we live.”<sup>61</sup> They described what they saw as the four main drives that explain human action: the drive towards self-preservation, the drive towards mastery over the environment, the need for love, and the drive towards reproduction.<sup>62</sup> Each person will ascribe a different value to each of these drives, they argued, determined most strongly by their personality, but geography and history would also play a part. These drives were formed during childhood and were most strongly influenced by interactions with other people, most importantly parents, siblings, and later friends and colleagues. Through these interactions, individuals developed feelings and understandings that came to define their character.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 2.

The authors of *Psychological Problems* stated that rehabilitation would have three components: physical and mental recovery from illness and starvation; recovery from emotional loss; and re-socialization within the larger community.<sup>63</sup> The steps to a successful rehabilitation included an assessment of the individual's level of regression, provision of an environment suited to this level, and then the introduction of incentives. The authors explained that this process would create "an atmosphere and opportunities where the careful and graduated use of incentives leads to graded satisfactions over efforts."<sup>64</sup> Notably, they understood satisfaction as the redevelopment of personal initiative and the acceptance of responsibility. The development of personal initiative was at the heart of American social work practice during the interwar period, and these reports exemplify the strong influence played by American social workers on rehabilitation as understood and exemplified by UNRRA. Just as social workers in the United States were doing with their clients, so too was UNRRA focused on using each person's strengths to overcome their difficulties and learn to provide for themselves. In practice, rehabilitation was the work that each individual DP would have to do to repair their personal relations and their social connections.

The working groups highlighted two especially important terms in understanding rehabilitation: discipline and cheerfulness. The authors of *Psychological Problems* explained that both terms were constantly misunderstood. They saw discipline as first and foremost a call for self-discipline. They explained that, "[d]uring recovery phases the false discipline of force may be essential in periods of crisis and must then be used without anxiety, but with full awareness that it postpones and does not remove or resolve hostile, critical or rebellious attitudes."<sup>65</sup> Similarly, cheer had to come from the individual. UNRRA welfare workers who tried to force cheer on the DPs would only make matters worse. They had to come to it in their own time. Welfare workers, the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 21-22.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 23.

authors warned, had to take these pitfalls into account from the very beginning. For many DPs, the process of registration would be their first contact with a non-enemy authority. The displaced persons may find some of the questions problematic or objectionable. Any explanation that was given would go a long way towards reassuring them of the necessity of the entire process. More generally, the administration of the centre should in no way resemble the way labour or concentration camps were run. They explained that “[i]t may even be necessary to organise a relatively inefficient method of dealing with some of the problems of repatriation simple [sic] in order to avoid ‘doing what the Nazis did.’”<sup>66</sup>

Both reports offered a number of suggestions for approaching the rehabilitation of women in particular. Active participation in community life was their ultimate goal. “A thread running through all plans,” they wrote, “should be to give opportunities for service, and to distract the mind from anxiety and brooding... The aim of the Administration must be to make them increasingly active participants in their organisation and services.”<sup>67</sup> They should also be encouraged to take over domestic duties in the camps. They explained,

Women’s response to regimented life is much less favourable than men’s. Opportunities should be provided to awaken and satisfy their natural home-making instincts. In arrangements for housing, the preparation and serving of food and occupational activities it may be possible to find many useful outlets for women’s domestic interests which will have an important rehabilitative effect.<sup>68</sup>

They also suggested that a number of cultural and recreational activities be organized in order to prevent women from becoming idle.

While the discussion of adults focused on the differences that divided the DP population, the discussion of displaced children focused on a key experience that all DP children shared: namely, that none had experienced a normal childhood or a “familiar home life.” Children required stability in

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>67</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 6.

their lives in order to develop normally, while “[a] child deprived for one reason or another of a dependable background to his life tends to feel unequal to his experience....The effects of this anxiety in turn show themselves in various kinds of disturbed behaviour.”<sup>69</sup> Especially important for these children was the psychological state of the adults who accompanied them. If the adults were “anxious, shattered grown-ups” then the children would likely be “uncertain and insecure.”<sup>70</sup> Many would also lack the stability of having their fathers in their lives. As a result, the expectation was that they would act out in several ways. Some would appear anxious and afraid; others would be apathetic; and still others, defiant towards authority. There could also be problems related to sexuality, especially amongst girls who were raped and boys who acted sexually precocious as a response to their experiences. Their rehabilitation had to include the provision of a safe and secure environment. Unless the mother suffered from anxiety, it was recommended that the child spend as much time with her as possible. The child DPs should also be encouraged to play and be creative. Some of the suggested tasks include playing with water and earth, and eventually washing clothes and growing flowers, as well as ‘vigorous muscular play’ in order to make a legitimate use of their aggression.<sup>71</sup>

Both reports discussed in detail the importance of food and privacy in the process of rehabilitation. Food was important for a number of reasons. First, it is a necessity of life. Many of the DPs had been starved for years. They had eaten what was served to them when it was served. It was something over which they had had little or no control. As the authors of *Psychological Problems* explained, “[h]unger for security of food is only stilled after a long period of regular physical satisfaction for the psychological consequences usually heal more slowly than the

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<sup>69</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 9.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

physical.”<sup>72</sup> This would be one of the first steps towards the rebuilding of trust. It was expected that there would be cases in which people hoarded food long after it was clear that there was an adequate supply, a response to the world of hostility that they endured during the war years. The best way to deal with this problem was to assure the displaced persons that there was an adequate supply, and also to ensure that it was distributed as fairly as possible. Although there could be no choice and usually not enough being served to provide them with the nourishment they needed, by giving the DPs some say in how the food was prepared, UNRRA welfare workers could begin to build a relationship of trust. As well, the type of food was important. Foods that the DPs recognized from their homelands would help them in their rehabilitation. By putting the DPs in charge of preparing the meals, the assembly center could not only provide them with an activity to fill their time, but it also made them active participants in their care.

Both reports also highlighted the importance of privacy in the housing arrangements. The authors of *Psychological Problems* argued that people would need space and privacy in order to deal with their experiences. They explained that the individual displaced person no longer had “opportunity to be alone or to reflect upon things as a private individual. He was driven back to a crowd existence in the camp where he became a victim of all mass-emotions and rumours.”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the authors of *Special Needs of Women and Girls* argued that privacy was of the utmost importance. They explained that “[f]acilities should be provided for displaced persons to be alone or quiet, as many will need opportunities for solitude after the long years of being herded together.”<sup>74</sup>

Most importantly, both reports pointed to the importance of responsibility. UNRRA saw its primary goal as instilling an acceptance of responsibility in each individual. This responsibility included responsibility for one’s person, in the form of personal hygiene and appearance;

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>74</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls*, 7.

responsibility for one's actions; and a responsibility to be a contributing member of the community. Firstly, both reports placed great emphasis on personal cleanliness and appearance. They warned that the DPs might, at first, not be interested in cleaning themselves or their clothes. Welfare workers would have to convince them of the importance of personal cleanliness and the assembly centers would have to provide adequate resources for bathing and for cleaning clothes in order to reaffirm this point. The authors of *Psychological Problems* explained that the DPs may "wash themselves less" and that "they [may] appear more ragged than need under the circumstances."<sup>75</sup> This was partly a result of not having access to adequate facilities for an extended period. However, this was also explained as a manifestation of the process of regression, whereby individuals fell back on more primitive habits in order to cope. People would only recover a sense of hygiene when they realised the importance of their appearance to their mental wellbeing. As the report on *Special Needs of Women and Girls* explained, "The possession of some decent and pleasant clothes, after this long period of deprivation, will make a considerable difference to individual happiness and behaviour in the Centre. The women should be encouraged in their natural desire to clothe themselves as decently and attractively as possible."<sup>76</sup> Regarding personal hygiene, it was anticipated that some displaced persons might exhibit strange behaviour with regards to their health, and their reproductive health in particular. The authors explained, "medical examination is often asked for by repatriates as a technique of reassuring themselves that their experiences have not damaged them beyond recovery... the underlying purpose of examination is as much to reassure the patient about his own health, as to help the doctor."<sup>77</sup> As part of the process of taking responsibility for one's person, people would need to convince themselves that they are not only physically healthy, but also not so harmed by their

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<sup>75</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls*, 8.

<sup>77</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 24.

experiences that they could no longer conceive children. In particular, they argued that this problem may plague women DPs.

The reports also emphasized the importance of instilling a sense of responsibility for one's actions in the DPs. Both touched on the expectation of problems arising around issues of immorality and promiscuity. At its heart, the working group on Psychological Problems saw these issues as rooted in issues of low morale. As previously mentioned, the working group on Psychological Problems recognized the Nazis' goal of destroying inter-personal relations. While "girls and women have been... led behind the fronts by force and debased into mechanical lust-gratification machines," men were also "dragged to Germany and forced to impregnate German women."<sup>78</sup> In *Psychological Problems*, the authors argued that, as a result, the relationship between the sexes would remain uneasy for some time. The welfare workers should be wary of instituting too many rules and regulations regarding relationships and conduct. Instead, they should help foster an environment in which relationships could develop naturally. They explained that, "the community must necessarily develop its own rules but care should be taken to see that neither harsh emergency regulations nor customs prevent that widespread growth of effective social contacts between the sexes."<sup>79</sup>

Both reports focused on the problems of women forced into degradation. *Special Needs of Women and Girls* focused on the various ways in which women and girls in particular had been victimized. They discussed not only the brothels where "the prettiest girls" were taken, but also how "German soldiers were given free access to the women's sleeping quarters in the labour camps."<sup>80</sup> In order for these women to recover from their experiences, they would require counselling and support, as well as medical care. They were careful to point out that these women and girls must be

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>80</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls*, 3.

differentiated from those women who had been professional prostitutes before the war and had gone to Germany voluntarily.

Finally, a particularly thorny issue for the welfare workers would be the children born to these women. As they explained, “[w]here women have had children – sometimes unwanted – born to them in or subsequent to leaving Germany, and as a result of conditions referred to above it is hoped that they will be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wish to keep the children.”<sup>81</sup> At its core, UNRRA wanted to limit the effects of promiscuity and the resulting illegitimate children. They wanted to instil in the DPs a sense of responsibility in order to limit the fallout from such actions.

A third aspect of responsibility that both reports focused on was one’s responsibility to the community at large. This was a process that would take time, but they believed that this should be a goal of the welfare workers. This process should begin with the introduction of informal discussion groups. Newspapers and radio reports could offer topics of interest for the DPs. This would be a chance for them to express their feelings and opinions on current events and also their personal experiences. They could also make comments and suggestions on their care. These informal discussions should in turn lead to more formal meetings. People should feel free to discuss any issues openly. The authors of *Psychological Problems* outlined a suggested methodology for these group meetings: they should include 8 to 30 people, they should last 1 ½ hours, they should be held twice a week, and their suggestions should be heeded, when possible.<sup>82</sup> Younger displaced persons should be included in order to foster in them a sense of the political process, many of whom may have had “no political feelings beyond a reaction against or an acceptance of Nazi doctrines.”<sup>83</sup> They were also trying to teach them about democracy. Active membership in the community involved taking part in

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>82</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 37.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 38.

community decision-making, and voting was the prime example of this. The younger DPs had likely never previously participated in elections, and this was something that the welfare workers were keen to introduce. Eventually, the hope was that people should start to feel a sense of responsibility to the community. “Relief from repressive measures, and freedom from close scrutiny and supervision,” they wrote, “are bewildering luxuries at first, but the human need for more positive rewards from life, in the form of competent independence and a place of responsibility in society, are quickly felt.”<sup>84</sup> In response to the fear of authority and their previous parasitic existence, they explained, some displaced persons would want to band together and form gangs. The purpose of these gangs was to establish social status and self-respect. However, they ultimately would lead to the formation of a hierarchy or caste system, a dangerous direction. It was felt that these groups would disappear once there was a feeling of “social security” within the assembly centre.

In addition, committees should be organized to develop programs for education and recreation. The working group on Psychological Problems put forward several suggestions of activities that would keep the DPs from sitting idle: cinema showings, sports groups, dances, and, eventually, work projects. Sitting idle would only give the DPs time to obsess over their wartime experiences and slow their rehabilitation. The authors suggested that a center cinema should be organized as soon as possible. Film was a useful tool because it did not require the active participation of its viewers. It would distract the DPs without requiring too much effort, which many DPs would not be able to handle physically. Eventually more active recreation should be organized, including sports, concerts and dances. However, these activities should be planned by the displaced persons themselves; UNRRA workers would only be there to facilitate these programs. In the long run, they insisted, the DPs should be made responsible for as many of the camp functions as possible

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 39.

in order to facilitate their rehabilitation. The authors also advocated the introduction of religious services. However, they explained that the clergy should not be made responsible for helping women deal with issues of sexuality as this might bring about increased feelings of guilt.<sup>85</sup> Eventually work projects should be introduced in the assembly centers. The authors recognized that problems might arise with the introduction of any work program because of their wartime experiences as slave labourers for the Nazis. They accepted that, “difficulties may arise, for forced work has a familiar and unpleasant flavour for displaced people.”<sup>86</sup> They explained that the best way to avoid a situation in which the displaced persons compared work in the assembly centers to work in the concentration camps was to let them plan their own projects, projects that would benefit their community. These projects should aim to recreate working relationships between individuals as well as a sense of purpose for the group as a whole.

Both reports also looked at the process of repatriation and suggested ways in which the stress of this transition could be reduced. The authors of *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* also pointed out that the displaced persons would not want things to be exactly the same upon their return; instead they would want to know that “the community or the world learned something or gained something from their loss, their pain, their sacrifices and their efforts.”<sup>87</sup> To help with this, the authors offered several suggestions for making repatriation less traumatic: do not overdo the welcome; let the returnees take things slowly; be ready with information on rules, such as rationing; and approach the returnees as people who have been away, not people who have changed.<sup>88</sup> Upon return home, “the same individual may display the demanding attitude which commonly ascribed as that of a ‘spoiled’ child and on another occasion the self-depreciation and drive to expiation of one

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 31.

who feels himself unworthy of affection and respect.”<sup>89</sup> The only way to deal with these types of psychological problems was to give the returnee the understanding and attention that they needed in order to become self-sufficient, but not so much that they become needy. The purpose, after all, was to help people to help themselves. “One measure by which the success or failure of social work may be graded,” they explained, “is the resulting attitude of the helped towards the helper. Recurrent effusive gratitude and a repeated return for further assistance is a sign of failure. Forgetfulness is a sign of success.”<sup>90</sup>

According to these reports, then, the key problems of rehabilitation that UNRRA expected to face were numerous. At its heart, they expected to see several different forms of delinquency surface. Some of these issues were the result of regression to more primitive habits: the DPs might appear unclean and dishevelled, they might lack certain social graces, and they might even appear touchy and hostile. It would take the provision of a stable environment and time for many of these overt responses to diminish and eventually disappear. However, other problems stemmed from deeper problems of social disintegration that were entrenched by Nazi policies. These problems included greed, self-destructive actions and immorality. The authors of both reports argued that these problems would be more difficult to overcome. UNRRA was particularly worried about cases of sexual promiscuity and illegitimate children. They believed that a large number of children already lived out of contact with their fathers. They worried that unwed mothers would not want to keep the children that came from these relationships and that hundreds if not thousands more children would see the end of the war without either parent. This would leave UNRRA in a difficult position in terms of who would care for these children. As American social workers were professing in the interwar period, keeping the family unit together was an important social norm.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

Finally, both reports highlighted the point that welfare workers had to recognize that their job would be a thankless one. “People have suffered too deeply and fundamentally,” stated the Report, “to react in a pleasant way. Their attitude may often seem harsh and unjust but this must be met with understanding and an absence of personal feeling. The Welfare Worker needs to shun all illusions but to retain belief in human nature.”<sup>91</sup> The welfare workers would almost certainly encounter people reacting to years of lost personal dignity, and that would not disappear overnight. For the particularly difficult cases, only counselling would help.

The reports compiled by the ERO formed part of the training program that UNRRA formulated for its new recruits. This training program contained three parts: initial training for those employees recruited in North America took place in College Park, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C.; for those employees recruited in Britain, a training facility was located in Reading; and a final training centre was established on the Normandy coast in France, preparing all UNRRA employees for deployment in the field. Approximately 16 percent of UNRRA’s personnel working at assembly centers in Germany were American; 31 percent came from the Britain and its colonies, including Canada; and 18 percent came from France. The remainder were recruits from other European countries.<sup>92</sup> Women comprised 36 percent of UNRRA’s operations in Germany.<sup>93</sup>

In North America, once UNRRA had received a candidate’s application and deemed the applicant a suitable candidate, UNRRA’s Investigation Section had the task of securing the necessary clearance for each new recruit through the State Department. At that time, the Personnel Division notified the candidate by mail that they were being considered for a position with UNRRA, and requested further detailed information. The Investigation Section reviewed that information and, if there were no problems attaining security clearance, UNRRA then sent a second letter to the

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>92</sup> “Class I Personnel by Nationality at Selected Stations, 31 December 1945” in *UNRRA*, 3:415.

<sup>93</sup> “Class I Personnel by Sex at Selected Stations” in *UNRRA*, 3:418.

candidate confirming their appointment. This letter instructed the new employee to begin applying for a passport, and to make arrangements to report to UNRRA Headquarters in Washington. Upon arrival in Washington, new recruits faced another battery of paperwork. They also visited doctors for health exams and received shots. Once past those hurdles, new employees were then invited to the UNRRA Training Center, located on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park, on the outskirts of Washington, DC. At the same time as new recruits were taking part in training, UNRRA Headquarters Staff Services Division was responsible for preparing each employee for overseas duty. They arranged uniforms and other necessary equipment. They also provided counseling on personal affairs, information regarding living conditions overseas, and requested transportation and final clearance. The Travel Section was responsible for organizing all documents, including passports, visas, and military permits, as well as all necessary tickets and reservations.<sup>94</sup> Once all of the papers were finalized and the training completed, UNRRA employees were sent by ship to Britain.

The first training course at College Park began on 1 May 1944 and lasted two months. The curriculum included “basic instruction in the relationships between the [UNRRA] Administration and the military, the organization and management of Assembly Centres, services for displaced persons, health precautions, and the regional backgrounds of displaced populations.”<sup>95</sup> The curriculum also placed a strong emphasis on language skills.<sup>96</sup> Harry Cassidy, a Canadian academic and public servant who had spent the war years as the Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of California at Berkeley, organized the training program. He placed a strong emphasis on the skills of the professionally-trained social worker, but believed that what they needed to take away from the

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<sup>94</sup> *Procedure for the Processing of Personnel for Overseas Duty in Displaced Persons Operations*, undated, in UNA, Series 520, Box 276, File 27 “Recruitment.”

<sup>95</sup> *Report of the Director General to the Council for the period 1 April 1945 to 30 June 1945*, UNRRA, 89.

<sup>96</sup> This long course was later shortened to a two week course which left out the language training and focused on UNRRA’s policies and procedures. See *UNRRA*, 1:257.

training at College Park was the context in which they would be working. “I’m trying to make them understand the country that they are going to, the people that they will work with, the purpose of UNRRA and their particular place in it,” Munk told the *New York Times* in May 1944.<sup>97</sup> These were the tools that he believed would be necessary in order for UNRRA’s staff to approach the problems of war-torn Europe. UNRRA welfare officer Bernard Warach believed that the purpose of UNRRA’s training was for recruits “to be oriented to the circumstances and conditions of postwar Europe and to the organization of the American and British Armed Forces in European Theatre.” Most important was that all UNRRA staff had a clear “understanding [of] the functions of the Civil Affairs Division of the American and British military, which would be responsible for the Displaced Persons Program.”<sup>98</sup>

Some of UNRRA’s welfare officers, including Bernard Warach, believed that the training period was successful. Others were not as supportive. Several UNRRA trainees noted that the preparations focused on theory, but provided no information on actual conditions in Europe. Lectures focused on UNRRA’s policies and objectives. Susan Pettiss stated that “little practical training was offered” apart from the language instruction. She explained that “the most useful information I picked up during those weeks was how to dispense meal or travel tickets to refugees loaded down with baggage in both arms. (You put the ticket in their mouths.)”<sup>99</sup> Marvin Klemme, a rancher and park ranger from Missouri, complained that the training brought together experts who often contradicted one another. He wrote that “we were told so many different things by so many different

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<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Fine, “UNRRA School is Training Workers for the Grim Job of Relief in War-Stricken Countries,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1944, E11.

<sup>98</sup> Bernard Warach, *Hope: A Memoir* (iUniverse, 2011), 97.

<sup>99</sup> Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), 7.

officials and lecturers that we never were very sure just what those principles were.”<sup>100</sup> He concluded that “the time was largely wasted for much of the stuff taught was just plain nonsense.”<sup>101</sup> Few believed that the training helped them in field. However, all agree that the training period was a time for UNRRA to observe all of the recruits and remove those who were not likely to make good UNRRA employees.

UNRRA employees recruited in Britain received their training in Reading, west of London. Early American recruits to UNRRA also took part in the training at Reading as they awaited deployment onto the continent. The ERO’s Welfare Division prepared a series of lectures on a variety of topics, including personal counseling, special services for children and mothers, special services for women and girls, and leisure activities in the assembly centers. The lecture on counseling highlighted the importance of encouraging each DP to utilize the skills they already possessed, noting that the primary objectives of counseling were “to help the individual to recognize and develop the resources within himself, to utilize all individual and community resources for the enrichment of individual and family life, and to afford protection and guidance needed by those unable to cope with conditions with which they are faced.”<sup>102</sup> Once again the importance of personal and community responsibility was stressed. While the lecture noted that welfare workers would be limited in the scope of their welfare work because of the primitive camp conditions and the sheer numbers of people requiring help, nevertheless each welfare worker should strive to do “the right thing even on the superficial or first aid level.”<sup>103</sup> To them, the right thing meant offering the same individual attention as proscribed by the case work approach to social work. Welfare workers would

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<sup>100</sup> Marvin Klemme, *The Inside Story of UNRRA: An experience in internationalism* (New York: Lifetime Editions, 1949), 10.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>102</sup> Personal Counseling and Individual Treatment (Assembly Centres) Lecture Summary, UNRRA, Welfare Division, ERO, undated, in UNA, Series 527, Box 268, File “P300.4b Unaccompanied and/or Stateless Children.”

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

have to access their “social work skills.”<sup>104</sup> While one-on-one counseling should be made available, where possible, welfare workers should also “promote recovery through group treatment and welfare aspects of the organized life of the centre.”<sup>105</sup> This would help overcome the destruction of social bonds caused by the war. The ERO even suggested that, where possible, “some equivalent to ‘home visiting’ in Assembly Centres” be carried out, ideally using displaced persons to help with this task.<sup>106</sup> The lecture on welfare services for women and girls reasserted the importance of encouraging domestic interests in women, as described in the report on *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation*.<sup>107</sup>

The lecture on recreation highlighted the importance of providing a variety of activities in the assembly centres, and not only for the purpose of preventing the displaced persons from sitting idle. Varied recreational activities “have an important positive aim – the provision of opportunities for people to ‘find themselves’ again, whether by individual absorption in some creative pursuit or through participation with other members of a group.”<sup>108</sup> As the report on *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* had emphasized, the displaced persons should eventually be involved in planning all recreational activities as a part of the process of rehabilitation. The training at Reading also included an orientation program for Displaced Persons Mission staff, which included a visit to the London Council Citizens Advice Bureau. These were local government offices that provided information on welfare services available to London residents, and in particular those who had lost their homes due to bomb damage. The purpose of these visits was to highlight the British approach to

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Personal Counseling and Individual Treatment (Assembly Centres) Lecture Summary, UNRRA, Welfare Division, ERO, undated, in UNA, Series 527, Box 268, File “P300.4b Unaccompanied and/or Stateless Children.”

<sup>107</sup> Welfare Services for Women and Girls (Assembly Centres) Lecture Summary, UNRRA, Welfare Division, ERO, undated, in UNA, Series 527, Box 268, File “P300.4b Unaccompanied and/or Stateless Children.”

<sup>108</sup> Recreation and Leisure-Time Activities (Assembly Centres) Lecture Summary, UNRRA, Welfare Division, ERO, undated, in UNA, Series 527, Box 268, File “P300.4b Unaccompanied and/or Stateless Children.”

social work, especially for UNRRA staff coming from the United States and therefore less familiar with British practices.

UNRRA staff recruited on the continent took part in training at the UNRRA Training Centre in Granville, in Normandy. The largest group of personnel from the continent came from France. UNRRA's French personnel were recruited through the French Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees, and received training there.<sup>109</sup> In December 1944 UNRRA had begun searching for a property for use as a training facility on the continent, as well as a mobilization centre, where they could gather together recruits from Europe and overseas before sending them into the field. Ideally, this centre would house recruits for two to three weeks before they were separated into teams and deployed in the field.<sup>110</sup> In consultation with French authorities, UNRRA settled on the Normandy Hotel in Granville for their Training Centre. In contrast to conditions in the training centers in the United States and Britain, conditions in Normandy were primitive. At the Normandy Hotel, Susan Pettiss recalled that she slept on a canvas cot without sheets, and wore her wool socks and undershirt under her nightgown and army-issued blankets, in order to stay warm at night. When she was transferred to Jullouville the conditions were worse still: "three in a room, sleeping on canvas cots, window panes out, no furniture, no water most of the time."<sup>111</sup>

It is little wonder, then, that the only UNRRA employee to be captured by the Germans reported that his most pressing concern upon liberation was the whereabouts of the gear he was forced to leave behind. In a daring raid on Granville, German soldiers based on the Channel Islands, believing that the Normandy Hotel was a major Allied supply depot, had raided the town and taken prisoner one UNRRA official. Upon his liberation in May 1945, apparently the chief concern of "Mr.

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<sup>109</sup> Military Liaison Report, Fletcher C. Kettle, UNRRA Liaison Officer, G-5 Supreme Headquarters AEF, dated December 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 20 "Relations with SHAEF. Liaison Officer's Reports."

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Pettiss and Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped*, 33.

Alexander, the UNRRA welfare officer who was captured by the Germans in their raid on Granville... [was] what happened to the sleeping bag he left behind him at the Normandy Hotel, Granville.”<sup>112</sup>

The training program in France consisted of six modules, covering topics such as the administrative structure of UNRRA’s welfare operations, analysis of the effects of the war on Europe’s population, information service provision in the assembly centers, guides to emergency feeding and shelter, welfare services for special groups, as well as UNRRA’s future plans for welfare operations.<sup>113</sup> As part of this training, UNRRA introduced a mock scenario in preparing its employees for the field. The objective of the assignment was to “recruit, train and supervise displaced persons personnel needed for the basic operations of an assembly center which is being run by an UNRRA team.”<sup>114</sup> Each class was divided into teams, and each team was instructed to choose a team director. They were given further details of the scenario: they were to be placed in an assembly center which was situated in a section of a German town that had been taken over by the military to house the DPs. The center had been in operation for one week prior to UNRRA’s arrival, and it had been administered by two army personnel. Upon UNRRA’s arrival, the military immediately turned over administration of the camp and left. The center had a mixed DP population of 6350 people, including 400 children. During the previous week, the two military personnel had managed to compile a list of camp inhabitants, but they had not undertaken a complete registration. There was a central soup kitchen that fed all center inhabitants. Some food, mainly fresh produce, had been requisitioned from the surrounding community, but they had also been using army rations. There was

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<sup>112</sup> Weekly Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>113</sup> Programme for Field Planning Course for Welfare Division Personnel at UNRRA Training Center, undated, in UNA, Series 520, Box 188, File 254 “Training.”

<sup>114</sup> Employment in Assembly Centers Problem No. 1, revised 14 June 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 183, File 195 “P410.11 – 20. Employment Services in Assembly Centers.”

a cottage hospital organized in a private residence, but no delousing or medical inspections had begun. Based on this information, the teams were then instructed to create a plan of operation for the first week in the assembly center, with a focus on deciding who would assume which functions, how help from the camp population would be recruited, and how operations would be supervised. This particular training exercise introduced UNRRA's recruits to a surprisingly realistic portrayal of what they could expect to encounter in the field.

Once UNRRA's staff was recruited and trained, the final hurdle to be crossed before UNRRA staff could be sent into the field involved supplying them. According to UNRRA's *Welfare Guide*, assembly centre teams included thirteen people: a centre director; a deputy director and administrative officer; a clerk; administrative officers for supply, messing, warehousing; a welfare officer and assistant welfare officer, a medical officer and a nurse; a cook; and two drivers.<sup>115</sup> Each of these staff required two full uniforms, mess utensils, helmets, bedding, and personal supplies such as toothbrushes and toothpaste.<sup>116</sup> Each team also required two trucks. Outfitting teams entering the field proved to be a major obstacle in UNRRA's early months. According to Fred Hoehler, director of the Displaced Persons Division, the chief cause for delay of UNRRA personnel reaching the continent was the lack of equipment. In particular, UNRRA was having a difficult time finding enough trucks for their teams. They had managed to secure twenty-six reconditioned trucks, but in March these were still en route to the continent. The military had first priority on, as well as control of, all shipping, and therefore UNRRA had to wait until space was made available for their supplies. Given the slowdown caused by lack of supplies, there was some discussion between UNRRA and SHAEF over the possibility of sending UNRRA staff into the field and having the military supply

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<sup>115</sup> *Welfare Guide: Services to United Nations Nationals Displaced in Germany, prepared by the European Regional Office*, UNRRA, dated 15 February 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 258, File 235 "Welfare Division."

<sup>116</sup> List of Clothing and Equipment for Personnel Serving in the European Theatre (Displaced Persons Assignments), undated, in UNA, Series 520, Box 276, File 27 "Recruitment."

them. UNRRA had received mixed messages from SHAEF on whether they would accept the teams without their full allotment of supplies. At first “SHAEF had indicated that they would prefer not to have the personnel until the equipment is on the Continent and available for the transportation,” but Hoehler had since then been informed that “they would use the bodies of the personnel regardless of the equipment.”<sup>117</sup> This had led to a belief that UNRRA should focus their efforts on sending as many teams as possible on to England, regardless of whether they were fully equipped. This led to quite a deal of confusion in the ERO because UNRRA officials did not have access to supplies in Britain. Some UNRRA officials believed that they would receive their field equipment in London, possibly from American military stocks, before being transferred to the continent. However, as Aickin explained, SHAEF had made clear that “there is no arrangement for the furnishing of such equipment to U.S. nationals in London.”<sup>118</sup> Since it was unlikely that more supplies would be found in the field, all teams should be sent from the United States fully outfitted in order to avoid further delays in London.

UNRRA’s Mobilization Centre in France was headed by a Canadian, John Alexander Edmison, a lawyer who had spent the war years at Canada’s Military Headquarters in London. Edmison was the individual responsible for ensuring that teams were fully equipped before they headed into the field. Yet equipment remained slow to arrive. In one instance, seventy tons of equipment was left sitting on the dock in England awaiting shipment to the continent. The greatest shortage was in motorized vehicles for UNRRA staff. The American military finally had agreed to make available 410 reconditioned trucks to UNRRA, although the exact state of repair of these trucks

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<sup>117</sup> Letter, Fred K. Hoehler, to Governor Herbert H. Lehman, subject: Telephone conversation between Mr. Fred K. Hoehler in Washington and Mr. Hugh Jackson in London., dated 10 March 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced Persons – files No 2.”

<sup>118</sup> Letter, Mr. William S. B. Lacy to Keith A. Aicklin, dated 15 March 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced Persons – files No 2.”

was unknown. “To say that [UNRRA truck] No. 126 inspired little confidence is putting it mildly,” wrote Edmison on his experiences in one of the reconditioned UNRRA trucks:

since it very obviously was a long time fugitive from the scrap yard. When, finally, it took off on its puffing and creaking way, I was made to realize that it is one thing to read exasperated reports on the condition of UNRRA vehicles, but it is quite another to receive at first hand a practical demonstration thereof... With the object of getting a full report from all seats and angles, I took over the driving for a ten mile stretch... I happily ceased this experiment after I had learned that the driver of such an UNRRA vehicle requires wrists of iron and some considerable acrobatic ability in addition.<sup>119</sup>

Welfare Officer Bernard Warach echoed the sentiment. “Our two vehicles were English Leylands, Land Cruisers, open topped. They had seen better days with General Montgomery in North Africa and probably survived the battle of El Alamein, we thought....The vehicles stood high off the ground and were badly sprung so that our ride across France on rutted roads was dusty and jarring.”<sup>120</sup>

Unfortunately, these were the only trucks available to UNRRA at the time. Once in the field, teams sometimes acquired other vehicles. Nurse Ann F. Matthews, working at several DP camps in Halle, wrote home that her “days are spent traveling between the camps and the hospital, many miles apart. I use a funny little car that two-thirds of the time is ‘kaput,’ but with a little profanity and coaxing I manage to get places.”<sup>121</sup> The problem of outfitting UNRRA’s teams was a serious factor in slowing the entry of teams into the field. Nevertheless, the first UNRRA teams were deployed in early April 1945 from the Mobilization Centre at Granville. By 14 April, thirty teams had been sent into the field.<sup>122</sup>

The process of recruiting, training and supplying a newly-founded organization during wartime thus proved a difficult task for UNRRA. They set their sights on recruiting professional

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<sup>119</sup> Report, SHAEF, G-5, Displaced Persons Branch, UNRRA/Military Weekly Status Report No. 13, dated 19 May 1945, Appendix D, UNRRA Field Reports and General Interest Items for Week Ending 19 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>120</sup> Bernard Warach, *Hope: A Memoir*, 119.

<sup>121</sup> “Letters from Readers,” *American Journal of Nursing* 45:9 (September 1945), 751.

<sup>122</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 155.

social workers for their work in Germany because of their education, their understanding of social norms and deviations, and their ability to promote self-sufficiency among the camp population. They also sought to take advantage of professional social workers' administrative skills, skills that were taught in university social work programs and then reinforced during years of work in the field. For this reason, the American understanding of social work, and the strong emphasis on case work, predominated in the American zone of occupation. Professionally trained social workers brought with them the skills and abilities that UNRRA, as a newly-formed organization with no direct experience to draw upon, sorely lacked. These skills included a common language and culture of social work. They held common principles in the form of social norms and deviations; they also followed similar methodologies and administrative processes, learnt on the job at relief agencies in the United States. Altogether, this made it possible to construct a functioning administrative apparatus in a short period of time.

UNRRA hoped that both the British and American voluntary agencies would help them identify and recruit a keen and dedicated staff, but these efforts proved largely in vain. Eventually they turned to direct appeals to military personnel and government officials, and by the summer of 1945 they had recruited enough staff to fill the positions that remained. Not only did they face numerous obstacles in recruiting a qualified staff, but even after they were trained and mobilized in France, UNRRA faced a final obstacle in outfitting them. The military had priority over all supplies needed for the war effort, and therefore those trucks that they did procure proved old and susceptible to breakdown.

The work done in compiling reports at the ERO pointed to the difficult task that lay ahead. The authors of these reports recognized that the standards they recommended would be difficult to attain. The authors of *Special Needs of Women and Children* asserted:

the standards of care suggested in this Report may seem impossibly high for a Centre or Camp with a transitory population and difficult living conditions and also in a more permanent establishment... But if he [the welfare worker] knows on what lines to direct his aim he will help to deal with the mental and emotional casualties which will be among his most anxious problems and make a valuable contribution towards the personal rehabilitation of the displaced people.<sup>123</sup>

The training, therefore, placed a strong emphasis on applying previously-learned social work skills to the DP population. However, it did little to prepare UNRRA staff for the difficult conditions that they would experience and the more immediate task of providing relief. Indeed, this lack of preparation stemmed from the military's extreme reluctance to share information on the supply situation in Europe with UNRRA. Therefore, UNRRA workers went into the field ignorant of the conditions on the ground, and therefore experienced quite a shock when they arrived to find themselves responsible for feeding and caring for thousands of people without the necessary supplies. As a result, some welfare workers were quickly overwhelmed by the difficulties; for others, this was an opportunity to prove their mettle. For all, the strong emphasis that the reports placed on counselling was set aside as they were forced to deal with the more immediate challenges of providing food, housing and medical care. However, it was also clear that the goal of rehabilitation was not forgotten and, later, counselling, based on the ideal of responsibility, became a core element of the work of UNRRA in the camps.

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<sup>123</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls*, 16.

## Chapter 3

### **‘An Endless Stream of Refugees and Displaced Persons’: initial SHAEF, UNRRA and DP encounters in Germany**

The job ahead of the military authorities, the governments of Europe, and UNRRA, involves the repatriation of 12 to 15 million people. It is a big task and is the result of an unprecedented migration of human beings. Each of these individuals has a story which is a tragedy in itself. They are scattered in countries throughout all of Europe and Africa and the Middle East. In addition to these, there are many millions of displaced persons in the Far East. UNRRA has planned to be ready and is ready to serve its member governments and the military and to assume its share of responsibility for the care and eventual repatriation of all of these people.<sup>1</sup>

In February 1945, Fred K. Hoehler, director of UNRRA’s Displaced Persons Division, issued this press release, announcing UNRRA’s readiness to take part in the care of Europe’s displaced persons. In late 1944 UNRRA had finally reached agreement with SHAEF detailing UNRRA’s involvement, in a supporting role during the ‘military period,’ the first six months following the end of hostilities in Europe, but a growing role in the succeeding months. While the military was planning the close involvement of the Liaison Officers (LOs) in the care of the DPs, the military also hoped to use UNRRA welfare workers in the field, working alongside the military units and under the direction of the military commanders.

Also in February 1945, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin were meeting in the Crimea to discuss postwar plans for Europe and the occupation of Germany. All agreed that only unconditional surrender would be accepted from Germany (a condition previously agreed upon by Roosevelt and Churchill in 1944, and tacitly by the Soviets all along). Of particular interest to UNRRA was the question of how the Soviet DPs would be treated, and if UNRRA would care for them or not.

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<sup>1</sup> For Immediate Release, Press Conference, Fred K. Hoehler, Director of Displaced Persons Division, Washington, D.C., dated 23 February 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced Persons – files No. 2 (Nov. 44 – Jan 45).”

According to the agreements reached, SHAEF would maintain Soviet nationals in special camps or points of concentration, in exchange for the same treatment of British and American soldiers and civilians. The care of millions of Soviet prisoners of war and civilians was, American officials believed, the only way to ensure the speedy repatriation of some 75,000 American soldiers in Soviet hands.<sup>2</sup> In response to the Yalta agreement, UNRRA officials in the ERO wrote to Headquarters, concerned that “no reference is made to use of UNRRA in Western Germany although UNRRA acting as agents of the military does not appear to be elsewhere excluded.”<sup>3</sup> They were also concerned about the effect of a separate agreement concerning the repatriation of Soviet civilians and prisoners of war. “Should Russian displaced persons be dealt with separately,” they explained, “awkward question of priorities will arise and there will undoubtedly be strong pressure from other Allied Governments for special bilateral arrangements.”<sup>4</sup> Finally they were disturbed by the possibility of displaced persons being repatriated against their own wishes. These concerns were, nevertheless, theoretical in nature as UNRRA personnel had yet to be deployed in Germany.

SHAEF forces encountered few problems regarding the care of civilians during the initial invasion of Germany. Their procedures for working with the Germans and the DPs appeared to be working. The transition to peacetime control followed a similar pattern across Germany. As SHAEF soldiers crossed the border and entered German territory, they followed the same procedure in each town. They began by posting a “Notice to the Population” proclaiming the beginning of military occupation, and then they set about locating the mayor. In many instances the mayors had evacuated alongside the German army, leaving no one in charge. As a result, the Allies were forced to appoint local leaders, despite being unable to verify their history or credentials. Once they had appointed

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<sup>2</sup> William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 259.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram, UNRRA London, to UNRRA Headquarters, dated 22 February 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced Persons – files No 2 (Nov. 1944 – Jan 1945).”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

someone to act as interlocutor with the local population, the troops ordered the surrender of all arms, and they conducted house-to-house searches to ensure that no one continued to hold arms that could be used against Allied troops. Each house search required at least three soldiers: one to stand guard outside, one to check the papers of everyone living in the house and wait with them, and one to conduct the search.<sup>5</sup> The Allies also instituted a curfew, banned travel of more than three miles, and forbade meetings of more than five people, except for church services. Finally, they also began to register all of the local citizens.<sup>6</sup>

The military also followed a standard protocol in their early contacts with the DPs. U.S. Army officers like Payne Templeton, a member of a D.P. detachment of the American army, organized the DPs by nationality and demanded food for them from the local authorities. The detachment remained in the area until Military Government and UNRRA officials arrived to assume control. Once relieved, they would continue to follow the combat troops and repeat the process.<sup>7</sup> UNRRA officers described several situations in which the military authorities perfunctorily handed over control of the DPs to UNRRA in favour of pursuing Wehrmacht soldiers and their withdrawal was in many cases quite unexpected. Just as the UNRRA team arrived at Esslingen and began to bring together the DPs in the area, the Military Detachment announced that they were leaving. “I protested,” UNRRA Team 50 director H. L. Ogden decried, “and asked if one of the Officers could give me a hand. I got all the French together and Russians and Poles together, and the Military

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<sup>5</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1975), 153.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-136.

<sup>7</sup> Laura J. Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1952” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001), 98.

Governor said we [the military] are off and they [UNRRA] are taking over....They cleared out and left me the whole town.”<sup>8</sup>

In April 1945 SHAEF reported having uncovered approximately 2.5 million DPs to date, far fewer than the 3.7 million that they had originally estimated. They suggested several possible reasons for the shortfall, including the possibility that large numbers might still be found on farms, in Russian-controlled areas, or perhaps in southern Bavaria, where the military had yet to infiltrate the countryside. In the meantime, SHAEF was planning to repatriate “important liberated political and racial personages immediately, preferably by air.”<sup>9</sup> They quickly identified those who could remain in their present location and those who needed immediate medical supervision. “Displaced Persons coming off the farms are in the best physical condition,” they explained, while those who “worked on fortifications and in urban areas are generally in much poorer condition. Individuals found in concentration camps are in worst condition of all.”<sup>10</sup> SHAEF also began to compile a list of concentration camp survivors. The food supply in Germany was reported as good, with food coming largely from local German sources. Displaced persons were being fed a diet of 2,000 calories per day, while local Germans were generally receiving between 1,000 and 1,500 calories per day, according to SHAEF reports. By April 1945, there were 114 UNRRA teams working in the field, and 697 Allied Liaison Officers.

Their push into the interior of Germany also brought Allied soldiers into contact with the concentration camps, for which the men were completely unprepared. American soldiers had heard stories of the Soviet liberation of the camps in Poland in 1944, but it was inadequate preparation. On

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<sup>8</sup> Report, SHAEF, G-5, Displaced Persons Branch, UNRRA/Military Weekly Status Report No. 13, dated 19 May 1945, Appendix D “UNRRA Field Reports and General Interest Items for Week Ending 19 May 1945” in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>9</sup> Report, Summary of Weekly Report No. 30 dated 30 April 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

11 April 1945, American forces entered Buchenwald, outside of Weimar, and a few days later British forces liberated Bergen-Belsen, near Celle. What they found shocked and sickened them: piles of rotting bodies; then, the survivors. “They looked like walking corpses,” Rabbi Herschel Schachter, chaplain of the American Third Army, recalled upon entering Buchenwald. “I got out of my army jeep and opened the crematorium door. At that moment my heart broke. I stood there for maybe half an hour, maybe half a minute, I have no idea how long it was.”<sup>11</sup> A SHAEF weekly report noted that, “[w]ith one or two rare exceptions, conditions in the more than 20 large concentration camps uncovered by Allied armies have been extremely critical.”<sup>12</sup> They brought medical personnel and food, but “the blunt fact is that many of the persons found alive were in such bad condition that they could not be saved.”<sup>13</sup>

The Allies ordered the local German population to bury the dead. The care of the survivors proved a more difficult task. Allied soldiers evacuated the inmates to hospitals and cared for them until they were strong enough to join the masses of displaced persons that SHAEF was organizing into DP camps. Even as the war continued to be fought around the camp Bergen-Belsen, the British Army took control of a nearby German barracks and collected the necessary equipment to organize a hospital with beds for 7,000 people from the local economy. In spite of the Germans sabotaging the hospital’s water supply just as the hospital was set to open, on 1 May 7,000 survivors were evacuated to the hospital, cleaned and deloused. The remaining 10,000 ill were cared for at the Belsen camp itself. “This is surely one of the most remarkable achievements of improvised organization in recent medical history,” wrote Dr. A. P. Meiklejohn, the leader of a group of ninety-six medical students from London, sent to Belsen to care for the survivors. “Those of us civilians who were privileged to

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Rabbi Herschel Schachter, quoted in Judith Tydor Baumel, *Kibbutz Buchenwald: Survivors and Pioneers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 7-8.

<sup>12</sup> Report, Summary of Weekly Report No. 30 dated 30 April 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

see the R.A.M.C. [Royal Army Medical Corps] in action at Belsen Camp are agreed that the medical problems there were most wisely handled.”<sup>14</sup> It was an unprecedented situation. Major General J. H. Hilldring, Director of Civil Affairs Division, highlighted the essential work of a nutrition consultant and the British medical students in feeding survivors at Belsen concentration camp intravenously, as a full 50 percent of survivors could not consume Army rations by mouth.<sup>15</sup> In several camps, Allied military doctors fed inmates “food mixtures which could be administered to people found in advanced stages of starvation.”<sup>16</sup>

SHAEF Memo 39 stated that the DPs were to be grouped in assembly centres and only then organized for an orderly repatriation. However, the DPs did not behave as expected, and this was an event for which the military was unprepared. SHAEF soldiers encountered relatively few DPs west of the Rhine because the Germans had moved many industries supplying the war effort into Germany’s interior in the last year of the war. Once they crossed the Rhine River, however, they encountered ever larger numbers of DPs. “In some cases,” a British relief worker noted, “groups of foreign workers were found already assembled in camps of their own choosing, or in the communal living quarters which had been their homes during the period of forced labour.”<sup>17</sup> However, she also emphasized that many more were “roaming the countryside and living on plunder, and only moving into official camps under pressure of hunger, bad weather, rumours of homeward transportation, and direction by military patrols.”<sup>18</sup> In order to direct the flow of people away from the fighting, the

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<sup>14</sup> *UNRRA Review of the Month* (London: UNRRA Information Division, European Regional Office, June 1945), 19-20.

<sup>15</sup> Memo, Major General J. H. Hilldring, Director, Civil Affairs Division, to the Chief of Staff, subject: Summary of SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities as of 30 April 1945, dated 18 May 1945, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>16</sup> Memo, Major Ernest A. Gross, to Chief, Economics and Relief Branch, subject: Summary of Weekly Report No. 31 dated 14 May 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, dated 30 May 1945, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>17</sup> T. B., “Relief work with Displaced Persons in Germany,” *The World Today* 1:3 (Sept. 1945), 137.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

military authorities quickly began to organize a system of road blocks. These checkpoints allowed them to direct people towards collection points. “From these collecting points,” Administrative Memo 39 had dictated, “refugees would be moved under police escort to transit areas or camps in the rear of Corps Zones, and from these in turn they would be transported to the semi-permanent assembly centers in the Army Zones.”<sup>19</sup> SHAEF had expected, or at least hoped, that the DPs would wait until the end of hostilities before attempting to return to their homes. UNRRA welfare worker Pettiss described how these hopes were soon dashed, as

...a mass movement was set off. Roads in all directions became clogged with streams of horse-drawn wagons, trucks, vehicles of all sorts bulging with humanity—families, ragged individuals, freed prisoners of war—Germans and non-Germans, many with nothing, many barely discernible under piles of belongings of all shapes and sizes. It seemed that all of Germany was on the move.<sup>20</sup>

Welfare worker Bernard Warach described a similar experience: “I was on the road outside our center. I observed an extraordinary sight. On that road and far off into the horizon there were thousands of people marching, walking west. It was an endless stream of refugees and displaced persons, young and old people, trudging on their way home.”<sup>21</sup> No one who was able to travel seemed interested in waiting for the Allies to repatriate them; they simply decided to start walking. This uncoordinated movement infuriated the military authorities, whose troops demanded unfettered access to the roads.

The DPs were not the only ones filling Germany’s roads. German refugees were also on the move. Thousands moved westward ahead of the invading Red Army. Following years of Nazi propaganda reinforcing the point, the invasion of eastern Germany led to panic amongst the German population. As Atina Grossman explains, “[t]errifying images of invading Mongol barbarians raping

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<sup>19</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 117.

<sup>20</sup> Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), 48-9.

<sup>21</sup> Bernard Warach, *Hope: A Memoir* (iUniverse, 2011), 131.

German women were a vital part of the Nazi war machine's feverish (and successful) efforts to bolster morale on the eastern front and keep the home front intact."<sup>22</sup> Some Germans at the time questioned the propaganda's purpose. "Are they supposed to spur the men of Berlin to protect and defend us women? Ridiculous. Their only effect is to send thousands more helpless women and children running out of town, jamming the roads heading west, where they're likely to starve or die under fire from enemy planes," one Berlin resident recounted in her memoir.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, this fear was soon reinforced by the experiences of those living in the path of the invading Red Army. "It was not untypical for Soviet troops to rape every female over the age of twelve or thirteen in a village, killing many in the process; to pillage the homes for food, alcohol, and loot; and to leave the village in flames," historian Norman Naimark explains.<sup>24</sup> The climax was the invasion of the capital city, which was "accompanied by an unrestrained explosion of sexual violence by Soviet soldiers."<sup>25</sup> As a result of the fear and panic, millions of Germans fled westward from the approaching Red Army, bringing with them only the few belongings that they could push on a cart or carry in their hands. These German refugees were distinguished from the displaced persons because they were displaced within the borders of their own country, whereas the DPs had been displaced beyond their national borders. However, both the DPs and the German refugees were vying for the same limited resources, namely housing, food, clothing and medical supplies, as UNRRA would come to learn in the following months.

Allied soldiers pushed further into Germany, and by April 1945 they were fighting in the streets of Berlin. On 30 April 1945 Hitler committed suicide. Karl Donitz, his designated successor,

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<sup>22</sup> Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 50.

<sup>23</sup> *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City* transl. Philip Boehm (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2000), 5.

<sup>24</sup> Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 79-80.

unsuccessfully attempted to organize a new German government and simultaneously sued for peace.

The war concluded on 7 May 1945 with the signing of the surrender document, first between German and American forces, and the next day, between German and Soviet forces. The declaration of surrender stated:

[t]he Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Provisional Government of the French Republic, hereby assume supreme authority with respect to Germany, including all powers possessed by the German Government, the High Command and any state, municipal, or local government or authority. The assumption, for the purposes stated above, of the said authority and powers does not effect the annexation of Germany.<sup>26</sup>

They definitively abolished the German government, and the members of Admiral Donitz's government were arrested and imprisoned. The occupying forces assumed all responsibility for the running of the country. In all but the larger cities, military government took the form of "three or four officers apiece, five enlisted men, and two jeeps with trailers....They arranged for the dead in the streets to be buried, restored rationing, put police back on the streets, and if possible got the electricity and water working."<sup>27</sup> They also arranged billeting for troops, organized labour battalions, and, when possible, they also worked to get electricity and water restored.

The military also continued to be responsible for caring for the DPs, chiefly requisitioning food and housing for the DPs, and ensuring that the Germans provided it. Initially it was quite basic but amid popular outcry at home, SHAEF ordered army groups to improve conditions for the DPs. This meant both increasing their food rations, but also finding them better housing. "Arrangements should be made at the earliest possible moment for alternative accommodation," a May 1945 SHAEF memo noted, "if necessary by transferring Germans from neighboring villages to the concentration

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<sup>26</sup> "Declaration Regarding the Defeat of German and the Assumption of Supreme Authority with respect to Germany and Supplementary Statements" *The American Journal of International Law* 39:3 (July 1945): 170-171.

<sup>27</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1975), 185-6.

camps.”<sup>28</sup> Military authorities began to seek more permanent accommodation for the DPs under their care.

The largest problem they faced was the vast destruction of the war. Everywhere there was evidence of the recent fighting. The countryside was devastated. Susan Pettiss described the scene as she crossed the Rhine River as one of “complete contrast” with the French cities she had just traveled through. “Now, everywhere were signs of recent fighting,” she wrote. “All along the sides were wrecked tanks, machine guns, German cars. The German cities were completely leveled.”<sup>29</sup> UNRRA Team No. 18 Director H. B. S. Ballantyne described the difficulty of travelling through the country by truck. “All the bridges had been blown; some had been repaired, but at times we had to ford the stream, and at other points make considerable detours over none-too-good tracks.”<sup>30</sup> The cities had been demolished by the aerial bombardment and the recent fighting. UNRRA Team No. 5 arrived in the seemingly deserted town of Bocholt, just across the Dutch border, where the town had recently been taken: “of course no light and water. A dead town, no inhabitants, ruins, stench of burned things and dead. In front of the building bombed trains and bombed railway station. The trees were dead, there even were no birds to make nests in that dead place.”<sup>31</sup>

In May 1945, UNRRA Team No. 51 described their arrival at a DP camp being run by the military. The director explained,

I have a camp here of 10,000 Poles, Russians, French and Italians who are living in conditions of indescribable filth. The latrine accommodation is rudimentary and foul. Hundreds cook their meals over candles looted from German stocks. The household rubbish of potato peelings, paper rag etc., lies about the place in heaps. The population is lice, flea

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<sup>28</sup> Memo, Major Ernest A. Gross, to Chief, Economics and Relief Branch, subject: Summary of Weekly Report No. 31 dated 14 May 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, dated 30 May 1945, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>29</sup> Pettiss and Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped*, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Report, Displaced Persons Division, European Regional Office, for the Week Ending May 26, 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>31</sup> Weekly Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

and bug ridden for there is no D.D.T. Luckily the food is good for the moment and natural resistance to disease high. But with the advent of warm weather – and yesterday’s temperature was over 80 – there is great danger of disease breaking out.<sup>32</sup>

There were few facilities completely undamaged by the war. Therefore, the DP camp structures varied considerably. DPs were housed wherever there was room. The DP camp at Bocholt was made up of “a five floor block of Siemens and Halske factory. All other parts of this factory had been bombed and were a heap of debris.”<sup>33</sup> The floors of the building were then divided according to nationality. The ground floor was designated for the Poles, who had with them many women and children. The first floor was full of heavy machinery and therefore uninhabitable. The second and third floors housed the Russians. The fourth and fifth floors were used by the Italians and French.

In Munich, the DP camp was comprised of a complex of buildings which had been built for the German army to store arms and other supplies, and covered three city blocks, including both the warehouses, “completely honeycombed underneath with stock rooms for supplies,” and apartments which had previously housed German officers.<sup>34</sup> The DP camp at Hockenheim “comprises two large schools, one private house for some families and one private house for a clinic.”<sup>35</sup> Once organized, the camps saw a constant flood of new arrivals. Camp Director H. L. Ogden explained that they originally found 200 DPs living in the camps under his control in Hockenheim, but that within a few days the camp population had swollen to 650, including fifty children. “It is noteworthy that there seems to be no system by which a Director can be warned that bodies of D.P.’s are being sent to him from other camps. The trucks arrive out of the blue and that’s that!” a May 1945 report noted.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons Division, European Regional Office, Report for the Week Ending May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>33</sup> Report, M. Korwan, UNRRA Team No. 5, Report No. 1, dated 7 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>34</sup> Pettiss and Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped*, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Weekly Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, Report No. 14, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Bernard Warach described the work involved in organizing the DP camp in Neustadt. “A unified internal Soviet military command was appointed,” he explained, “roofs and walls were repaired by the U.S. Army Engineers and German civilians, kitchens were made operational, beds scrounged and installed, latrines dug and constructed out of prefabricated plywood, and community activities organized. Everyone was doused with DDT almost immediately after we arrived.”<sup>37</sup>

The military was responsible for maintaining displaced persons and German civilians alike, a responsibility for which they were singularly unprepared. One soldier noted that “[s]ince the tactical mission has ceased the units in the field do not have a clear conception of their responsibility toward military government... we have a definite lack of coordinated and cohesive action on the part of G-3 and G-4 and G-5.”<sup>38</sup> Another highlighted the glaring difference between the way most soldiers viewed the DPs and the German population. “Through no fault of his own,” he explained, “the DP makes a poor outward impression on an MG officer, as he attempts to present his case. His ‘home’ is usually a barracks, schoolhouse or barn; his wardrobe, what he wears plus a few extra pieces of clothing stuffed in a bag. He has developed a defensive attitude as protection against German brutality.... In American, he looks and acts like a ‘bum’.”<sup>39</sup> He contrasted this with “the German [who] is well dressed, better fed and living in a home. He is very correct in his manner when addressing an American officer.”<sup>40</sup> Military officers were also more likely to have German translators with them than those who could translate for the DPs. He concluded that, despite orders to

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<sup>37</sup> Warach, *Hope: A Memoir*, 456.

<sup>38</sup> Periodic Report, 1-6 June incl., Major W.A. Nessel to Brigadier General Wood, dated 8 June 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 176, File “319.1 Reports, Liaison Officers.”

<sup>39</sup> Displaced Persons Report No. 42, Combined Displaced Persons Executive, G-5 Division, USFET, dated 13 September 1945, Appendix B: Displaced Persons versus German Authorities, in French National Archives, Paris (FNA), AJ 43, Box 78, File “Displaced Persons Miscellaneous Reports from Occupied Zones.”

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

the contrary, when approached by both a DP and a German, officers “place more credence in the German’s complaint about DP looting than in the DP’s complaint about inadequate food.”<sup>41</sup>

Soldiers, whether American or British, had little patience for the care of civilians generally, and even less for the care of the DPs. They wanted to continue the fight against the Germans, and when the war ended in Europe, to transfer to the Pacific theatre. The military was especially unprepared for the level of care required by liberated concentration camp inmates. Many soldiers no doubt arrived in the field with expectations similar to those of Malcolm J. Proudfoot, who believed that “many essential refugee operations, except some of the welfare services required for women, children, and family groups, were no more than the standard army procedures involving sanitary measures, mass billeting, feeding, and general care. For all practical purposes these were the same for an army barrack or a refugee centre.”<sup>42</sup> They were sorely disappointed and frustrated when they found that the DPs required more care, and more guidance, than the typical army soldier. They did not see their supervision of displaced persons as a valuable use of either their skills or manpower.

Under the circumstances, the military had expected the national liaison officers to play a significant role in the care of the DPs. The liaison officers were national representatives appointed by their home governments and called forward by SHAEF to register their nationals, issue repatriation visas and assist in the provision of services for health and welfare. This arrangement had been outlined in the fall of 1944. Unfortunately, the liaison officers did not fulfill SHAEF’s expectations. They proved unwilling and, at times, unable to control their populations. Soviet liaison officers also made increasingly vehement claims and impractical demands against the level of care provided by SHAEF. Alongside the liaison officers, individual representatives of a whole host of voluntary agencies arrived in the field to help. They did not seek military permission to begin work with the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 124.

DPs and refugees; they simply showed up, circumventing military protocol and generally getting in the way, from the military's perspective. Finally, the process of repatriation was fraught with difficulties. The disorganization of the entire process only served to anger SHAEF officials. Trains arrived without warning at all hours of the day. It was impossible for them to prepare for the arrivals and departures. Finally, the DPs themselves proved an unruly lot. Many had taken it upon themselves to repatriate of their own free will, taking to the road and impeding the flow of military traffic. They also set upon the German population and took revenge against them. Drunkenness proved a particularly deadly problem for those DPs who found large quantities of liquor.

The combination of difficult displaced persons, unwilling liaison officers and disorganized repatriation efforts all combined to alter SHAEF's understanding of UNRRA's role in the DP camps in Germany. UNRRA officials were willing and apparently able to take on the administration of the DP camps, register DPs, provide food and medical care, and organize the voluntary agencies, all tasks that the military found itself increasingly reluctant to do. Thus, while UNRRA had played a supporting role during the initial invasion of Germany, helping the military when they were invited to do so, they came to be seen as an increasingly valuable partner in the care of the DPs.

Unfortunately UNRRA was not prepared to fill this role immediately. In early 1945 they still faced a serious recruitment problem. As explained earlier, qualified personnel were already working for organizations involved in the war effort, whether it was working for the armed forces or groups involved in wartime production. Attracting staff was made more difficult by the fact that UNRRA could not promise its recruits either a specific length of service or a precise location of employment. Finally, UNRRA itself had only a small staff focused on recruitment, and therefore they relied heavily on voluntary agencies in both Britain and the United States to suggest personnel for work with UNRRA. Alongside the problem of recruitment, supplying UNRRA's teams as they were preparing

to enter the field was a second major obstacle to meeting SHAEF's request for personnel in Germany. Throughout the fall of 1944, UNRRA and SHAEF had held numerous conferences on the composition of assembly centre teams and the equipment they required in order to be "self-contained and independently mobile."<sup>43</sup> Given the military's prioritized claim to all supplies, UNRRA struggled to equip its teams with the most basic of necessities before they entered the field. The most difficult items to procure were trucks for use in the field. As long as the military retained control over requisitioning and refused to supply UNRRA there would be no access to those supplies necessary to send UNRRA teams into the field.

While in December 1944 UNRRA had agreed to provide the military with 200 field teams of thirteen members, in light of the problems associated with recruitment and supply, UNRRA was unable to provide the promised teams; instead, they resorted to sending out smaller teams, groups consisting of three or four UNRRA members, known as spearhead teams. According to *Review of the Month*, a monthly publication issued by the ERO's Information Division, the spearhead teams "are being used by the military authorities in a variety of ways, according to how fluid or stable the situation is in a particular place. Sometimes the team is split up and the personnel used in an individual capacity where the need is greatest; in other cases the team operated as such from its own base...; or the team may be divided in half and put to work at two centres."<sup>44</sup> The first spearhead teams were mobilized on 15 April 1945, and by the end of June, there were 322 in the field, of varying size. UNRRA then spent the summer of 1945 building up the spearhead teams to their full strength. As UNRRA built up these teams in May and June 1945, the military became increasingly

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<sup>43</sup> Military Liaison Report, Fletcher C. Kettle, UNRRA Liaison Officer, G-5 Supreme Headquarters AEF, dated December 1944, in UNA, Series 523, Box 60, File 20 "Relations with SHAEF. Liaison Officer's Reports."

<sup>44</sup> *UNRRA Review of the Month* (London: UNRRA Information Division, European Regional Office, June 1945), 7.

willing to hand over administrative responsibility for the DP camps than they had been earlier in 1945.

These UNRRA teams were at all times under the command of the military, as per the terms of the UNRRA-SHAEF Agreement. Bernard Warach noted that in the early months UNRRA had all but lost contact with its personnel in the field. “Communications with the field units was very poor. We were aware of that problem in Neustadt. The UNRRA teams were under military command and provided full logistical support. There was really no need for UNRRA direction at all. We receive no mail or pay.”<sup>45</sup> This period was at once confusing and liberating for UNRRA staff on the ground. While they had no direction in terms of policy, they were also not limited in terms of actions that they could take. They did not need to wait for permission to come down from UNRRA headquarters when they wanted to institute new programs. They had free reign over the DP camps that they administered.

By mid-May 1945 UNRRA had sent 141 teams into the field in Germany. At the end of that month, officials at ERO wrote to UNRRA Headquarters in Washington to request welfare goods for the DP camps. Staff in the field were desperately requesting any clothing, toiletries and recreational supplies that could be found. Officials at the ERO in London had attempted to locate canteen supplies and toiletries in Britain, but the only supplies available were timber nails and screws, pencils, paint brushes and paint, glue, hammers, mallets, various saws and screwdrivers, sewing needles and thread, as well as small amounts of playing cards, chess sets, soap, razors, and toothpaste. They were unfortunately unable to locate any sports equipment, such as footballs, volleyballs and table tennis rackets, or toothbrushes and scissors. They also sought clothing for all age groups, especially children.

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<sup>45</sup> Warach, *Hope: A Memoir*, 137-138.

Aside from the challenge of trying to locate adequate supplies, one of the largest problems for UNRRA teams in the field was communication with the DPs. UNRRA teams, despite their international composition, rarely spoke the languages of those under their care. Therefore, UNRRA officials often had to turn to the DPs themselves for interpreters. “All our charges are Poles and Russians, and the struggle with the languages is some battle,” reported UNRRA Team No. 18 director H.S. Ballantyne.<sup>46</sup> “I have got a French-speaking Pole, who can speak Polish and Russian. Rachel Greene [the team’s welfare officer] has an English-speaking Pole who can do likewise, so we manage somehow, most ably helped by a number of soldiers of the U.S. Army, who, in their spare time, come and give a hand with the interpreting.”<sup>47</sup> Ballantyne requested that UNRRA send him a short dictionary containing 200-300 words in English, German, Russian and Polish. “I have got some out already here,” he explained, “on the typewriter; and we are beginning to make ourselves understood.”<sup>48</sup> However, it made an already difficult task especially frustrating and challenging. “I have an awful horror,” he wrote, “that one day I shall be asking for a glass of water in polite society and that someone will bring me a double scotch.”<sup>49</sup> The chances of this happening were highly unlikely, but Ballantyne’s frustration, as well as his sense of humour in the midst of such an absurd situation, was not difficult to understand.

The lack of basic office supplies had very practical and negative implications. Without paper, pens, typewriters, forms, or even rubber stamps, it was impossible to begin to construct the paper records expected, let alone the complicated five-part registration that had been designed. Nowhere was registration of the DPs taking place. “Few registration cards are apparently available,”

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<sup>46</sup> H.B. S. Ballantyne, Director, UNRRA Team No. 18, quoted in UNRRA Weekly Report, Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

SHAEF noted, and therefore “[o]nly a simple statistical record was kept for purposes of supply and transport.”<sup>50</sup> Despite this fact, SHAEF reported that the DP camps in Western Germany were “functioning smoothly, with some striking instances of exceptional welfare and leisure time programs.”<sup>51</sup> At the DP camp at Bocholt, UNRRA welfare worker M. Korwan immediately set about clearing a space amongst the rubble for the children to use. When the space was finally cleared and the windows and doors repaired, she invited the children into the hall. “When the children came in,” she explained, “they asked what they can do. I said, ‘all you want, this is your own place.’ ‘Will you smack us if we scream?’ ‘No,’ I said, ‘you can shout as much as you like.’ They started shouting and for 2 days they did nothing else. Afterwards they had enough and they began to play normally.”<sup>52</sup> Their wartime experiences had taught them to always be quiet as children “were smacked if they did not get out of the way where a German was going, smacked if they broke a flower or laughed or sang and also without any reason other than their mere existence.”<sup>53</sup> Despite the difficult conditions, then, UNRRA workers began developing programs of rehabilitation, even as they continued to solve problems associated with basic housing. Perhaps in some ways, the absolute lack of basic supplies and the most rudimentary facilities encouraged a creativity and ingenuity on the part of UNRRA staff and DPs alike.

In reality, in the first months in the field, there was little time to spend filling out reports for UNRRA Headquarters. When the welfare workers did find the time, they often did not have the tools necessary. UNRRA teams were not equipped with paper and typewriters; they had to scour the German landscape to track down such things. As a result, only towards the end of the summer were

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<sup>50</sup> Memo, Major Ernest A. Gross, to Chief, Economics and Relief Branch, subject: Summary of Weekly Report No. 32 dated 28 May 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, dated 7 June 1945, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Weekly Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

UNRRA teams able to begin submitting regular reports to zone headquarters. Initially officers were expected to submit an “Assembly Centre Weekly Report,” a weekly numerical summary of the DPs at each centre. The ERO’s Welfare Division recommended that a section entitled “Special Comments” be appended to the report for any other information that UNRRA welfare officers believed to be important. The explained that, “[i]n order that action can be taken at the appropriate level on such things as the provision of special food, clothing, welfare supplies, special personnel etc. for the care of such groups, it will be particularly important for the Welfare Officer to relate his or her reports to these groups and their needs, as well as to general welfare problems.”<sup>54</sup> The ERO also reminded welfare officers that they should report any “special situations” as soon as possible, although exactly what qualified as such a situation was never clarified.

By 6 June 1945, the ERO’s expectations had evolved. Centre directors were instructed to submit a more detailed report on conditions in each centre, and welfare officers were instructed to submit to the centre director a narrative report on welfare work in the centre for inclusion. “When making these reports,” the ERO explained, “it is essential that Welfare Officers should relate information to needs in such a way that requirements can be speedily and accurately evaluated.”<sup>55</sup> The welfare reports were to comprise two sections: a statistical section and a narrative section. The statistical section was to include the camp population broken down according to age range. A page within each report was to be devoted to a more precise breakdown of the ages of all children. “The Report should be analytical in content,” the instructions explained, “indicating the welfare services rendered in relation to the specific situations encountered; it may on occasion be necessary to describe

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<sup>54</sup> Memo, Reporting from Assembly Centres: Guidance to Welfare Officers, U.N.C. 765, Welfare Division, ERO, dated 1 May 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 252, File 2 “Reporting from Assembly Centres.”

<sup>55</sup> Memo, Reporting: Assembly Centres to Areas: Directions to Welfare Officers on the Preparation of Reports, U.N.C. 862, 3<sup>rd</sup> draft, dated 6 June 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 183, File 193 “P410.9 - Camps for DP.”

the actual situation.”<sup>56</sup> The report went on to state that UNRRA welfare officers “should feel free to make definite recommendations on which he considers action should be taken (and, where possible, by whom). These recommendations should, of course, be well documented. A summary of recommendations should appear at the end of the Report.”<sup>57</sup> The ERO recommended several headings be addressed in each report: general organization of the camp, available facilities, any special problem groups, the disposition of unaccompanied children, services offered to all children and youth, and personal counseling services. The instructions on report-writing drew upon many of the same principles that were both taught to and followed by American social workers.

The summer of 1945 witnessed a shift in SHAEF policy based on conditions on the ground. SHAEF’s plan for administering the DP camps in Germany relied heavily on the role played by the liaison officers controlling their nationals. However, it did not take long to learn that these officers could not effectively fulfill this role. In the area administered by the American Seventh Army, there were numerous reports of problems with Polish liaison officers in particular. Brigadier General Wood reported that their territory contained 134,000 Polish DPs, and that the vast majority of them wanted to return home, but that the liaison officers were slowing their movement. The liaison officers themselves “would mostly like to go home, but wonder if they can safely do so.”<sup>58</sup> They feared crossing through the Russian zone. Warsaw radio meanwhile was encouraging Poles in Germany to “form themselves in groups of 50 and trek home,” but the Polish DPs “are deterred by the doubts of Polish Ln [Liaison] officers” on the advisability of such a move.<sup>59</sup> As well, the Soviet military was forcing Polish DPs across the border into the American zone, which was only adding to

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Memo, Eric Fisher Wood, Brigadier General, to Commanding General, US Group CC, subject: Report of Reconnaissance, 17-22 July 1945, dated 23 July 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

the problem. “For instance,” Wood explained, “1800 [Polish DPs] loaded in Thuringia by the Russians, were shipped via Bebra, and ended up at Karlsruhe on 19 July,” in the American zone of occupation, rather than being returned home to Poland.<sup>60</sup> The UNRRA team working at Euskirchen, just west of Bonn and not far from the Belgian border, reported a similar situation. They were also dealing with unexpected arrivals, and in one particularly distressing instance, “a party of Russians, expected to number 25, turned up 235 strong.”<sup>61</sup>

The DP exchange centre located at Bebra, twenty kilometers from the border with the Russian zone, was a site of particular chaos. The centre was operated by Major W. A. Nessel of USGCC, POW and DP Division, and located in the Bebra train station. German refugees and displaced persons had gathered at the station in order for transport home, either into Eastern Germany or beyond to Eastern Europe. At the end of July 1945, 15,000 such people had gathered in Bebra and the American Army simply did not have the resources to care for them. “Few people are being exchanged at Bebra,” the report stated, “because of the inability of Major Nessel to reach a working agreement with the Russians.”<sup>62</sup> As a result, conditions in the town had quickly deteriorated and “[t]he town is jammed with frantic people. Considerable human misery is being encountered which is difficult to alleviate due to present food and medical shortages.”<sup>63</sup> The problem stemmed from the fact that the Russian military was only accepting Russians into its zone, while forcing Polish people in the opposite direction. Another point of contention concerned the return of trains used to move people eastward. Major Nessel wanted reassurance that the trains would be returned to the American zone. “The Russians have refused to guarantee the return of any rolling stock; in fact some US RR

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> *UNRRA Review of the Month* (London: UNRRA Information Division, European Regional Office, June 1945), 9.

<sup>62</sup> Memo, Eric Fisher Wood, Brigadier General, to Commanding General, US Group CC, subject: Report of Reconnaissance, 17-22 July 1945, Annex No. 2 – DP Exchange Center, Bebra, dated 23 July 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

[railroad] equipment seems to have been mysteriously swallowed up within the Russian Zone already.”<sup>64</sup>

The problems with the liaison officers led to a revision of SHAEF’s policy. The first evidence of this shift came in a memo entitled “Liberated Citizens of the Soviet Union,” issued on 8 April 1945. This memo touched on some of the problems encountered in the field. In the section concerning camp management and security, SHAEF reduced the role of the liaison officers to a supporting one. “For security and other pertinent reasons,” the memo stated,

...control over the liberated Soviet citizens must be exercised by the US forces with the assistance of the Soviet authorities. The US commander, in whose area the camps or concentration points are located, will appoint a US commandant for each camp who will have the overall responsibility for discipline and administration thereof. The Soviet authorities have the right to appoint the internal administration and to set up the management and discipline within the camp according to Soviet law and military procedures.<sup>65</sup>

According to the updated memo, in cases where the Soviet camp leader was unable to maintain internal discipline, the US commander had the power to remove him and appoint someone new in his place. As well, the memo noted that “where the US camp commandant or military commander feels that additional military or administrative personnel is required in order to carry out the responsibilities of US forces, military commanders are authorized to assign such military or UNRRA personnel as may be available.”<sup>66</sup> UNRRA was now expected to play a much larger role than Memo 39 had originally allowed it. In cases where the liaison officers were unable to manage the camps themselves, UNRRA staff would be brought in to assist them. The access of liaison officers was also curtailed:

Soviet officials and repatriation representatives will have the right of immediate access to the camps and points of concentration. Such visits to camps and points of concentration will be

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> R. B. Lovett, Brigadier General, USA, to Commanding Generals, Section Commanders, and Commanding Officers, European Theatre of Operations, United States Army, subject: Liberated Citizens of the Soviet Union, dated 8 April 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 5 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Vol. I OMG 1945-46.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

restricted to those who have been duly authorized by this headquarters. The above mentioned right of immediate access does not apply to Russian officers or liaison personnel who are not directly connected with repatriation activities.<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, this memo emphasized the control of the US commander over all DP movements, including those involving Soviet DPs. “All movements of Soviet citizens under US control are US responsibility,” the memo asserted, “and will not be executed on the sole responsibility of any Soviet authority.”<sup>68</sup> Finally, in all cases where crimes were committed beyond the confines of the camp itself, the offender would be tried by military government court, and not by Soviet officers.

The changes made by SHAEF to its operating procedure with regards to Soviet DPs make clear that the LOs were simply not living up to SHAEF’s expectations of them. These changes were further cemented in May 1945, when SHAEF issued a revised manual for the care of the DPs, *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons*. In this newest edition, which superseded all previous guides to the care of DPs, including Administrative Memo 39, the changes reflected the experiences of those working with DPs in early 1945. The ultimate goal remained the repatriation of the DPs as quickly as possible and the Guide outlined the same timeline as presented in Memo 39. During the combat period (previously labeled the period of military advance), the military would continue to move DPs from the front lines toward collection points, before being transported to assembly centers. At the collection points, the military would provide food and first aid treatment to those in need, as well as dusting with DDT to prevent the spread of disease. No attempt at registration would take place until the DPs had been transported to an assembly center.

The Guide made clear that any and all buildings available could and would be utilized for housing the DPs. “These Centers will not necessarily consist of camps or communal buildings, though such accommodation will always be used if available. If it is not, blocks of houses or sections

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

of a town may be taken over from the German population to provide lodgings for displaced persons.”<sup>69</sup> In such cases, the assembly center itself would include a central office and perhaps some communal facilities as available. In no cases were the DPs allowed to be billeted in homes also occupied by Germans. The Guide suggested that several factors be taken into consideration when choosing the site of a new assembly center, including location in relation to communication routes and food supplies. However, the most important factor was the availability of adequate physical space. Each center required enough space for sleeping quarters, administrative space, warehousing, cooking and dining facilities, latrine and washing facilities, laundry, as well as room for recreational activities and school classes. Suitable accommodation for assembly center staff was also a factor to consider. Beyond the issue of space, assembly center directors also had to ensure the accommodation would keep out the elements. “The first two elements of good accommodation are weatherproof roofs and solid floors. The latter are particularly important from the point of view of cleanliness,” the Guide explained.<sup>70</sup> This was a clear reflection of the type of housing that the DPs were living in.

The Guide explained that the DPs were to be registered upon arrival at an assembly center. A flow chart appended to the Guide outlined the process for receiving DPs into the centers, listing six steps: arrival and medical examination, assignment of accommodation, registration, verification of nationality by the liaison officer, waiting in the assembly center, and finally “disposal,” which meant either repatriation or movement to a camp for non-repatriable DPs.<sup>71</sup> Upon arrival, the DPs were expected to be kept separate from the assembly center population until such a time as they could be properly registered. The Guide suggested that each assembly center prepare an Admission Control Section in which five hundred persons might be held, with facilities for “messing and sleeping, as

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<sup>69</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5, SHAEF, May 1945, p. 5, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 3 “383.7 Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany.”

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>71</sup> “Flow Chart: Inside an assembly center for United Nations D.P.s,” *Ibid*, 9.

displaced persons often arrive hungry and tired and it may take some time to put them through the initial processing.”<sup>72</sup> Only once they had been medically examined and deloused could they enter the general assembly center population. The liaison officer was responsible for confirming the nationality of each DP and for issuing travel visas. During the verification of nationality, a DP might meet one of three possible fates: in the first instance their nationality is confirmed and they await repatriation in the assembly center; in the second instance they are identified by the liaison officer as an enemy national and sent to a detention camp; and in the third instance, when their nationality cannot be confirmed, they become the responsibility of the chief liaison officer at SHAEF headquarters, who is then responsible for deciding their fate. The ultimate goal of each DP, according to the chart, was to reach “disposal,” either through repatriation or movement to a camp for those who cannot be repatriated. As William I. Hitchcock notes, “[t]he chief goal of the assembly centers, then, was not to house but to process DPs.”<sup>73</sup> SHAEF wanted the DPs organized for a speedy repatriation, with those unable to return home moved into separate camps to be dealt with at a later date by some other authority.

The Guide further detailed how to properly register the displaced persons. For each DP, five separate documents were created. The first document, the DP1 card, assigned each DP a registration number and included their name and signature. This was the DP’s proof of identity in the camp. They were told to hold onto these cards and to keep them accessible. As the Guide explained, when necessary, the DP1 card could be used to verify a DP’s identity through their signature. The DP2 card contained more detailed information, including all of the information on the DP1 card, as well as proof of disinfection and medical inspection, the liaison officer’s stamp of approval upon nationality verification, and all information collected during the liaison officer’s interview. In order to verify a

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>73</sup> William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 253.

DP's nationality, the liaison officer might inquire about place of birth, other residences, names of parents, and occupations held by the DP. This information was recorded on the DP2 card. These cards were held by the assembly center's officials, but travelled with the DP when they were repatriated or moved to a new center. The DP3 card contained much of the same information, including the name, registration number, nationality, sex, age and date of arrival of each DP, but these cards remained in the center, even if a DP was moved or repatriated. The DP3 card also tracked blankets and clothes issued to each DP in the assembly center. Alongside the three DP cards, each DP was assigned a Supplementary Medical Record, which noted the dates of medical examination and disinfection, and also tracked all other medical treatment received. Finally, each DP was issued a DP Meal Record Card to be shown at all meals. These five documents, then, were the means by which SHAEF organized the processing of all DPs. SHAEF was also helping to normalize the lives of the DPs by giving them a legal identity. They could simply have housed and fed the DPs temporarily without worrying about their identification. However, in providing identity cards they legalized their identity.

While under SHAEF care, the assembly centers would provide the DPs with food, clothing, shelter and medical care. They would also register all DPs, work to verify each DP's nationality, conduct a security screening, provide welfare facilities and temporary employment, and prepare each DP for repatriation. In order to avoid difficulties, the Guide suggested several measures be implemented: national groups should be kept together where possible, families should not be divided, displaced persons should be allowed to bring all of their belongings with them when moved, they should be given as much information as possible, and they should be allowed to speak freely to assembly center officials and liaison officers. The Guide also recommended that as many programs and activities as possible should be organized in order that the DPs not sit idle for long periods. The

DPs should also be encouraged to take part in running the center. National group leaders should be chosen, with input from both the DP population and the liaison officers, and they should take part in the organization of activities.

Whereas in the earlier Memo 39 UNRRA's role was a very minor one, in the Guide SHAEF stated that the "Supreme Commander has signed an agreement with the Director General of UNRRA to facilitate UNRRA's contribution, which will be a growing one."<sup>74</sup> While the care and repatriation of the DPs ultimately remained the military's responsibility, SHAEF was now prepared to hand over administration of the DP camps to UNRRA. The position of Assembly Center Director, previously only held by military commanders, was now an UNRRA position. An assembly center housing approximately 3,000 DPs now initially required, according to SHAEF, a team of 12, including three military officers, eight soldiers, and one UNRRA official, but these military teams were to be replaced as quickly as possible with UNRRA teams, including UNRRA staff and additional personnel from the voluntary societies. Following the transition to full UNRRA administration, assembly center directors were encouraged to utilize DPs in the camps' administration. "As a general rule," the Guide states, "center administration will provide employment for 7½% of the total inhabitants of a center. This may be raised to 10% when there is a high proportion of women and children in the center."<sup>75</sup> The Guide also stressed the importance of providing DPs willing to work in the assembly centers with extra privileges in order to ensure that they performed their tasks satisfactorily. Some of the suggested functions for DPs included acting as national group leaders, interpreters, assembly center police and firefighting. The Guide also encouraged the center directors to use the DPs in counseling, recreation programs, school programs, cooking, handling supplies, and in medical services.

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<sup>74</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

The greatest change to the care of DPs was the evolution in the role played by the liaison officers. While Memo 39 had highlighted the important role that SHAEF believed they would play, this was significantly curtailed in the Guide. The principal duties of the Allied liaison officers were now restricted to verification of the claims of nationality made by each DP, distribution of repatriation visas, and recommendations on repatriation priorities. Subsidiary duties might include assisting in the control of their nationals, furnishing information, and generally helping the assembly center director when necessary. It is clear from this change that SHAEF was disappointed by the role played by the liaison officers in the early part of 1945, and as a result had shifted responsibility away from them as a result.

On 5 June 1945, the Allies agreed to form a joint commission for governing defeated Germany. The country would be run by an Allied Control Council, made up of the military commanders of the four zones who would together develop policy. The British organized a Control Commission to govern their zone of occupation. The Americans created a zonal-level Control Council, which was comprised of three divisions: the Armed Forces Division, which planned for disarmament, demilitarization, and repatriation of prisoners of war; Military Government Division A, which would deal broadly with economics; and Military Government Division B, which would deal with political matters. At the same time, agreement was reached between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union on the repatriation of Soviet displaced persons. According to this agreement, displaced persons would be exchanged at ten reception delivery points along the line separating SHAEF and Soviet-controlled areas. "Transport of Soviet displaced persons from points on Allied side to Soviet reception-delivery points will be undertaken entirely by SCAEF Armies," which would then use the empty trucks to transport Allied displaced persons and American and

British prisoners of war back into SHAEF-controlled territory.<sup>76</sup> SHAEF took full responsibility for the transportation because of the considerably larger number of Soviet nationals in SHAEF territory, which included the agreed-upon American, British and French zones of occupation, as well as large parts of Thuringia, Magdeburg, and Saxony-Anhalt (in the future Soviet zone of occupation). The memo noted that the movements were running smoothly. Although some of the repatriation trains lacked both enough food and a sufficient number of security guards, as of 26 May, SHAEF had delivered 160,000 Soviets to the reception points, with a further 5,000 Soviets being transported by plane from France. At the same time, more than a million Western Europeans had been repatriated, including more than 120,000 French and Belgian citizens by plane. The SHAEF memo also noted that the care of the displaced persons remaining under SHAEF control showed “steady improvement,” and that the biggest problem concerned a “failure in some instances to use line military personnel to fullest extent.”<sup>77</sup>

The summer of 1945 saw a large number of outside visitors visit the DP camps in Germany. Newspaper reporters filed stories and news of the difficult conditions was soon reported in the major American newspapers. In response to these reports, President Roosevelt appointed Earl G. Harrison, former Commissioner of Immigration, as the American representative on the Intergovernmental Commission on Refugees, and sent him to Germany in June 1945 to tour the camps and report back on conditions. In late September 1945 Harrison submitted his report. Harrison was most concerned for the Jewish DPs, “in so many ways the first and worst victims of Nazism.”<sup>78</sup> Harrison’s report highlighted the problems with the living conditions and the need to improve them as quickly as

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<sup>76</sup> Memo, Major Ernest A. Gross, to Chief, Economics and Relief Branch, subject: Summary of Weekly Report No. 32 dated 28 May 1945 on SHAEF Displaced Persons Activities, dated 7 June 1945, in NARA, RG 165, Box 829, File 6 “Highlights of Weekly Reports on D/P’s.”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Earl G. Harrison, *Report on the Treatment of Displaced Jews*, August 31, 1945, <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/dp/resourc1.htm> (accessed 10 November 2012).

possible. While recognizing that the initial postwar period was a time of chaos and that the military was at first severely limited in its capabilities, he asserted that the military was also responsible for improving conditions as quickly as possible. Specifically, he explained that

...three months after V-E Day and even longer after the liberation of individual groups, many Jewish displaced persons and other possibly non-repatriables are living under guard behind barbed-wire fences, in camps of several descriptions (built by the Germans for slave-laborers and Jews), including some of the most notorious of the concentration camps, amidst crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions, in complete idleness, with no opportunity, except surreptitiously, to communicate with the outside world, waiting, hoping for some word of encouragement and action in their behalf.<sup>79</sup>

He was shocked by the lack of clothing: former concentration camp inmates continued to wear their striped clothing for lack of anything else. Harrison was also concerned about the amount and type of food served to the Jewish DPs. While accepting the fact that food was scarce everywhere, “one must raise the question as to how much longer many of these people... can survive on a diet composed principally of bread and coffee, irrespective of the caloric content. In many camps, the 2,000 calories included 1,250 calories of a black, wet and extremely unappetizing bread,” while Germans living in rural areas continued to eat a more nutritious and varied diet.<sup>80</sup> Housing also posed a serious issue; while their current housing would suffice for the summer months, it would not provide adequate protection from the elements during the winter, and Harrison was certain that the fate of Europe’s surviving Jews would not be decided by then.

As a result of his tour, Harrison made key and fateful recommendations which had profound implications. Crucial, he argued, was that Jewish DPs be recognized as such and not categorized according to their former nationality as “the result is that special attention cannot be given to their admittedly greater needs because, it is contended, doing so would constitute preferential treatment

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

and lead to trouble with the non-Jewish portion of the particular nationality group.”<sup>81</sup> He explained that, in fact, “it is not a case of singling out a particular group for special privileges. It is a matter of raising to a more normal level the position of a group which has been depressed to the lowest depths conceivable by years of organized and inhuman oppression.”<sup>82</sup> In addition, the DPs expressed great concern over their future, he explained. While some Jewish DPs were willing to be repatriated to their former homes, Harrison asserted that the majority of Jewish DPs wished to immigrate to Palestine. The only solution was to make available enough visas for them to be able to do so, regardless of the concerns of the British government (who feared that increased Jewish immigration would threaten the tenuous position of their mandate in Palestine, and relations with the predominantly Arab population). He also felt strongly that the military should hand over administration of the DP camps to a civilian authority as soon as possible. “While it is true the military have been urging UNRRA to get ready to assume responsibility,” he explained, “it is also the fact that insufficient cooperation of an active nature has been given to accomplish the desired end.”<sup>83</sup> Harrison’s report led President Truman to write to Eisenhower demanding better conditions for the Jewish DPs. In response, Eisenhower appointed an adviser for Jewish Affairs and began to move the Jewish DPs into separate camps.

The summer of 1945 also saw increasing problems of law and order amongst the DP population in many camps, and an inability or reluctance to halt it on the part of the liaison officers, ostensibly one of their functions. Looting was widespread; so too was drinking. Malcolm Proudfoot attributes alcohol to some 2,000 deaths during the summer of 1945.<sup>84</sup> There were reports of acts of violence against the German population by the DPs. An August 1945 USFET report on displaced

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 175.

persons described in detail many the problems with law and order amongst the DP population. In a typical week, 20-27 July 1945, the Military Government Detachment at Schwäbisch Gmünd (in Baden-Württemberg) received thirty written complaints and twenty verbal complaints against the DPs there, including one instance in which “2 Germans were shot and seriously wounded and another stabbed by a group of Polish nationals.”<sup>85</sup> In the nearby city of Heilbronn, there were reports of “gangs of Polish and Italian nationals threatening shopkeepers and farmers, stealing cattle, and destroying potato and onion fields.”<sup>86</sup> In the towns of Flein and Lehensteinfeld there were violent clashes between DPs and local Germans. In Karlsruhe and Obergriesheim DPs were believed to be responsible for the murder of Germans. In Kreis Esslingen, “8 armed Russians engaged 2 American security guards on duty guarding a farm in a fire fight, during which one of the soldiers was wounded and one of the Russians killed and another wounded.”<sup>87</sup> The report explained that at least part of the problem involved American soldiers urging DPs to disregard the German police. “In the town of Sulzbach,” for example, “members of the police were beaten up by American soldiers following the arrest by the police of several intoxicated Italians, some of whom were armed.”<sup>88</sup>

As the dust began to settle in the summer of 1945, UNRRA’s newfound responsibility seemed threatened again. The core source of uncertainty was that its ability to operate in Germany was contingent upon its agreement with SHAEF. SHAEF had been envisioned solely as a wartime organization, and when its operations ceased at the beginning of July 1945, UNRRA feared it would have to renegotiate its agreement with its successors. In early 1945, there had been a great deal of hope that UNRRA would be allowed to operate throughout occupied Germany, both in the American and British (and later the French) zones, but also in the Soviet zone. This would have been possible if

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<sup>85</sup> Displaced Persons Report No. 41, Combined Displaced Persons Executive, G-5 Division, USFET, dated 27 August 1945, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 78.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

the Control Council as a whole had agreed to it, but this was not to be. In May 1945, with Germany definitively divided into zones of occupation and the military forces of each occupier withdrawn to their zonal frontiers, it became clear that UNRRA would not be invited into the Soviet zone. When the USSR decided not to employ the services of UNRRA, the Control Council (which required quadripartite agreement on anything it decided), no longer had the authority, or the need, to sign a single agreement with UNRRA. Instead, each zonal authority had to sign a separate agreement, opening up space for drastically different terms of operation in each zone. While the Americans were more enthusiastic about UNRRA's participation, and therefore created an agreement that granted a central role to UNRRA, the British and French were much less enthusiastic and their agreements reflected this. In the American zone of occupation, UNRRA had control of all of the DP camps by the fall of 1945. In contrast, UNRRA administered less than half of the DP camps in the British or French zones.

On 4 July, SHAEF forces adjusted to the new zonal boundaries that had been agreed upon. The American zone of occupation encompassed the Länder of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg and Hessen, and included the cities of Munich, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Mannheim and Karlsruhe. Altogether, the zone was home to approximately 15 million Germans.<sup>89</sup> Less than two weeks later, on 13 July, SHAEF ceased operations and all control passed into the hands of the individual zone commanders. The joint wartime command was dissolved, and in its place each zonal occupation force was now responsible for administering its own zone, although the country would remain a single economic unit. They were expected to develop policy jointly under the aegis of the Allied Control Council. In the American zone of occupation, SHAEF's staff and soldiers came under the command of US Forces, European Theatre (USFET). Eisenhower remained in charge as the military

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<sup>89</sup> Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom*, 192.

governor of the American zone of occupation and USFET headquarters were located in the former I.G. Farben building in Frankfurt.

At the end of July the Allied leaders met to finalize the agreement on the occupation of Germany. Stalin, Harry S. Truman (who had been named President following the death of Roosevelt), and Clement Attlee (who had defeated Winston Churchill in the July British elections) agreed on several points: the disarmament, demilitarization and democratization of Germany; reparations; the disposal of the German navy; and the apprehension and trial of war criminals. They also agreed at this time on the transfer of all German populations from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia into German territory, although the British and Americans both stressed the importance of carrying out these transfers in an organized fashion. The following month, on 30 August, the Allied Control Council met for the first time in Berlin to begin implementing this agreement.

The agreement at Potsdam had legitimized the expulsion of the ethnic Germans, known at the *Volksdeutsche*, from their homes throughout Eastern Europe. At the end of the war, the Polish and Czechoslovak governments had begun expelling the remaining Germans from their homes and pushing them westward, into Germany's prewar borders. More than 700,000 ethnic Germans living in Bohemia alone were expelled by the end of 1945.<sup>90</sup> They were often given only a few hours' notice before being evicted from their homes. They took only what they could carry or push on a cart, and these items were often confiscated by soldiers at checkpoints along the way. One American soldier witnessed these expulsions. "When the Nazis conquered Czechoslovakia," he explained,

they disposed Czechs to make room for Nazis with 'no baggage but the clothes on their backs and no jewelry except wedding rings.' The Czechs are preparing to turn this same formula around and apply it to the Sudeten Germans. Screening is already completed. 'Undesirable'

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<sup>90</sup> Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 181.

citizens of German extraction have been segregated, may not move freely, and must wear yellow armbands in the interim before their transfer to Germany as refugees.<sup>91</sup>

Those refugees coming from Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania generally entered Germany through Bavaria, but those from Polish territory crossed the Oder River and flocked toward Berlin, a city unable to cope with the influx.<sup>92</sup> According to its mandate, UNRRA was not responsible for caring for the German refugees; this task fell to the German relief organizations. Their presence did impact UNRRA's operations nonetheless. German charities improvised shelter and provided food, and were forced to draw from the same food stocks and the same limited supply of housing as the military and UNRRA were using for the DPs. The arrival of the *Volksdeutsche* only further stressed an already overburdened supply infrastructure.

By the end of the summer, UNRRA had identified several core problems still facing welfare workers on the ground. In the American zone of occupation, UNRRA continued to encounter resistance from the military; there were still many individuals in the American military who disapproved of UNRRA's involvement. At the end of July 1945, Brigadier General Eric Fisher Wood of the United States Group, Control Council's Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons Division reported back to the Commanding General of the USGCC on UNRRA's relationship to the military. "The policy towards turning over to UNRRA the administration of DP Camps," he explained,

...at as early a date as possible, is not as well understood and supported by military echelons below ARMIES as would seem desirable. The number of UNRRA teams in the field is still insufficient, and the strength of these teams in many cases is too small. From this arises a

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<sup>91</sup> Report of Reconnaissance, 17-22 July 1945, Brigadier General Eric Fisher Wood, Deputy Director, US Group Control Council, Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons Division, dated 23 July 1945, Annex No. 4 – Summary of Conferences held at HQ XXIII Army Corps, Pilsen, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>92</sup> Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 122.

tendency for US Army units to do the work themselves rather than to educate and give responsibility to UNRRA for future reference.<sup>93</sup>

Alongside the problematic relationship with the military, welfare workers continued to struggle to provide the basic necessities to those DPs in their care. An August 1945 meeting of the welfare committee made this clear. The welfare committee identified four immediate problems: housing shortages, the poor quality of the food, problems tracing family members, and the lack of educational programs, vocational training and employment opportunities in the camps. The most acute problem concerned housing: “A large proportion of the camps are overcrowded, even in terms of summer housing; winter housing will intensify this overcrowding.”<sup>94</sup> As well, they noted that many people were sleeping in large, open spaces such as school rooms and recreation halls. There was also no separate accommodation for girls and single women. To address these problems, the committee recommended that UNRRA present the military with a clear explanation of the housing shortage and demand that they provide the required housing as soon as possible, because “if those standards are not achieved now it will be impossible to convince the army of the need for instituting them after UNRRA has been given major responsibility.”<sup>95</sup> The committee also recommended that a list of necessary supplies be compiled and presented to the military at the earliest possible date. A key point of concern for the welfare staff was that it was the military who was deciding which centres would remain open and which ones would be closed, for reasons that were not always obvious and resulting in poor decisions. “Inquiry as to the basis on which permanent camps are being selected” should be ascertained, they asserted, and “recommendations to the army as to important criteria to be

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<sup>93</sup> Memo, Eric Fisher Wood, Brigadier General, to Commanding General, US Group CC, subject: Report of Reconnaissance, 17-22 July 1945, dated 23 July 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>94</sup> Report of Committee Meeting on Welfare Services, Held at UNRRA Staging Centre, August 4-5 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 3 “Welfare IV Minutes of Special Meetings – Zone Headquarters – Welfare/Relief Services.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

used – sanitation, adequate floor space, facilities for eating, kitchen units, recreational space, classrooms, etc.”<sup>96</sup>

The meeting notes make clear that welfare workers in the camps and UNRRA staff at headquarters still had little understanding of the army’s process or plans even in August 1945. The Committee explained that they believed that the army was planning on using the “Kaserne type of housing unit” (basic military barracks) for housing DPs, but they asserted that this type of housing did not work well for families and that in its place “a definite effort [should] be made to take over small villages or sections of small towns” in order to accommodate these groups.<sup>97</sup> This was a first hint at differing understandings of the needs of the DP population, and the differing agendas of the military and UNRRA. While the military saw the barracks as adequate short-term housing for the DPs, UNRRA recognized that barracks were inadequate, even for short periods, and especially for families. UNRRA’s understanding of rehabilitation meant normalizing life, and this would be difficult to achieve in large, open barracks that offered little in the way of privacy. This different understanding of acceptable forms of housing for the DPs was the beginning of many such clashes over DP care.

A second major problem identified by the welfare committee was the problem of food. The feeding problem centered on the fact that the local German administration was responsible for providing food for the assembly centers, and, according to UNRRA officials, they chose to send the worst of their supply. “Inferior grades of food are sent to Centers,” the welfare committee asserted.<sup>98</sup> As well, there was also a problem of keeping food fresh. Even when milk was made available, it quickly turned sour. In general, there was also a lack of variety. “A caloric diet of 2000 is not assurance of an adequate diet,” they asserted.<sup>99</sup> The solution to this problem was to requisition spices

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

in order to make the food tastier. As well, instead of cooking all of the food for a camp in one large kitchen, it recommended that smaller cooking units be provided so that the DPs could cook for themselves. Again, the military and UNRRA had differing understandings over DP care. For the military it would clearly be easier and more economical to serve entire DP camp populations from a single kitchen. In contrast, UNRRA saw cooking as part of the process of normalizing life for the DPs. Responsibility for cooking their own meals was an important means of introducing responsibility, and therefore a key factor in rehabilitation.

In the midst of continuing to work towards solving the problems of food and housing, in the late summer of 1945 UNRRA also began to offer expanded welfare services in the centres. Welfare workers identified two key areas where they could begin this work: creating a Tracing Bureau to help the DPs contact family members, and providing the DPs with work and educational opportunities so that they would not sit idle while awaiting repatriation. The DPs desperately wanted to locate their families, either in Germany or beyond, but no mechanism as yet existed for them to do so. “Because of the lack of any centralized plan to date for accomplishing these reunions or providing this information,” the Welfare Committee noted, “many local schemes have developed and many D.P.’s have taken to the roads in an effort to locate people themselves.”<sup>100</sup> The only solution to this problem was the full implementation of a Central Tracing Bureau. Such an organization had been envisioned in the Displaced Persons Division of SHAEF, the Committee noted, but it was not yet fully functional. Officials were working to prepare lists of each centre’s inhabitants, but they had yet to introduce a “tracing form” which could be “used for further searching of those people not able to

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

locate one another through lists.”<sup>101</sup> The committee recommended that this be accomplished as soon as possible. UNRRA founded the Central Tracing Bureau in November 1945 to fulfill this task.<sup>102</sup>

UNRRA welfare workers’ second concern was the lack of employment, vocational training and educational opportunities for DPs. The welfare committee identified both “those young workers who are completely without vocational training or work experience except that of slave labor” and those “professional people who have been out of touch with their field of practice” for some time and therefore needed re-training.<sup>103</sup> The committee recommended that each assembly centre organize workshops in order to teach or re-teach skills, as well as agricultural projects. Farming projects, it was thought, would provide an excellent means of involving the DPs in their own care. As the ERO’s *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* made clear, the DPs had spent years with no control over their own food supply; they ate what was served to them, and many DPs had experienced severe and long-term hunger. Both assuring the DPs of an adequate food supply and giving them control over it was a means of working toward the rehabilitation of the DP population. It would also build trust between the DPs and UNRRA’s welfare workers.

When necessary, the Welfare Committee continued, use should be made of local German trade schools, alternating hours used by the Germans. For women, they likewise recommended courses in practical nursing, homemaking, cooking and sewing. The committee also recommended that further work opportunities be made available to the DPs outside of the camps. These ideas reflected the process of rehabilitation as outlined in the ERO’s wartime planning reports, the goal of which was the reintroduction of responsibility: personal responsibility for one’s appearance and

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, ed. George Woodbridge et al. (New York 1950), 2:531.

<sup>103</sup> Report of Committee Meeting on Welfare Services, Held at UNRRA Staging Centre, August 4-5 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 3 “Welfare IV Minutes of Special Meetings – Zone Headquarters – Welfare/Relief Services.

hygiene; responsibility for one's actions and its effect on those around them; and responsibility for the community as a whole. Only once the DP population as a whole accepted responsibility for themselves, their actions and their communities would they easily and fully reintegrate into their prewar societies upon repatriation. Food, work and training were a few readily available means of beginning this.

The committee recognized the many problems associated with providing schooling for children. They recognized that educational activities were important to both the DPs and UNRRA, but that many obstacles remained, including the complete absence of books and facilities. Another major concern was how to introduce schooling to those children who had either never been before or who had not attended school in many years. The only solution was to introduce education programs as quickly as possible, and to demand the required supplies from the military. A third issue was finding the necessary teaching staff. The hope was that teachers could be located within the DP camps. A training course should also be offered to help them refresh their skills. These, then, were the problems that needed to be solved. The outline of a plan for rehabilitation was beginning to emerge.

By the fall of 1945 more than six million DPs had been returned to their homes.<sup>104</sup> This left a population of 307,301 DPs receiving care in UNRRA DP camps in the American zone of occupation in December 1945.<sup>105</sup> These people were now the responsibility of UNRRA, who had officially taken administrative control of all of the DP camps in the American zone of occupation on 1 October 1945. As the temperatures began to fall and the threat of frost increased, housing once again became a prime issue for both UNRRA as well as the military, who remained responsible for securing supplies and housing. Adequate shelter was essential for those DPs who had not yet been repatriated before

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<sup>104</sup> *UNRRA*, 2: 515.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 3: 422.

winter set in. Attention in both military government and UNRRA circles turned toward winterizing the existing housing for this purpose. By November 1945, the US Army acted. On 23 November, they ordered German sources to turn over the necessary tools and supplies for this purpose.

It is a military responsibility to insure [sic] that DP camps are winterized.

a. In meeting this responsibility, Director, Office of Military Government for Baden-Wurttemberg and Greater Hessen will:

1. Provide necessary materials to accomplish required repairs;
2. Insure that No. 1 priority for use of building materials is given.

The military also promised to “[p]rovide technical supervision to insure uniformity, best use of materials, and rapid completion of the repair program.”<sup>106</sup> Those facilities that could not be sufficiently winterized were closed down and their populations moved. In some instances they were moved into other camps; in others the American Army requisitioned German housing. In the city of Ulm, the Wilhelmsburg Kaserne and Hindenburg Kaserne DP camps, both former army barracks, were relocated. UNRRA’s field supervisor, R. J. D. G. Blackmore, reported that the Hindenburg Kaserne was very overcrowded, and the camp was evacuated by 6 November, with a much reduced population moved with the UNRRA team into the Donau Bastion Ulm, another former military barracks. Similarly, the Wilhelmsburg Kaserne was evacuated because it was deemed unfit for winter occupation. The camp population from Boelcke Kaserne was moved into private dwellings.<sup>107</sup> This process of moving DPs between camps and into private housing took place continually throughout the fall of 1945, as they worked to ensure that those who would remain in Germany over the winter had adequate housing.

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<sup>106</sup> Memo, Elsie J. Chairman, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters, Seventh Army, Western Military District, US Army, subject: Repairs for Displaced Persons Camps, dated 23 November 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 91, File 1 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons (Refugees, Expellees, Internees) [2 of 2].”

<sup>107</sup> Memo, R. J. D. G. Blackmore, UNRRA Field Supervisor, to Alex E. Squadrilli, Deputy District Director, subject: Weekly Report on Camps visited by Field Supervisor, dated 2 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

These, then, were the problems that UNRRA welfare workers faced in the fall of 1945. They had recruited, trained and equipped 373 teams, first under military direction, but soon administering the DP camps on their own.<sup>108</sup> They had accomplished the tremendous feat of helping care for and repatriating millions of DPs. By December 1945, UNRRA was operating 134 DP camps in the American occupation zone of Germany.<sup>109</sup> Those DPs who remained required housing that would protect them from the elements, and continued access to food and medical care, a constant challenge. UNRRA also believed that they required rehabilitation, with an emphasis on personal responsibility and responsibility for the community as key to normalizing life for the DPs. It was now time to begin putting these plans into action.

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<sup>108</sup> W. Arnold Foster, "UNRRA'S Work for Displaced Persons in Germany" *International Affairs* 22:1 (Jan. 1946), 9.

<sup>109</sup> *UNRRA*, 2:502.

## Chapter 4

### Cleaning up the DPs: UNRRA's initial efforts at rehabilitation in Ulm

The latrine accommodation is rudimentary and foul. Hundreds cook their meals over candles looted from German stocks. The household rubbish of potato peelings, paper rag etc., lies about the place in heaps. The population is lice, flea and bug ridden for there is no D.D.T. Luckily the food is good for the moment and natural resistance to disease high. But with the advent of warm weather – and yesterday's temperature was over 80 – there is great danger of disease breaking out.<sup>1</sup>

Under the circumstances, the displaced people seemed surprisingly happy. They were singing, dancing, putting on plays, concerts and variety shows in spite of a pitiful lack of facilities.<sup>2</sup>

Because a considerable period of time is likely to elapse between the time such persons are uncovered and their ultimate repatriation, it is essential that everything possible be done for their gainful employment in activities desired by the military forces.<sup>3</sup>

When UNRRA staff crossed the border in Germany to work alongside the Allied military forces in caring for Europe's displaced persons, they were full of energy and excitement, but soon shocked by conditions on the ground. German cities had been devastated by both the aerial bombing and the fighting; food distribution networks had all but collapsed; the electricity and sewer systems were in complete disrepair. UNRRA teams had been sent into the field with little more than the clothes on their back as the military was responsible for providing all supplies. When they arrived on the scene to take over administration of the DP camps, they were largely unprepared for the task ahead. UNRRA's training had focused on language instruction and the relationship between UNRRA and the military. There had been no discussion of conditions in the field, largely because UNRRA did not have up-to-date information to share with them. As a result, when UNRRA staff arrived,

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<sup>1</sup> Report, UNRRA Displaced Persons Division, European Regional Office, Report for the Week Ending May 26, 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 "Displaced Persons File No 3."

<sup>2</sup> *UNRRA Review of the Month* (London: UNRRA Information Division, European Regional Office, June 1945), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Memo, H. H. Newman, Colonel, AGD, Assistant Adjutant General, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, subject: Employment of Polish Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons, dated 17 May 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 5 "AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Vol. I OMG 1945-46."

they found themselves overwhelmed by the enormity of the task before them. Nonetheless, their goal continued to be the provision of not only relief, but also rehabilitation. UNRRA's first attempts at rehabilitation focused on four fronts: housing, hygiene, education, and employment. In each case, UNRRA had a vision of how these elements could be used to restore the DPs to the social norm, as UNRRA understood it. In some cases, the DPs clearly shared those norms; in others, perhaps not. In all cases, implementing a program of rehabilitation that touched on these four aspects of life in the DP camps proved more challenging than any had anticipated. These challenges, and how the UNRRA staff met them, or not, is made very clear in the story of the small city of Ulm.

The city of Ulm lies on the eastern edge of the *Land* Baden-Wurttemberg, in southern Germany, half-way between the major centres of Stuttgart and Munich. The city sits on the River Danube, while across the river lies the twin city of Neu-Ulm, Bavaria. Ulm was always an important city because of its location: the river traffic brought traders and kings alike. In the twelfth century it was confirmed as an imperial city (which meant that it was self-ruling and answered only to the emperor, not a local duke or bishop). The city gradually declined over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and during the Napoleonic wars it was occupied by the French army and its fortifications were destroyed. In 1810 the city became a part of the Land (province) of Wurttemberg, and it soon became an industrial centre, owing again to its location and ease of access by river transport. During the Second World War, Ulm was home to several factories and was therefore the target of aerial bombardment. The city was 81 percent destroyed; of an inventory of 12,756 buildings, only 1763 remained undamaged.<sup>4</sup>

The city of Ulm provides an excellent window onto the relationship between UNRRA, the military and the DPs and UNRRA's work towards rehabilitation. First, the city housed DPs of all

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<sup>4</sup> "Historie," Stadt Ulm website (original in German): [http://www.ulm.de/kultur\\_tourismus/stadtgeschichte/die\\_letzten\\_kriegstage.34995.3076,3963,4236,34709,34993,34995.htm](http://www.ulm.de/kultur_tourismus/stadtgeschichte/die_letzten_kriegstage.34995.3076,3963,4236,34709,34993,34995.htm) (accessed 27 November 2012).

nationalities. During the first year after the war, it housed several temporary transit camps used by a number of national groups as they awaited repatriation, including large Polish and Ukrainian populations. Beginning in 1946, many of these camps were emptied in order to make space for Jewish infiltrees arriving from eastern Europe (both Holocaust survivors who had returned to their prewar homes and those who had survived the war either in hiding or behind Soviet lines and subsequently fled eastern Europe, entering the occupied zones of Germany illegally, many en route to Palestine). Several postwar pogroms encouraged returning Jews to continue westward into Germany. The worst such attack took place in Kielce, Poland on 4 July 1945 and involved the murder of forty-two Jews; altogether these anti-Semitic outbursts led to nearly 1200 deaths in the first postwar year in Poland alone.<sup>5</sup> While small numbers of Jewish DPs trickled into the DP camps in the summer and fall of 1945, they arrived in large numbers in the spring of 1946, putting pressure on a still overburdened German supply system. Tony Judt estimates that 63,387 Jews arrived in Germany from Poland alone between July and September 1946.<sup>6</sup> These were numbers for which both UNRRA and the military were quite simply unprepared. Ulm's relatively undestroyed cityscape meant it became an important site for housing these infiltrees.

The second reason why the DP camps in and around Ulm provide a useful case study of UNRRA's rehabilitation work is because the city took in German expellees and refugees as well as DPs, and therefore the scarcity of resources was severe. The city had been bombed and several buildings damaged, but the city had not been leveled. Its location on the bank of the Danube, between Munich and Stuttgart, made it an ideal place to locate German refugees and foreigners alike. Third, the DPs were housed in several different types of buildings, including kasernes (army barracks), private apartments, and even a former German Army bakery, which provided a more varied

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<sup>5</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

camp life for DPs in comparison to some of the large cities and small towns, which only offered one type of housing. The urban area surrounding Ulm, Baden-Wurttemberg and Neu-Ulm, Bavaria contained buildings old and new: the Donau Bastion and the Wilhelmsburg Citadel in Ulm, as well as the Pioneer Kaserne in Neu-Ulm, were all constructed in the mid-nineteenth century; the Sedan Kaserne in Ulm and the Bleidorn Kaserne in Neu-Ulm were constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century; and the Boelcke Kaserne and Hindenburg Kaserne were both built in 1935. In the initial postwar months, all of these buildings, as well as private apartments formerly belonging to German families, were used to house DPs.

The fourth reason why the DP camps in and around Ulm provide an excellent case study of UNRRA's work towards rehabilitation of the DPs is because the varied camp sizes provided opportunities for a whole host of programs. The proximity of these camps to one another made it possible to offer different programs and services at different camps, but which were made available to DPs from across the city, not just the host camp's inhabitants. As a result, the DP camps located in and around Ulm offered many different educational and vocational training opportunities to the DP population that resided there. Finally, we have excellent records for the camps located in Ulm because UNRRA Field Supervisor Richard Blackmore was a prodigious report-writer. He began as the director of UNRRA Team 127, but was soon promoted to the position of field supervisor and in this new position he was responsible for all of the DP camps in the city of Ulm and the surrounding county. In the autumn of 1946 he was once again promoted, this time to Area Supervisor. His reports were both detailed and opinionated. He was not afraid to express his opinions, sometimes bluntly, and the reports reflected his frankness on conditions in the camps, as well as on the individuals who administered the camps and those who resided in them.

Little had been accomplished by the city administration in preparation for the invasion of Ulm by Allied forces in early 1945. The local administration had planned for a set of inner and outer ring defences to protect the city, but all that had been accomplished by the time that American and French troops arrived was the construction of a tank ditch. During their withdrawal, the German army had blown up four out of five of the bridges across the Danube, but this did little to slow the American advance. On 23 April, the mayor, district party leader and police chief quit the city, and Ulm was left without government. Two days later, on 25 April, the American commander arrived. One resident of Ulm described the feeling of relief once the city was occupied. “It was at first, in spite of everything, easier,” he explained. “The terribly oppressive threat of air war was now over. In the local Wagner school gymnasium soup with pieces of meat was served daily in parchment cups to drink, for who had a spoon? ... At many ruined houses there were notes written in chalk, explaining where the former occupants could be found.”<sup>7</sup> The American military had originally named Acting Police Commissioner Frank Hermann as mayor when they arrived, but on 7 May they replaced him with Carl Eychmuller, head of a local factory.<sup>8</sup> This was a common practice in the early days of occupation. To facilitate the management of the local population, often the military would select a mayor to communicate orders without necessarily conducting a complete background check. In many cases, these interim leaders turned out to be either Nazi party members or simply ineffective administrators, and they were soon replaced by more capable, and trustworthy, individuals.

In UNRRA’s planning phase, owing to the fact that UNRRA knew that the military would make all final decisions over all housing, little was detailed by UNRRA planners about exactly how

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<sup>7</sup> “Alltag nach dem Einmarsch (Chronikalischer Bericht von Ernst Hirzel, Niederschrift 1963),” Stadt Ulm website (original in German): <http://www.ulm.de/sixcms/media.php/29/1-0-1.pdf> (accessed 27 November 2012).

<sup>8</sup> “Die letzten Kriegstage,” Stadt Ulm website (original in German): [http://www.ulm.de/kultur\\_tourismus/stadtgeschichte/die\\_letzten\\_kriegstage.34995.3076,3963,4236,34709,34993,34995.htm](http://www.ulm.de/kultur_tourismus/stadtgeschichte/die_letzten_kriegstage.34995.3076,3963,4236,34709,34993,34995.htm) (accessed 27 November 2012).

DP housing should be organized. However, UNRRA planners did stress two important general principles for DP housing: privacy and normalizing conditions as much as possible. In their report *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, UNRRA planners recognized that the DPs had lived for years without any privacy:

[t]he displaced person was no longer able to enjoy even a few hours a day with persons whom he has chosen, he was constantly in the crowded presence of persons whom he had not chosen and probably would not have chosen, as companions. He had no longer opportunity to be alone or to reflect upon things as a private individual. He was driven back to a crowd existence in the camp where he became a victim of all mass-emotions and rumours.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, what the DPs required in the postwar period was housing that afforded them some level of privacy. “Good sleeping accommodation,” they argued, “together with sufficient privacy and adequate washing facilities allowing as much privacy as possible is important. Facilities should be provided for displaced persons to be alone or quiet, as many will need opportunities for solitude after the long years of being herded together.”<sup>10</sup>

Equally important for DP housing, according to UNRRA planners, was the belief that all attempts should be made to normalize life. The most important way of doing this was by housing family members together. *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation* asserted that even in temporary accommodations, “Families should be kept together... unless exceptional conditions make it impossible or the well-being of the children would be endangered.”<sup>11</sup>

They also emphasized the fact that the DPs should be involved in their own care, beginning with food preparation. “In the matter of food, its general and detailed distribution, and often its cooking and

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<sup>9</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, dated June 1945, p. 14, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 12 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Displaced Persons; June 1945.”

<sup>10</sup> *Special Needs of Women and Girls during Repatriation and Rehabilitation*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an International Working Party of Social Workers, Psychiatric Social Workers, Doctors and Psychiatrist [sic], dated June 1945, p. 7, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 13 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Special Needs of Women and Girls; June 1945.”

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

serving, the active participation of displaced persons should be encouraged and formalised into catering, delivery and messing committees created by displaced persons themselves to work alongside the appointed workers of the distributing organisation.”<sup>12</sup>

The military had slightly different expectations and standards, made very clear in its own *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*. The *Guide* outlined some basic factors to consider in choosing locations for DP camps, but also made clear that conditions would vary immensely in different districts. “Displaced persons may be housed in hotels, schools, halls, cinemas, churches, disused factories or any other type of public building; they may occupy blocks of houses or apartments from which Germans have been evicted, or they may occupy workers camps varying in size from 50 to 5,000 occupants,” SHAEF explained.<sup>13</sup> They recommended that several factors be taken into consideration when choosing the site of a DP camp. “The first two elements of good accommodation,” the *Guide* noted, “are weatherproof roofs and solid floors. The latter are particularly important from the point of view of cleanliness. Ventilation is another factor to be considered. The better the accommodation, the more satisfied will the displaced persons be, and the easier it will be to care for them.”<sup>14</sup> Another important factor was location. They suggested that camps be located on communication routes and near food supply sources. Camp buildings had to provide sufficient space for sleeping quarters, administrative offices, warehouse space, cooking facilities, bathing facilities, hospital requirements and recreational space. As well, camps required adequate space to accommodate camp staff, a reliable water supply, and means of sewage and waste disposal. “If water cannot be obtained from a chlorinated supply, water for drinking purposes, brushing teeth and washing of fruits and vegetables to be eaten raw should be treated with a chlorine

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<sup>12</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, 21-22.

<sup>13</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5, SHAEF, May 1945, p. 29, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 3 “383.7 Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany.”

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

solution in canvas water sterilizing bags or some other container suitable for distributing water,” the *Guide* explained.<sup>15</sup>

The *Guide* also clearly outlined the proper disposal of waste. In the first instance, SHAEF recommended that flush toilets be used. When unavailable, a pit latrine should be constructed based on the military manual guidelines. “Because of continental habits,” the *Guide* explained, “a squat-type latrine may be found most satisfactory. Due to difficulty in policing, can latrines should not be resorted to unless a pit latrine cannot be used. Urinals should be provided in latrine areas for males.”<sup>16</sup> Each camp required one toilet per twenty people and one urinal per twenty-five men. All facilities were required to be at least 100 yards from any mess hall or water supply. “Care and maintenance is essential,” the *Guide* warned. “A detail of people must be assigned to keep latrine areas clean at all times. Any evidence of defecation or urination in other than the facilities provided for, such should be investigated energetically and its repetition prevented.”<sup>17</sup> Similarly, SHAEF set out strict guidelines for the collection of garbage. Proper disposal of trash was also necessary in order to stop the spread of disease. “Sanitary inspections of kitchens, mess halls, food dump, dormitories, latrines and other facilities important in environmental sanitation will be made daily,” the *Guide* noted, “by a qualified persons under the direct supervision of the Center Medical Officer,” who will then report to the center director.<sup>18</sup> SHAEF explained that continual inspections were necessary in order to ensure the health and safety of the camp’s population.

Thus, in setting up the DP camps, SHAEF and UNRRA had very different understandings of what comprised the best type of housing for DPs. While UNRRA clearly preferred housing that allowed a high level of privacy and the maintenance of family units in their own quarters, the military

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

focused on housing that would provide for the easiest management of the large DP population. For them, this meant housing the DPs in large barracks with kitchens that could feed all of the camp's inhabitants. SHAEF's *Guide* suggested that camps should be located in urban centres, exactly where there was the greatest destruction from aerial bombing. Undamaged and appropriate facilities were thus at a premium. In Ulm, these limitations quickly became evident as the first DP camps were organized in 1945.

The Boelcke Kaserne had originally been constructed in 1935, and a DP camp was established there by the military on 13 June 1945. The camp was soon handed over to UNRRA Team 127, under the leadership of Director Blackmore. By the end of August, it housed 2250 Polish DPs, although it had a capacity of only 2000 people. As Blackmore pointed out, it was badly overcrowded. Fifteen UNRRA personnel administered the camp, and a Polish liaison officer was also attached, although the liaison officer was proving less than helpful, according to UNRRA. "Polish Liaison Officers refuse to cooperate with Camp Commanders," Director Blackmore noted, "and pursue an independent existence causing much nuisance."<sup>19</sup> There were also approximately 1000 Russian DPs living in the area, although not within the camp itself. As the Russians were being repatriated, Blackmore did not expect that they would be moved into the camp. As well, there were an indeterminate number of Polish DPs living in Ulm, but outside of the camp, and the military recommended that they remain there for the time being.<sup>20</sup> In keeping with UNRRA's model for the camps, the camp itself had established a Polish administration made up of DPs. They assumed responsibility for registering camp inmates, assigning accommodation, providing welfare assistance and organizing the school, all under the supervision of the UNRRA director. It was a good start, but there was clearly room for improvement according to Blackmore. "Polish administration is generally

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<sup>19</sup> UNRRA Team Report, Team No. 127, Director R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 27 August 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 34, File 4 "US Zone - Team 127 - Ulm 1945-1946."

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

good,” he observed, “but it requires careful supervision. Leaders lack ideas and initiative in organizing health and cleanliness campaigns.”<sup>21</sup> The DPs living in the camp were generally happy, but they complained about the restrictions placed on their movement by the U.S. military. The camp administration held 300 passes to be distributed to those wishing to leave the camp. The DPs believed that this was an unnecessary restriction and as a result there were frequent “[b]reakouts at night or early morning.”<sup>22</sup> Nor had UNRRA team 127 begun registering the camp population because DP cards had not yet been provided by the military, although they were in the process of filling in the DP2 cards. While conditions were not as UNRRA had anticipated, especially with regard to the role that UNRRA had envisioned the DPs playing in their own administration, conditions in the camps were improving and the DPs were taking on increasing responsibility.

DPs were also being housed in the Wilhelmsburg citadel, on the northern outskirts of Ulm, originally built between 1842 and 1949. An assembly centre had been established there by the military in May 1945, but UNRRA Team 509 had only taken over its administration on 21 September 1945. On 15 October 1945, this center had a population of 1184 DPs. The largest group was comprised of 855 Polish DPs, but there were also large groups of Italian (165), Rumanian (65), Yugoslav (31) and Greek (17) DPs, as well as small numbers of other nationals (51 altogether). The camp at Wilhelmsburg was run by a team of five UNRRA officials and one member on loan from the staff of UNRRA’s field supervisor in Ulm. There were also four liaison officers working in the camp, one each for the Russian, Polish, Italian and Czech DPs. Each national grouping had chosen a leader when the camp was first established who organized “a complete staff handling the affairs on [sic] their respective people.”<sup>23</sup> In mid-October the registration of the camp population was approximately

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 15 October 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 “US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

65 percent finished, and expected to be completed by the following week. They had also held a few recreational activities, including a film viewing. DPs living at Wilhelmsburg were allowed to take part in welfare programs at other camps in Ulm as well.<sup>24</sup> By the end of October, however, it was obvious that the citadel was not going to suffice for housing over the winter months and plans were made to transfer Poles from it. Those who were going to repatriate soon were moved into other camps. Those who were not were moved into private German dwellings.

In anticipation of the closing of the Wilhelmsburg camp, the DPs held a 'farewell dance.' They also organized a dance for people from the Dachau concentration camp, as well as a lecture about the concentration camp.<sup>25</sup> By early November 1945 this camp had also been evacuated as it was considered "unfit for winter occupation," and its remaining population had been relocated to the QM Bakery on Sedanstrasse and into private dwellings spread throughout the town. "The administration of the private billets," director Nowicki noted, "is fairly difficult as the German Town Authorities did not clear for Displ. Persons a closed area of the town, but requisitioned single dwellings only. In consequence the D.P.s are practically mixed up with the German population."<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the move had improved their morale, he noted, and had even caused a number of Polish DPs to volunteer for work in the camp as a result.

By mid-November 1945, Nowicki reported that Team 509's DPs seemed much happier in their new accommodations. The Polish DPs who had moved into the private dwellings enjoyed more privacy. However, many of these apartments had also suffered war damage. As well, when the Germans were forced to evacuate they had removed all of the furniture, so that the apartments were bare. In spite of this, the DPs preferred this new situation to the Wilhelmsburg Citadel. Although

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 30 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 "US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

UNRRA continued to provide them with food supplies, which they collected from one of two collection points established by UNRRA, each unit had its own kitchen, which meant that the DPs could prepare their own meals. By November 1945 the average weekly ration included bread or flour, cabbage, potatoes and apples, as well as small amounts of coffee, sugar, lard and milk powder.<sup>27</sup> While these new accommodations were sparsely furnished at best, they provided the DPs with a level of privacy that many had not known throughout the war, and therefore it was a chance for the DPs to reestablish a more “normal” life.

The non-Polish DPs who had moved into the QM Bakery were not as satisfied because conditions at the Bakery remained extremely crowded and lacked privacy. The center had formerly housed a Wehrmacht bakery, but at the end of the war it had been occupied by the American Army. It had a maximum capacity of 500, although in November 1945 it only housed 317 DPs. It had latrines and bathing facilities (10 showers, three washbasins, and twelve toilets), a central mess hall with seats for 110, as well as three large rooms used to house both families and individuals. A separate part of the building was used as an UNRRA storehouse, and yet another part of the building was used by the US Army to store machinery. The building also contained a large kitchen, including several large kettles which could hold 1500 litres, and a coal range with six fireplaces, but an insufficient supply of dishes and cutlery. In fact, Blackmore recommended that it be operated as a transit camp.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, UNRRA Team 141 was administering a DP camp in a group of army barracks, all of which had sustained significant damage during the war. The Hindenburg Kaserne was one of its newest buildings, built between 1935 and 1937 for Wehrmacht use. In his visit to the camp,

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Memo, R.J.D.G. Blackmore to Alex E. Squadrilli, Deputy District Director, subject: Special Report on DP Centers Ulm, dated 3 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

Blackmore was unimpressed. As he explained, the camp “has a capacity of 2500 persons, at present it accommodates 3000 Poles.... There are five main blocks and buildings and many garages. All buildings have suffered more or less from bomb damage and blast effect.”<sup>29</sup> UNRRA had been working to repair the damage, but they could not complete the repairs without glass. As an interim solution, the windows had all been boarded up, but this meant that “people live in a state of semi-darkness in many instances.”<sup>30</sup> Electricity and running water had been restored, but electric light continued to be rationed. Team 141 Director Mr. Van Ark remained concerned about what would happen if the DPs remained in the camp over the winter. “This place can be used for winter quarters but I do not recommend it as it would be depressing in the extreme,”<sup>31</sup> he exclaimed. Further complicating matters, they had no winter clothing or boots for the DPs. Otherwise the camp was functioning well, in that there was enough food to feed each DP 2000 calories per day, prepared in two central kitchens. Interestingly, the DPs all chose to eat their meals in their room and not in a central dining room, testament to the importance of eating meals individually or in family groups as an important way of normalizing life in the DP camps; it was one of the few ways in which they could reestablish their own prewar social norms. While eating in the rooms made it more difficult to keep track of dishes and utensils, many UNRRA workers understood and sympathized with the DPs’ desire. In contrast, the military believed that this was an unhygienic practice and complained about it in their inspection reports continually.

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<sup>29</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 141 – Ulm, Director: Mr. Van Ark, dated 3 August 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 34, File 11 “US Zone - Team 141 - Ulm 1945-1945.”

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

In November 1945, Blackmore reported that the camp at Hindenburg Kaserne remained severely overcrowded, and that UNRRA planned to evacuate the camp by 6 November.<sup>32</sup> In order to empty the camp, the population had to be dispersed. The Polish families were to be moved into private dwellings; 400 DPs were being repatriated on 1 November; a further 1000 Polish DPs on the 5 November; and the remaining 700 DPs were relocated to the Donau Bastion. The Donau Bastion had been built between 1843 and 1855, and at the end of the war, the building had functioned as a British transit camp. Blackmore believed that the camp could house a maximum of 700 people over the winter, but that a great deal of work was yet required before the camp would be inhabitable. UNRRA Team 149, under the direction of Mr. Fishbein, was in the process of organizing the camp.<sup>33</sup> DPs in Ulm were also housed for short periods in the Sedan Kaserne, the Pioneer Kaserne, and the Bleidorn Kaserne, but these buildings were soon handed over to the German authorities to house German refugees.

The fall of 1945 was spent relocating those DPs who wished to repatriate into camps from which it would be easiest to arrange their transportation, while moving those DPs who wished to remain in Germany into more permanent housing. According to SHAEF's *Guide*, all movements required the coordination of the Assembly Centre director, the Allied liaison officer and the chief convoy leader, a repatriate appointed from amongst the DP population. These officials were to work jointly on the details of the journey and the DPs involved were to be informed of all such details at least 48 hours before they are due to depart. Assembly Center Directors were to ensure that all DPs due to participate in the movement were ready to move out at the stipulated time; that the DP2 forms

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<sup>32</sup> Memo, R.J.D.G. Blackmore to Alex E. Squadrilli, Deputy District Director, subject: Weekly Report on Camps visited by Field Supervisor, dated 2 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 "U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports."

<sup>33</sup> Memo, R.J.D.G. Blackmore to Alex E. Squadrilli, Deputy District Director, subject: Special Report on DP Centers Ulm, dated 3 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 "U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports."

had all been completed and were duly handed over to the OC convoy, together with copies of the nominal rolls of the party for handing over to G-2 representatives at the frontier and to the national authority in the country of destination. The liaison officer would have complete responsibility for the convoy and would take all necessary action in cases which could involve delay. He was to ensure that the necessary rations and equipment were loaded on the train if travel was by rail and to supervise the overall issue of rations. This operating procedure was meant to provide structure to the movement of so many people in such a short period of time.

While repatriation did not occur in nearly as orderly a fashion as SHAEF had hoped, movements continued throughout the summer and autumn at a rapid pace. By December 1945 the population of the DP camps in the three western zones of Germany had settled at 511,000, most of whom had refused repatriation or had declared themselves stateless.<sup>34</sup> While in the winter months it was not possible to move large numbers of people, with spring, the military moved to consolidate the camps into fewer, larger camps. It was very frustrating for the DPs and the UNRRA workers alike, and as one welfare worker lamented, “[t]he Army was moving them around again, shifting groups from camp to camp, uprooting them as soon as they had tacked up a private-room partition or strung a light-bulb, giving them no chance to create a temporary home, in the hopes that maybe they might begin to thinking of their real home in Poland and go there, if for no other reason than for the peace of staying put.”<sup>35</sup>

These constant movements between camps became a strong point of contention between UNRRA and the military. For the military, these movements to consolidate the smaller camps into larger ones meant that each camp would (hopefully) be run more efficiently, requiring less men and using less space. “As pressure to repatriate increased,” Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray

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<sup>34</sup> Laura J. Hilton, “Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany, 1945-1952” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2001), 137.

<sup>35</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1953), 149.

explain, “populations were moved from camp to camp, reflecting the belief of many within the military that the ‘shifting of the D.P. from one centre to another is desirable so that they shall not become ‘too settled’ in their conditions.’”<sup>36</sup> From UNRRA’s point of view, the continual movements worked against the reintroduction of social norms that UNRRA had been working toward. While UNRRA was working to normalize lives by creating order and stability, the constant movements upset the DPs and undermined any sense of normalcy that they had achieved.

The constant population shifts only became more frequent in the summer of 1946, as the infiltrees arrived in ever larger numbers. Camps were cleared of other DP populations in order to make room for them and for the military. At the beginning of July 1946, the transit camp housed in the QM Bakery was closed and the building returned to the U.S. Army, who claimed that they needed it for their own purposes. In the same month, the evacuation of the Polish population residing in the private dwellings administered by UNRRA Team 508 began in order to make room for the Jewish infiltrees.<sup>37</sup> The biggest problem then was providing adequate housing for those infiltrees who arrived. “Our camps are filled above capacity,” the Team Welfare Officer wrote.<sup>38</sup>

Overcrowding was a common theme in the DP camps throughout UNRRA’s tenure. UNRRA believed it was essential to provide housing that permitted the restoration of the family unit, and for this reason they supported the move out of barracks and into individual dwellings. The DPs clearly shared those values, as they preferred the apartments - even when they were substandard - to the barracks. The ability to cook one’s meals independently played an especially important role. Even when forced to live in barracks, the DPs did their best to replicate the 'family unit' mode of

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<sup>36</sup> Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 184.

<sup>37</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 20 July 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>38</sup> UNRRA Monthly Team Report, Team No. 509, Director L. Van Eyck Jr., dated 15 September 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

living, exemplified in their insistence on eating their canteen-produced meals back in their own private space. UNRRA worked to institute their vision of a kind of rehabilitation through proper housing, and the DPs were willing participants.

The military was not uniformly unsympathetic to the DPs' plight. There were some examples of the military using its clout to provide better housing for the DPs. On occasion, the Military Government threatened the German population with worse conditions in order to move them to action. In Coburg the water lines were damaged at the Kaserne which was housing the DPs, and the local commander ordered the Burgomeister (mayor) to haul water using a horse and buggy. When he complained that this was not possible, the commander threatened to move Germans out of their houses to make room for the DPs if he did not comply. Similarly, in Sonnsberg the local commander demanded that the Burgomeister provide food for the DPs. When he failed to produce the required food, the military entered the butcher shops and bakeries, requisitioned their entire contents and handed it over to the DPs. Consequently, in nearby towns the order to provide food for the DPs was quickly filled in order to avoid a similar fate.<sup>39</sup> However, these actions proved the exception rather than the rule. More typically, UNRRA was forced to contend with an indifferent military who controlled the allocation of housing and decided where DP camps would be located. The limited supply of individual dwellings, and the military's reluctance to remove Germans from their own homes in order to make room for the DPs, meant that most DPs continued to live in barracks, and not in apartments.

Alongside rehabilitation through housing, UNRRA also believed in encouraging social norms concerning cleanliness. Hygiene norms in the United States had undergone significant changes in the

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<sup>39</sup> Displaced Persons Monthly Report No. 12, UNRRA Central Headquarters, dated September 1945, p. 3, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 "AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46."

last decades of the nineteenth century. In the decades between 1820, when baths with permanent plumbing began being installed in homes, and the First World War, bathing “went from being an occasional and haphazard routine of a small segment of the population to a regular practice of the large bulk of the people.”<sup>40</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century, then, personal cleanliness was firmly rooted in American middle-class behavior. A strong connection had been forged between cleanliness and morality. To be clean meant not only to smell nice and look tidy, but was also a reflection of one’s self-respect and higher moral standards. Middle-class social reformers had carried this into their work with the poor. Social workers identified a lack of personal cleanliness as a form of social deviation. They strongly encouraged the poor to introduce regular bathing into their daily routine. They sought not only improvements in public cleanliness, but also better schools and playgrounds, more parks and green space, increasing regulation of conditions in tenement houses, and more consistent garbage collection, as they also drew a connection between the many social ills that existed in such communities and the physical environment. The reformers believed that scrubbing the bodies of the poor, as well as the buildings and streets of these neighborhoods, “would ameliorate the social problems arising out of squalor,”<sup>41</sup> including not only disease, but also malnutrition, addiction, and crime.

By the time that UNRRA’s welfare workers arrived in Europe, personal cleanliness was understood as the key to maintaining the health of not just the individual, but also the community. Those who did not accept the importance of personal cleanliness were likely to catch and spread disease. Robert W. Kelso, President of the National Conference on Social Work, explained:

that community which is shot through with syphilis and gonorrhoea, which is shorn of a high percentage of its working energy by tuberculosis; which has not one perfect set of teeth in a

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<sup>40</sup> Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman, “The Early History of Cleanliness in America,” *Journal of American History* 74 (1988), 1214.

<sup>41</sup> Marilyn Thornton Williams, “New York City’s Public Baths: A Case Study in Urban Progressive Reform” *Journal of Urban History* 7 (1980), 49.

thousand; which musters barely sixty percent of passable physiques in a war levy of her finest manhood—such a nation, except resuscitating and preventive measures be soon set up, is likely to become morally rotten and in the end Godless—likely to crumble as a power in civilization.<sup>42</sup>

The connection between cleanliness and morality also remained strong. Those people who carried disease risked infecting their neighbours and therefore made them not only a danger to themselves, but to society as a whole. UNRRA and the military brought this strong belief in the importance of cleanliness with them into the field and the DP camps.

Like personal cleanliness, the drive for oral care had grown swiftly in the United States in the nineteenth century. The first school for training dentists was founded in Baltimore in 1840. Previous to this, dentists trained as apprentices for many years, but there were neither schools nor a professional curriculum. “There were neither diplomas nor state regulations,” Maurice Bremner explained. “Anybody who so desired could set himself up in practice with no more restriction than the opening of a blacksmith shop.”<sup>43</sup> However, beginning in the 1840s, the movement to professionalize dentistry gained momentum. Schools were opened and a number of professional journals established. Technological advances, most notably the discovery of laughing gas in 1772 and its arrival in North America forever changed the average person’s perception of visiting the dentist. “Patients, who in the past preferred to suffer toothache rather than go to a dentist,” Bremner explained, “now were glad to take a few whiffs of the wonderful gas to obtain permanent relief. The removal of teeth had become a simple operation which most sensible people ceased to fear.”<sup>44</sup> In combination with training and technological advances, a massive media campaign began at the turn of the century. Just as social workers were teaching adults and children alike the importance of bathing

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<sup>42</sup> Robert W. Kelso, “Changing Fundamentals of Social Work,” in *Readings in Social Case Work 1920-1938*, ed. Fern Lowry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 9.

<sup>43</sup> Maurice Bremner, *The Story of Dentistry from the Dawn of Civilization to the Present* (Brooklyn: Dental Items of Interest Pub. Co., 1939), 69.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

with soap, so too were dentists spreading the message concerning the importance of brushing one's teeth. They printed pamphlets, gave lectures and spoke on the radio of the importance of tooth-brushing as a means of preventing tooth decay. By the beginning of the Second World War, brushing one's teeth was part of every middle- and upper-class American's hygiene regimen, and it was another social norm that UNRRA welfare workers brought with them into the field.

The military also brought into the field its own expectations concerning DP cleanliness. According to the *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, each DP camp was to be regularly inspected to ensure that they met army standards of cleanliness. SHAEF explained that continual inspections were necessary in order to ensure the health and safety of the camp's population. While UNRRA social workers were not ideologically opposed to inspections for the purpose of maintaining cleanliness and reducing the risk of disease, their support for the inspections did not prevent numerous confrontations between the DPs, UNRRA workers and the military over the way in which the inspections took place. Laura Hilton argues convincingly that the military saw the DPs as soldiers who were under their command, not as the civilians that they were, and therefore expected them to meet unrealistically high standards of cleanliness, both in the camps and as individuals. UNRRA welfare worker Kathryn Hulme explained that she looked forward to the winter of 1945, when she hoped that weather would prevent, or at least slow,

the military inspections which harassed us.... The 'new broom' officers came through camp and made suggestions that kept us crazy for weeks at a time, undoing past work, redoing it the new way and revamping all reports to fit the orders in the sheaves of directives which we had to study at night because we still had fifteen thousand people to take care of during the days.<sup>45</sup>

UNRRA also conducted its own inspections and reported back to UNRRA Headquarters on conditions in the camps.

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<sup>45</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1953), 44.

The task of establishing UNRRA's social norms to the DPs through standards of cleanliness was a formidable one. Alongside the continual inspections of sleeping quarters, bathrooms and kitchens, many UNRRA directors took it upon themselves to introduce courses of instruction on matters of cleanliness. While these courses were never outlined in any of the planning materials, it is clear that UNRRA was unsure of the level of personal hygiene practiced by the DPs before the war, and that many individual workers expected the DPs' standards to be far below their own. Blackmore was certainly amongst this group. They believed that they would have to educate the DPs on this front, and, indeed, much of the language associated with the courses of instruction on personal hygiene seems to echo the orientalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They imply that the DPs have yet to learn the 'proper' methods of taking care of themselves. In this way, UNRRA saw itself as the transmitter of civilization to the uncivilized DPs. In October 1945, Blackmore reported that his successor as camp director at Boelcke Kaserne, H. A. Oprel, had organized a series of lectures on public health and sanitation. "The main problem appears to me to be the inculcation into the center inhabitants of elementary knowledge of sanitary facilities and simple health measures. This problem is common to all centers and I have selected Mrs. Wanda Woytowicz-Grabinska to cooperate with Team Directors and advise them on necessary action," he wrote.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately documents do not describe exactly what advice Team Directors gave the DPs under their care. However, Blackmore's reports continually emphasized the importance of regular bathing and fresh air in the living quarters. On numerous occasions he argued that "the Poles have a marked dislike for fresh air with the result that the rooms are stuffy. Also they do not bath sufficiently

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<sup>46</sup> Field Supervisor's Monthly Report, Team No. 127, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 17 October 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 "U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports."

often.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, regular bathing and opening of windows in the living quarters seem to have been a point of contention.

While UNRRA welfare workers launched their campaign at the adults, they also sought to teach the children about personal hygiene. When the kindergarten and school at the DP camp in Bocholt was first opened, the UNRRA welfare worker there was startled by the lack of personal hygiene among the children. “Some of the children hadn’t had a bath, or even a proper wash, for months,” she explained. “Very few of them had lice, but the majority had scabies. We had a stove for hot water, and four men volunteered to carry water the whole day; every mother could bath her child three times a week.”<sup>48</sup> The worker took it upon herself to teach the children about the need for personal cleanliness. She also worked to instill a sense of responsibility in each of the children under her care. “We gave each child soap and a towel, and three children shared a cupboard,” she wrote.

The oldest of the three was entrusted with the key of the cupboard, and his or her name was put on it. It was their responsibility to see that the other two kept it in order, and didn’t hide pinched things; otherwise somebody else would keep the key, and another name would be put on the cupboard. I am glad to say that they were so proud to be entrusted that not a single occasion arose in which they key had to be taken away.<sup>49</sup>

In teaching the DPs about UNRRA’s social norms concerning personal cleanliness, the welfare officers had to contend with the limited facilities at their disposal, and washing and bathing facilities varied considerably from camp to camp. There were severe shortages of basic supplies, including toothbrushes, soap, and other cleaning supplies. None of the camps contained facilities for laundry. The QM Bakery had a total of ten showers, two washrooms with three basins in each, and

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<sup>47</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 525, Dornstadt, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 24 April 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>48</sup> *UNRRA Review of the Month* (London: UNRRA Information Division, European Regional Office, June 1945), 10.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

twelve toilets, all for a population of approximately 150 people.<sup>50</sup> The sanitation facilities at the Wilhelmsburg Citadel consisted of two large shower rooms, one for men and one for women, with 24 showers in each. As well, there were four bathrooms, each with 24 water basins, 56 toilets and 35 urinals. While these facilities were “in very bad condition on arrival,” very soon everything was being cleaned regularly and kept in good condition, according to an October 1945 report.<sup>51</sup> At the Boelcke Kaserne, the bathing facilities were adequate for the camp population, but there were not nearly enough toilets. According to military regulations, the camp required one toilet for every twenty people. This camp had a total of thirty toilets for more than two thousand people. Nevertheless, the sanitary conditions of the camp were reported as good. On the other hand, the Donau Bastion, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, contained no indoor plumbing whatsoever, and so the British army, which had originally used the building as a transit camp, had built outdoor latrines. When UNRRA took over operation of the camp from the American military, it meant that these latrines had to be winterized.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the lectures on cleanliness and UNRRA’s efforts to instill a sense of responsibility for personal cleanliness among the DPs, there continued to be clashes between UNRRA and the military over the camp inspections. The inspections made clear the military’s unfavourable opinion of the deficiencies of both the DPs themselves and the UNRRA workers who were administering the camps. In November 1945, the Donau Bastion did not pass its military inspection. The camp’s director, Eldon E. Marple, stated that steps were being taken in the camp to “eliminate the

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<sup>50</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 15 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 “US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Memo, R.J.D.G. Blackmore to Alex E. Squadrilli, Deputy District Director, subject: Special Report on DP Centers Ulm, dated 3 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

deficiencies noted” by the military authorities.<sup>53</sup> The DPs were now being provided with two hot baths per week, “despite the lack of coal or dry hardwood to be used with the coal-burning type furnaces,” and an educational program on cleanliness for the DP population of the camp had been implemented. Nevertheless, he complained that it was especially difficult to keep the lavatories clean when “parts for repair have not been furnished on requisition from M.G.” He made clear that UNRRA was doing the best that it could to keep the camps as clean as possible given the overcrowding, the shortages, and the military’s failure to provide adequate support.

For his part, the military commander who had inspected the Donau Bastion was evaluating not only the state of cleanliness of the camp, but also the UNRRA staff administering it. The camp’s physical condition was seen as a direct reflection of the staff’s ineffectiveness. Thus, he questioned the ability of the DP camp director in supervising the DPs, especially in terms of the cleanliness of sleeping quarters, bathing areas, latrines and kitchens. In response to the commander’s criticism, UNRRA District Director Charles McDonald wrote to Blackmore to ensure that steps were being taken to ensure that the DP camp did not fail its next inspection. “If the above matters have not already been taken care of,” McDonald wrote to Blackmore, “as a result of the inspection referred to, please see that same is done immediately.”<sup>54</sup>

There is little question that the biggest challenges were the private dwellings, which failed their inspections on several occasions. While they could at least monitor the conditions in the other camps, visiting all of the private dwellings on a regular basis proved a difficult task. UNRRA did carry out their own inspections of the private dwellings, and in April 1946 Blackmore reported that

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<sup>53</sup> Letter, J. Trevor Guy, Special Investigator UNRRA, to Col. G. V. Sottong, Inspector General, Special Investigation Division, subject: DP Camp at ULM – Mr. E. M. Marple, UNRRA Director of Team 508, dated 24 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 6 “US Zone - Team 508 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

<sup>54</sup> Letter, Mr. Charles McDonald, UNRRA District Director, Heidelberg, to Mr. R. J. Blackmore, UNRRA Field Supervisor, Ulm, dated: 8 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 6 “US Zone - Team 508 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

“[r]andom inspection revealed state of dwellings to be generally very good and the occupants are contented.”<sup>55</sup> He was especially impressed in the improvements given the small size of the UNRRA Team. “It should be borne in mind,” he wrote, “that Team 509 is a small Team with comparatively heavy responsibilities and it is with pleasure that I note the effectiveness of the supervision exercised by the Team and the manner in which the DPs themselves co-operate and share various responsibilities throughout the installations.”<sup>56</sup> They had organized a system of social visits to check in on the DPs living in the private dwellings. Nonetheless, he noted, “it is very difficult to keep some of these people up to standard.”<sup>57</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1946, with the arrival of large numbers of infiltrees, the problems surrounding camp cleanliness arose once again. On 16 August 1946 Blackmore reported that the Sedan Kaserne camp, now housing Jewish infiltrees, was in a state of chaos. “I found the standard of cleanliness to be deplorable,” he lamented. “A large number of Jewish infiltrees in this camp seem to have no standards at all and in spite of great efforts on the part of the Team to promote some sense of responsibility into these people the rooms were dirty and evil smelling. Corridors were littered with rubbish and food remains.” He also commented on the state of personal cleanliness amongst the infiltrees. “The conception of regular bathing appears to be quite foreign to large numbers of inhabitants. However, the Team have so far had little time to concentrate on these problems and I am sure that the future will show a speedy improvement.”<sup>58</sup> He had equally harsh words for the kitchen staff. “The kitchen was filthy and worse than any other I have seen in my

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<sup>55</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 26 April 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>56</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 14 May 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 15 August 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

experience. In fact typical of the extremely low standard of the inhabitants.”<sup>59</sup> He did note that the team’s Welfare Officer, Mr. Thomas, was in the process of organizing welfare assistants and a sanitation squad to ensure the cleanliness of the building.

The situation, however, showed little improvement, to Blackmore’s frustration. In September 1946 Blackmore reported that “[t]he camp is somewhat cleaner than before but it is still in very poor condition. The main difficulty is of course in securing proper cooperation on the part of the camp population in maintaining the most elementary standards of cleanliness.”<sup>60</sup> He continued to explain that “[t]he living rooms which I inspected were not good. In one or two exceptional cases I did find cleanliness and order. Garbage disposal is fair. Latrines and wash rooms [sic] need constant supervision.”<sup>61</sup> He hoped that the Jewish Agency for Palestine (JAFP) representative would spend more effort on working with the DPs to improve camp cleanliness. “I am inclined to think that Mr. Sklarz could perform more useful work than he is doing at the present time by throwing his weight and influence into the general effort to instill a sense of responsibility and cooperation into the people as a whole.”<sup>62</sup> Still worse were the conditions in the camp kitchen. He explained that they were establishing a kosher kitchen at the camp, but that “[o]n the occasion of my last inspection I found fresh meat lying about on dirty floors being cut up by very grimy individuals.”<sup>63</sup>

The reports on the battles between UNRRA and the military over the camp inspections and military expectations concerning camp and personal cleanliness focus very little attention on how difficult it was to provide soap and hot water to the DPs. While some camps contained indoor plumbing, the majority did not, and required hot water to be heated in the kitchens and then

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 26 September 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

transferred to the washrooms. Welfare officers were constantly asking the military to provide soap for the camp population as well. The military's belief that the DPs should be able maintain a certain level of cleanliness regardless of the availability of supplies highlights the fact that they had the same expectations of the DPs as they did of their own troops.

These reports also avoid entirely the question of how the DPs themselves felt about personal cleanliness, and also what standards they brought with them from their prewar homes. Neither group seriously considered what standards the DPs had previously followed nor how much of a change they were instilling in DP social norms concerning hygiene. The DPs were a heterogeneous group of people: some had come from the city, but most were from the countryside. In his discussion of Poles living in Breslau following the Soviet seizure of formerly Polish territory, Frederick Taylor writes, the rural Poles “were mostly not city dwellers but farmers and country people. Not only did they not want to be in this German city [Breslau], but they did not actually know *how* to live in such a place.”<sup>64</sup> The DPs had likewise come from rural homes where people generally adhered to personal cleanliness practices reminiscent of the United States before indoor plumbing spread in the late nineteenth century. Bathing was undertaken in a river or lake in the warmer months, and by sponge bathing throughout the year. American practices of bathing in a bathtub had yet to be taken up by much of the urban population in Europe, and by none of the rural population. Also important were the DPs' wartime experiences. The toilets and baths were not a major concern or readily available. The Germans treated foreign workers, and eastern European workers in particular, with disdain. In his study of foreign workers in Osnabruck, Panikos Panayi quotes a January 1945 German government report which described one such forced labour camp as “dirty and disorderly, the

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<sup>64</sup> Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 71.

provision of clothing for the inmates is inadequate, the heating is insufficient, the inmates are covered in lice. Only about 50 per cent of them go to work.”<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, given their prewar habits and their wartime experiences, perhaps what is most interesting to note is that the DPs did eventually absorb the values and hygiene standards imparted by UNRRA welfare workers and army officers alike. While the documentation from 1945 and early 1946 was replete with discussions of inspections and disagreements over their outcome, by the end of 1946 these complaints had vanished. Instead, the reports show that nearly all of the camps passed their inspections easily. By 1946 the extreme shortages that had plagued the first year were coming under control, and therefore hygiene supplies (such as soap and toothbrushes) were in much greater supply, which certainly made it easier for the DPs to conform to these new social norms. There was also certainly some changeover of personnel, although this alone cannot explain the change. What is clear is that after a year of enduring inspections and listening to lectures, the DPs had embraced the notion of personal cleanliness, as understood by American welfare workers, as an attribute. This part of UNRRA’s rehabilitation program had been, in spite of the slow start, a clear success.

Alongside the emphasis on personal cleanliness as a key personal responsibility and an important means of rehabilitation, UNRRA also sought to introduce structure into the DP camps and the DPs’ lives through the provision of recreational, educational and work programs. UNRRA began introducing recreational activities as soon as they arrived in a camp. By the end of August 1945, the DP camp at Boelcke Kaserne had already hosted several recreational activities, including dances, theatre, football matches, and musical programmes by DPs visiting from other centres. The DPs had also organized a Catholic chapel for religious services, and Blackmore had requested that projectors and films be made available so that the centre could present a film night to the residents.

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<sup>65</sup> Letter, Dr. Fischer to Regierungspräsident, 26 January 1945, quoted in Panikos Panayi, “Exploitation, Criminality, Resistance. The Everyday Life of Foreign Workers and Prisoners of War in the German Town of Osnabrück, 1939-49” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40:3 (July 2005), 490.

For children, the single most important means of introducing normalcy was to begin school. UNRRA recognized that for many children this would be their first experience with formal education, as a “large number of children have never been to school; another large number have had their education interrupted and are now in need of both academic and vocational guidance and training.”<sup>66</sup> However, few UNRRA staff members spoke the languages of the DPs or were able to offer formal instruction, and no one had the time to devote solely to this effort. Instead, UNRRA welfare workers helped the DPs organize and run the schools by helping them locate the necessary space and resources, often at the expense of the German authorities. For adults, UNRRA sought to organize vocational training. “In conformity with the character and intention of UNRRA’s programme of relief and rehabilitation,” Directive No. 5 explained, “vocational training is a means of helping displaced persons to earn their living and to contribute usefully to the wellbeing [sic] of their countries or place of residence.”<sup>67</sup>

In July 1945, UNRRA welfare worker Rita Morgan shared her experiences and thoughts on UNRRA’s education program to Conrad Van Hying, Director of UNRRA’s Welfare Division. “It is of the utmost importance,” she wrote, “that the refugee body through its representatives selected in as democratic a way as is practicable have some voice in the determination of education policy. This may seem a slow way to get started but in the long run it will prove most valuable.”<sup>68</sup> She emphasized the fact that the DPs themselves were the ones to benefit because their children would be educated. This point was expanded upon in UNRRA’s directive *Educational Activities in UNRRA Assembly Centres and Camps*, which explained that while education was considered a key part of any

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<sup>66</sup> Report of Committee Meeting on Welfare Services, held at UNRRA Staging Centre, dated 4-5 August 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 3 “Welfare IV – Minutes of Special Meetings – Zone Headquarters – Welfare/Relief Services.”

<sup>67</sup> Directive on Displaced Persons Operations No. 5, UNc 1119, undated, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons Files No. 3.”

<sup>68</sup> Recommendations for a services program for a camp of about 5,000 refugees (Draft), Rita Morgan, 26 July 1945, in UNA, Series 523, Box 593, File 92 “Assembly Centres. Services. General.”

welfare program, it was one which UNRRA should encourage the DPs to organize themselves. “The Director of an assembly centre or camp should give every encouragement to spontaneous educational enterprises undertaken by the displaced persons themselves. Freedom of educational enterprise is a constituent part of the general process of liberation and should therefore be encouraged,” the directive explained.<sup>69</sup> Thus, this process of organizing children’s and adult education was an especially important a form of rehabilitation because it was another way to make the DPs responsible for themselves.

UNRRA workers faced two types of obstacles in their efforts to coordinate education programs in the DPs camps. The first problem concerned supply: they did not have access to the necessary teaching materials, books, paper and pencils necessary to successfully run school programs. To solve this problem, they turned to the military for help, but these efforts often met with resistance. The second obstacle was the process of repatriation. As UNRRA’s stated goal was the return of all nationals to their country of origin, they had to justify their educational efforts according to requirements in their home countries. UNRRA could not organize programs that would halt or even slow repatriation efforts. As a result, the educational and vocational training programs were compromised from the start.

In August 1945, school programs had begun for 185 children at Boelcke Kaserne. Subjects being taught included religion, history, writing, and Polish language. There were also English classes for adults being offered. At the QM Bakery, a Polish Education Council was founded at a meeting of all Polish camp residents on 7 December. They decided that children in the first four years of their schooling (aged six to ten) would continue to attend classes at Boelcke Kaserne, while older students (aged eleven and above) would attend classes at a new school, to be set up in the QM Bakery. “This

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<sup>69</sup> Directive on Displaced Persons Operations No. 5, UNc 1119, undated, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons Files No. 3.”

arrangement will allow [us] to use in the best way the limited number of trained teaching personnel,” the team director’s monthly report noted. By the end of November the school inside the Bakery was providing instruction to students in grades five, six and seven on Polish language, mathematics, history, geography, religion and folk song, in spite of a shortage of teaching materials. Some materials, like globes, were available from German sources, but Polish instruction material was not to be found.<sup>70</sup> In some instances the military was able to provide requisitioned supplies from German sources. However, there are also numerous reports of UNRRA workers attempting to locate the resources themselves. “The attention of the staff has been given to the searching of possibilities of procuring books through gifts, publication or purchase,” on report noted. “Plans have been made for the publication of additional books in five different languages. The program provides fairly adequately for the first three grades, but additional publication must be undertaken to meet needs for higher grades of the elementary school, and for secondary instruction and adult education.”<sup>71</sup>

UNRRA also turned to the voluntary agencies for help. In October 1945, W.G. Bergman, UNRRA’s Education Officer, wrote to the Chief Welfare Officer to ask for help. Given that “[e]ducational training has not been a major factor in UNRRA selection” he hoped that the voluntary agencies would “be of assistance in those areas of professional effort which are most lightly represented in UNRRA personnel.” He suggested that UNRRA ask the voluntary agencies to provide teachers, especially teachers fluent in Polish and those who “speak a language common to most Jewish D.P.’s, Yiddish, German or Hebrew.”<sup>72</sup> The need for teachers for the Jewish DPs became

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<sup>70</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 30 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 “US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

<sup>71</sup> Summary Report, Displaced Persons Operation – U.S. Zone, Germany, for the period ending 31 October 1945, Alvin R. Guyler, Zone Director, dated 6 November 1945, in UNA, Series 412, Box 15, File 3 “US Zone – Zone Director’s Monthly Report.”

<sup>72</sup> Letter, W.G. Bergman, Education Officer, to Chief Welfare Officer, UNRRA Headquarters, Wiessbaden, subject: Personnel Needs from Voluntary Agencies, dated 21 October 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 63, File 1 “Welfare – Inter-Office Memos.”

more urgent in the summer of 1946, with the arrival of the infiltrees. In August 1946, Chaplain Emanuel Rackman of the United States Army, Aide to the Advisor to the Theatre Commander on Jewish Affairs, wrote to UNRRA's American Zone Director J. H. Whiting in regards to DP education. "Since children are arriving in this Zone in ever increasing numbers, I deemed it advisable to participate in deliberations with regard to their education – religious and secular," he noted.<sup>73</sup> Chaplain Rackman explained that not all of the Jewish DPs wanted their children to receive religious instruction, but many did. In order to solve this problem, he suggested that all children be offered secular classes together, and teachers able to teach religious classes offer them to those children who wanted to attend them. Again, UNRRA reached out to the voluntary agencies for qualified staff.

UNRRA helped the DPs organize several different training courses in the DP camps in Ulm. In August 1945, Blackmore praised the efforts of UNRRA Team 141 in this area. The Boelcke Kaserne had founded an excellent sewing school that was training girls to make alterations.<sup>74</sup> The only problem was that they did not have access to the necessary supplies. The UNRRA team director had approached the military, "but requisitions are not made promptly. It would appear that the Military Government is lenient towards the German Population and does not pay sufficient regard to D.Ps.," he noted.<sup>75</sup> In November 1945, DPs in the QM Bakery were organizing a driver and mechanic school to instruct forty people for a total of three months. They also hoped to begin instruction for tailors, typists, and farmers.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Letter, Chaplain Emanuel Rackman, United States Army, Aide to the Advisor to the Theatre Commander on Jewish Affairs, to J. H. Whiting, U.S. Zone Director, UNRRA, dated 16 August 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 64, File 4 "Welfare – Child – Child Welfare."

<sup>74</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 141 – Ulm, Director: Mr. Van Ark, dated 3 August 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 34, File 11 "US Zone - Team 141 - Ulm 1945-1945."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 30 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 "US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946."

In December 1945, UNRRA drafted a *Statement of Targets for Vocational Training*.

UNRRA suggested a complete review of all vocational training currently taking place, with the goal of reorganizing vocational training programs according to “priority trades and industries from point of view of resettlement ... and repatriation.”<sup>77</sup> The *Statement* explained that “[v]ocational training and occupational re-training is one of the most important factors in helping people to help themselves, by developing their skill, self confidence and morale, needed for their self-sufficiency when they return to their own country, and offering a better chance for earlier resettlement.”<sup>78</sup> It was a tricky balance to strike. While UNRRA workers brought with them into the field their belief in the importance of reinstating social norms and the important role that education and vocational training would play in this process, they soon met resistance from both the military and UNRRA’s leadership, who did not want to encourage the creation of any programs that would slow the pace of repatriation. As a result, any vocational training plans had to be short-term; they could not organize programs that required long periods of training.

UNRRA did not have to lecture the DPs on the importance of schooling for children; this was a goal that they already shared. However, education was seen as an especially important aspect of rehabilitation because the UNRRA workers had the DPs organize the classes themselves, and so merely supported them in this endeavor instead of managing it for them. Thus alongside housing, education provides another clear example of the convergence of DP and UNRRA social norms. The DPs were as keen to provide schools for their children, and to do the work in organizing and managing them, as UNRRA was in encouraging them to do so. The same was true of vocational training. The DPs were encouraged to organize courses themselves, while UNRRA coordinated with

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<sup>77</sup> Statement of Targets, Germany, Austria and Middle East Displaced Persons Operations, Phase 1 to Spring 1946, Vocational Training, dated 3 December 1945, in UNA, Series 520, Box 183, File 197 “Vocational Training and Re-Training.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

the voluntary agencies and the military to procure the necessary staff and supplies. This was no simple task for UNRRA, and they met resistance from the military in many instances. But in the end they provided the DPs with an educational experience that gave structure to their lives in the DP camps, and provided many with skills and experience that they could take with them, whether they were returning to their home country or hoping to settle abroad.

UNRRA also believed that both educational and work opportunities would provide structure to camp life and instill a work ethic that was considered key. American understandings of a work ethic had evolved over the course of the nineteenth century alongside understandings of personal cleanliness. These notions about work had evolved from Protestant ideas of both work, and especially the “Doctrine of the Calling” (which claimed that God had assigned each man a productive job), and the dangers of idleness into a more secular understanding of work which focused on each man’s duty to contribute to the good of society however he was able.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, idleness remained the enemy. Daniel Rodgers explains that work fulfilled several purposes in the Victorian understanding of society: it took up time that would otherwise be devoted to succumbing to temptation; it provided a means of supporting oneself and family; and it gave men purpose in their lives.<sup>80</sup> A work ethic was a quintessential middle-class value, and one that remained rooted in American culture into the twentieth century. Thus, based on their understanding of social norms, American social workers identified both unemployment and the lack of a trade or skill as deviations from the norm. They believed that it was their job to teach people the necessary skills to be able to obtain and keep permanent employment – skilled employment when possible.

UNRRA workers brought these norms with them into the field. “His career has been suddenly disrupted,” *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons* explained, “he has been put into

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<sup>79</sup> See Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 8-10.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

kinds of work entirely different from those into which had gone his previous energy and interest. Every moment that he worked below his skill-level, his disgust and hate and anxiety grew.”<sup>81</sup>

UNRRA’s task was to reintroduce work, but to do so in a way that would help the DPs come to enjoy it once again. The most important thing was to give the DPs some choice in their tasks; they did not want to force anyone to perform work that they did not want to do. Work would also distract the DPs from brooding over their previous experiences. “All his skills of defence were on end as it were, he had to be on his guard all the time and was reduced to a constant state of touchiness. The trivial routines of work in slavery made him think more than was good for him, embittered him and thus created new fear and anxiety.”<sup>82</sup>

For UNRRA, the creation or reinforcement of a work ethic was a central part of the process of rehabilitation as they understood it. The DPs had to learn to be productive members of the community. By working together, they would re-establish normal relations among themselves, and hopefully overcome the effects of Nazi policies which had worked to destroy inter-personal relationships. Work would also bring structure to their days, which was also an important part of normalizing life in the camps. For the military, working DPs were less likely to be engaged in black market activities outside of the camp or other criminal or deviant activities. As early as May 1945, SHAEF was already stressing this point: “[b]ecause a considerable period of time is likely to elapse between the time such persons are uncovered and their ultimate repatriation, it is essential that everything possible be done for their gainful employment in activities desired by the military

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<sup>81</sup> *Psychological Problems of Displaced Persons*, prepared for the Welfare Division of the European Regional Office of UNRRA by an Inter-Allied Psychological Study Group, dated June 1945, p. 14, in Canadian National Archives, Ottawa, R9369, Vol. 3, File 12 “UNRRA – Welfare Division: Report – Displaced Persons; June 1945.”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

forces.”<sup>83</sup> As well, any work that the DPs could do themselves was work that the military (or UNRRA) would not have to do for them. This proved especially important in the fall of 1945 when the buildings had to be winterized and when wood needed to be collected for winter heating, both quite laborious and labour-intensive tasks. Therefore, for SHAEF, employment in the camps meant a larger pool upon which it could draw, less demand for army resources and also less worry about what the DPs might otherwise be doing.

The organization of work for the DPs appeared to be one area in which UNRRA and the military agreed. They both saw it as providing structure and normality to the lives of the DPs. However, SHAEF’s reasons and objectives differed from UNRRA’s, and were much more practical and immediate. The DPs were a temporary, if important, labour source to be utilized. “It is the policy of the Supreme Commander,” SHAEF’s *Guide on Employment* stated, “to give every opportunity to United Nations displaced persons to engage in paid employment while awaiting repatriation.”<sup>84</sup> SHAEF made clear that in the early postwar weeks they expected those DPs working in German firms and on German farms to continue working until they received orders otherwise from Military Government. The military was worried that essential services, and especially the food supply, would collapse if the DPs stopped working. At the same time, the military asserted that no DPs would be forced to perform paid labour against their will. Military Government declared that DPs would be given priority over Germans in all employment opportunities with the Allied armies. They called upon each centre director to appoint an employment officer from among the centre team to coordinate Military Government requests for workers and to assure the conditions of work outside

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<sup>83</sup> Memo, H. H. Newman, Colonel, AGD, Assistant Adjutant General, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, subject: Employment of Polish Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons, dated 17 May 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 5 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Vol. I OMG 1945-46.”

<sup>84</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5, SHAEF, May 1945*, p. 48, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 3 “383.7 Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany.”

of the DP camps. In no case, however, was employment to be allowed to interfere with repatriation plans.

According to SHAEF, the DPs would also be expected to work within the camps. “Every displaced person will be expected to make his contribution to the community by keeping his own quarters clean and by participating in whatever ‘fatigue’ is considered necessary and suitable by the Assembly Center Director,” the *Guide* stated.<sup>85</sup> This section of the *Guide* in particular reflected the military’s view of the DPs as soldiers under military command and a source of labour. SHAEF also recommended that the DPs be encouraged to establish services within the camps such as hairdressing, woodworking and gardening. They explained that the Centre Director should encourage these endeavours by assisting the DPs in obtaining the necessary tools and materials.

Initially SHAEF organized work parties to fulfill tasks within the camps. Gradually, as the camps took shape and a degree of permanence, the DPs took on administrative work as office staff and translators, work in kitchens and on cleaning teams, providing health care for the centre population, and as camp guards. By the end of August 1945, Boelcke Kaserne, with a population of 2250 DPs, had 525 DPs working inside the camp and 120 working outside of the camp. While none of these workers were paid, they received extra food rations from Red Cross packages as compensation.<sup>86</sup> Boelcke Kaserne was also the site of one of two DP dental clinics. DPs from the camps throughout Ulm visited the DP dentist at Boelcke Kaserne for dental care, or else the Polish DP dentist at the Sedan Kaserne. At Wilhelmsburg, approximately 125 men and 77 women were employed inside the DP camp, and an additional 52 men worked outside of the camp on jobs such a

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> UNRRA Team Report, Team No. 127, Director R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 27 August 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 34, File 4 “US Zone - Team 127 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

woodcutting and driving. Again, these DPs were paid in Red Cross packages for their work.<sup>87</sup> The DPs also organized shoe repair, car repair, a carpentry shop and radio repair. In November 1945, the director of UNRRA Team 509 reported that 102 DPs from the QM Bakery were employed in the camp. Some worked in administrative roles, as interpreters and typists, while others worked as truck drivers or messengers, and still others worked as doctors, nurses, teachers and cooks. These DPs also received extra rations, soap or cigarettes as payment.<sup>88</sup> In January 1946 Blackmore added that DPs were also working outside the camp cutting wood for winter heating for the camp, and also as carpenters and painters within the camp. Unlike the residents of the Boelcke Kaserne, the DPs living in private dwellings did not participate in any work projects.<sup>89</sup> While many of the DPs living in the barracks were content to leave their sleeping quarters and take part in work projects, the DPs living in the private residences were not interested.

At a meeting held in Frankfurt on 4 and 5 August 1945, welfare officers from the American zone met to discuss welfare issues, including the problems associated with employment. It was recognized that what existed was ad hoc and improvised and UNRRA was keen to bring more structure and planning to the employment of the DPs. They recommended that a placement or employment officer be assigned at the district level in order to consult with welfare officers at individual camps and to study employment opportunities throughout the district.<sup>90</sup> In October 1945, UNRRA created the position of Employment Officer to act as liaison with Military Government and

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<sup>87</sup> Report, UNRRA Team No. 509, Director: Mr. R. Nowicki, dated 15 October 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 "US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946."

<sup>88</sup> Letter, R. Nowicki, Director, Camp 679, to Mr. Alvin Guyler, Zone Director, UNRRA Headquarters, Wiesbaden, dated 26 November 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 "US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946."

<sup>89</sup> Field Supervisor's Monthly Report, Team No. 509, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 7 January 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 "U.S. Zone - Field Supervisor - Mr. Blackmore - Reports."

<sup>90</sup> Report of Committee Meeting on Welfare Services, held at UNRRA Staging Centre, dated 4-5 August 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 3 "Welfare IV - Minutes of Special Meetings - Zone Headquarters - Welfare/Relief Services."

develop a classification system for an employment program. “Recognizing the need for a sound employment program, considerable time and effort has been spent in discussion with representatives of CHQ in developing effective employment plans for displaced persons in Germany,” UNRRA’s director for the American Zone reported.<sup>91</sup>

SHAEF and UNRRA had assumed that the DPs would be willing to continue working for German firms once the war had ended, but in this they were largely disappointed. Initially DPs’ employment had occurred within the camp system and had focused on getting the camps functioning and prepared for winter. Once UNRRA had complete administrative control of the camps in the American zone in the fall, however, they calculated that it would only need a small number of DPs to perform all of the camp functions, leaving the remainder sitting idle. This was unacceptable from UNRRA’s perspective. However, when they approached the DPs about the possibility of organizing work projects with German firms, they found that the “[v]ast majority of Displaced Persons do not desire to work for the Germans who share their feelings.” The Germans objected to the possibility of the DPs working outside of the camps because the Germans also needed employment, and opportunities were scarce in the postwar months. When UNRRA staff approached the DP leaders at Boelcke Kaserne they learnt that the camp population refused to work for German firms or individuals, despite the fact that this was the only work available outside of the camp.<sup>92</sup> The same was true throughout many of the DP camps. The one exception to this rule appeared to be the Estonian DPs. “The employment program is making good progress here in striking contrast to the Polish centers in my area,” Blackmore explained. The Estonian DPs were “very enthusiastic and eager for training and occupation” and only the limiting factor was the availability of materials,

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<sup>91</sup> Summary Report, Displaced Persons Operation – U.S. Zone, Germany, for the period ending 31 October 1945, Alvin R. Guyler, Zone Director, dated 6 November 1945, in UNA, Series 412, Box 15, File 3 “US Zone – Zone Director’s Monthly Report.”

<sup>92</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 127, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 17 October 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

which, if remedied, “would make it possible for practically all employable persons in this [Estonian] center to be working.”<sup>93</sup>

Throughout the fall and winter of 1945, there was much work to be done inside the camps to prepare them for the winter, and this work kept many DPs busy, but in the spring of 1946 UNRRA once again took up the question of providing work for the DPs. On 1 March 1946, Leon Berger, UNRRA’s Chief Employment Officer, reported on the state of UNRRA’s DP employment program. Berger reported that in February 1946 the Employment Branch had finally begun operations. Its purpose was to find employment for DPs both inside and outside of the camps. As part of this process, they began organizing employment registration and classification for all adult DPs. They also began to procure supplies for vocational training projects. To begin, they hoped to procure a large quantity of cloth which was in the military’s possession for making children’s and adults’ clothing. They hoped to provide work for DPs within the camps, but paid for by the local German authorities “at the established rate,” that is, what German firms would pay their employees.<sup>94</sup> In other words, they hoped to provide the DPs with contract work from German firms. When they presented this plan to UNRRA teams, the welfare workers responded that this was a good idea, but they worried that few DPs would be willing to take part unless they were offered incentives beyond cash wages. The DPs recognized that Germany’s Reichmarks were nearly worthless, and that there was little that they wished to purchase anyway. The welfare workers explained that “without additional incentive in the form of extra food or goods, maximum results in a ‘production’ type operation could not be assured.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, the DPs would not work unless they were also given extra rations. In the

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<sup>93</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 190, Geislingen, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 6 March 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

<sup>94</sup> Monthly Report, Leon Berger, Chief Employment Officer, to S. B. Zisman, dated 1 March 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 2, File 4 “Administrative – Correspondence – Incoming – District 1 – Stuttgart.”

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

end, the military instead made this fabric available to German firms, who found willing workers and quickly began turning the fabric into much-needed clothing.

Berger instead focused his efforts on matching individual employment requests with suitable candidates from amongst the DPs in the area. His efforts, however, were hindered by the slow registration process. Many teams were unable to complete the registration and classification because they did not have personnel qualified to evaluate the DPs' skills. He had sent out detailed instructions on how to complete each camp's employment registration in both German and Polish to all teams who had not yet completed the registration, but the reports trickled in very slowly. "The fact that most teams have not as yet submitted their occupational registration reports prevent establishing any effective district personnel placement pool," he explained.<sup>96</sup> It is important to remember that the teams were also swamped with the many other tasks they had to carry out. There was also a lack of paper, pens and typewriters – all of which made it impossible to submit reports. Berger continued to face many other setbacks as well. "Establishment of more projects, a better attitude of the military toward use of DP personnel, and improved attitude of displaced persons toward accepted of employment with incentives, improvement of incentives to employment are a few of the problems," he lamented.<sup>97</sup> His relationship with Military Government remained strained. According to Military Government regulations, the local German authorities were responsible for paying the wages of those DPs employed in official positions within the camps, amounting to 7 ½-10 percent of each camp's population. Berger wanted to provide employment for the rest of the camp, but they could not all be paid by the German authorities. As well, despite orders to do so, the military hesitated to employ DPs. "The military claims that the displaced persons are unskilled, lazy and unreliable," he wrote.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

“A selling job with the military is necessary to try to dispell [sic] this idea.”<sup>98</sup> Berger explained that he had also approached them about accessing captured enemy war material sources for use in camp work projects, but that he had been repeatedly rebuffed. “The fact that the military declines to commit itself to providing materials for rehabilitation,” he exclaimed, “is a major limitation on work shop and employment activities.”<sup>99</sup>

As the welfare workers had previously noted, Berger also realized that the DPs seemed to require ever larger incentives in exchange for work. He explained that because “most workers think that, if they perform their normal camp housekeeping functions, they will be fed and clothes regardless of participation in work projects, they look for some substantial extra incentive being provided for work done.”<sup>100</sup> In fact, different camps had developed different methods of incentivizing work: while some camps distributed goods solely based on need, others had established elaborate ‘centre currency systems’ by offering goods at canteens for those who work. This was yet another example of UNRRA’s efforts to put “responsibility” into action. He explained that each camp director approached the problem differently according to the conditions in the camp, and the amount of free time available to staff to organize these systems. This was very typical of conditions in the camps in 1946, with the UNRRA staff responding to a particular problem in an ad hoc, uncoordinated manner – generally reflecting an impressive ingenuity, but also a lack of any central direction.

In June 1946 the picture appeared somewhat brighter. The district employment officer for District 1 reported that the employment registration had still not been completed by all of the DP camps in the district, but that some progress had been made in organizing work programs within some of the camps. The chief problem facing employment officers was a lack of transportation. In places where the employment officers were located, “they have organized excellent registration offices and

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

employment programs” but “[t]he full utilization of the three UNRRA Class I employment officers assigned to Teams has been impossible because the District Office has had not vehicles to assign them to travel among the Teams in the areas assigned.”<sup>101</sup> With the arrival of large numbers of infiltrtees in the spring and summer of 1946, the employment program was thrown into further disarray. Blackmore described the newly founded infiltrtee employment committees as “verbose rather than active” and explained that “co-operation among the infiltrtee population generally renders the situation difficult. However, we are endeavoring to overcome these obstacles.”<sup>102</sup> Team 509 Director L. van Eyck Jr. reported that “Jewish [DPs] do not wish to work outside the camp in German firms. As our shops are set up employment increases.”<sup>103</sup> As was the case with previous DP groups in the area, the infiltrtees were willing to work on projects within the camp, but they refused to work for German firms outside of the camps. They wanted no part in helping to reconstruct the German economy.

Alongside DP challenges to the plans UNRRA had worked to organize, the DP employment program faced hostility from the military as well. They wanted to provide the DPs with work to keep them busy, but only so long as it did not interfere with repatriation efforts. Indeed, the American military used DP labour in many instances: DPs worked as drivers, warehouse staff, DP policemen and woodcutters. They provided valuable labour that the military required. However, when it came to providing supplies for camp employment programs, the military had little time for these requests. While they appreciated the help in meeting their own short-term needs, they did not share UNRRA’s vision of rehabilitation. These programs required materials that the military was unwilling, or at least

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<sup>101</sup> Monthly Report, District Employment Officer, to Relief Services Officer, UNRRA District No. 1, dated 20 June 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 2, File 4 “Administrative – Correspondence – Incoming – District 1 – Stuttgart.”

<sup>102</sup> UNRRA Monthly Area Team Report, Area Team 1005, District 1, Director R. J. D. G. Blackmore, dated 15 November 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 3, File 4 “US Zone - Area Team 1005 - Ulm - Various Reports.”

<sup>103</sup> UNRRA Monthly Team Report, Team 509, Director L. van Eyck Jr., dated 15 September 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 44, File 8 “US Zone - Team 509 - Ulm 1945-1946.”

extremely reluctant, to provide. Given this enormous constraint, it is not difficult to see how UNRRA staff like Leon Berger became disillusioned with their task. At the same time, employment programs were further undermined when DPs were either moved to new camps or repatriated in large numbers. During an Employment Officers' Conference at UNRRA Headquarters in March 1946, Berger was reminded once again that the purpose of DP employment was to prepare the DPs to return to their home countries:

[s]tress was laid on the paramount importance of repatriation and the fact that the employment program should be conducted as a short-term operation with emphasis on immediate placement and vocational training in simple skills, to terminate when accommodations for repatriation are available. The occupational interview and registration should be used as a means of orienting the DP towards repatriation.<sup>104</sup>

The competing goals and very real constraints made construction of an effective employment program that would advance the rehabilitation objective extremely difficult.

At the same time, UNRRA workers praised the resourcefulness of the DPs. Blackmore was particularly impressed by an ingenious project in which "a tinsmith shop is using cans and army biscuit tins to turn out large numbers of very useful household articles such as dust pans, sauce pans, tin baths and even a church cupola is being entirely constructed out of wood and tin. This week's production includes 200 dust pans for distribution to the housewives throughout the camp."<sup>105</sup> He also praised a DP carpenter shop which was "making furniture, toys, police truncheons, photo frames and many other useful articles. Machines smashed and buried by the Luftwaffe have been dug up, dismantled and the material used for constructive purposes."<sup>106</sup> It was a remarkable (from his point of view) demonstration of the revival of a strong work ethic – exactly what UNRRA was hoping for.

And it was happening without UNRRA or military assistance. Surely this demonstration of a strong

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<sup>104</sup> Displaced Persons Monthly Report No. 9, UNRRA Central Headquarters for Germany, dated 30 April 1946, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 "AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46."

<sup>105</sup> Field Supervisor's Monthly Report, Team No. 525, Dornstadt, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 17 June 1946, in UNA, Series 436, Box 46, File 8 "US Zone - Team 525 - Ulm."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

work ethic could only be a good thing. Ironically, however, UNRRA and the military alike were concerned about the growing number of independent DP businesses in Germany. By setting up their own, private businesses, the DPs were placing roots in Germany, and this only meant that it would be that much harder to repatriate them. On numerous instances the military used the excuse that these goods were being sold on the black market to discourage the DPs from further efforts. Berger himself mentions his own fears about DP enterprises in his reports. He also reported that these private enterprises often competed with similar cooperative work projects taking place in the camps. While the DP entrepreneurs sourced their raw materials on the German market, the DPs working collectively on projects in the camps were limited to the supplies provided by the military. This constraint, in many cases, discouraged many DPs from working cooperatively in the camps, which worked against UNRRA's rehabilitation process. While UNRRA wanted the DPs to work, they wanted them to engage in productive work that would help them reintegrate into their home communities. Building independent economic partnerships in Germany worked against repatriation, they worried. This was evidence of a serious conflict between UNRRA's goals of rehabilitation and repatriation. While they wanted to provide the DPs with skills that would help them later on, these plans were always limited by the necessity of putting repatriation first.

For their own part, the DPs had many reasons for wanting to start their own businesses. The Jewish DPs in particular brought with them a long history of commerce. Barred from owning property, Jews had historically congregated in the cities and participated in trade, often acting as middlemen in the sale of goods between the towns and the cities. They also sold finished goods such as clothes and footwear. Many also owned taverns.<sup>107</sup> These were, then, the skills that the Jewish DPs brought with them to the DP camps. Non-Jewish DPs also brought with them a long history of

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<sup>107</sup> Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 311-312.

barter. Ukrainian DPs had primarily been agricultural workers, unskilled workers or merchants before the war.<sup>108</sup> Farmers had a long tradition of trading agricultural goods for manufactured products that they could not make for themselves. Therefore, it was not surprising that so many DPs wanted to open their own businesses, providing goods and services to DPs and Germans alike. Unfortunately, this goal was not in line with UNRRA's expectations of DP work.

Thus, UNRRA's initial efforts at rehabilitation met with varying levels of success. Housing was one area in which both DP and UNRRA social norms meshed successfully, and therefore the DPs accepted the move to the apartments willingly, and even happily, despite the apartments' deficiencies. Unfortunately, severe shortages in this type of housing made it impossible to house all of the DPs in this way. The military made clear that it was easier and more convenient for them to house the DPs in barracks and other large, open structures. As a result, rehabilitation through housing did not achieve the results for which UNRRA had hoped.

UNRRA was more successful in its efforts to instill a sense of personal hygiene in the DPs. While the majority of DPs arrived with little understanding of personal hygiene and cleanliness of living quarters as understood by the American relief workers, reports from less than a year later mention none of the same failed inspections. In order to pass both military and UNRRA inspections, the DPs had to follow the practices as laid out by UNRRA staff, and these included regular bathing, keeping one's sleeping quarters and washing facilities tidy, and even letting fresh air in once in a while. While UNRRA believed, at least at first, that they were rehabilitating the DPs by reintroducing standards of cleanliness that had existed in the United States for some time, they were in fact introducing for the first time new standards of personal hygiene to many of the DPs.

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<sup>108</sup> Nicholas G. Bohatiuk, "The Economic Aspects of Camp Life" in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw et al. (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1992), 73.

Education was the area in which UNRRA met with the most success. Welfare workers wasted little breath having to explain to the DPs the importance of education; the DPs themselves not only thought that it was important, but were willing to actively organize the courses of instruction, turning to UNRRA for help procuring the necessary supplies. UNRRA's plans for rehabilitation through work proved the most problematic. While UNRRA worked to provide the DPs with work in German firms, the DPs refused. Instead they turned their attention to organizing camp projects, but UNRRA had to contend with the military insistence that no work program divert efforts at repatriation. At the same time, all work projects had to be organized with resources provided by the military, who were at best reluctant to requisition them from the Germans. The DPs preferred to open their own private enterprises, much to the chagrin of the military, who saw such enterprises as a further hindrance to DP repatriation.

A closer look at UNRRA's efforts at rehabilitation through housing, hygiene, education and work inadvertently identify several instances in which the DPs either accepted or opposed UNRRA's plans for rehabilitation. In many ways, the military and UNRRA had expected to encounter a subdued and submissive group. Instead, what they found were people willing to take matters into their own hands. While the DPs had little control over housing or food, they did have the ability to protest when they felt their needs were not being adequately met, as will be discussed in chapter six. In cases in which the DPs shared UNRRA's goals, they acted decisively to institute the programs planned by UNRRA, as was the case in education and vocational training. However, the DPs showed the most surprising opposition when it came to organizing work. While they may not have worked in the exact manner proscribed by UNRRA staff, they did not sit idly by. Instead, they took the initiative to begin their own businesses and provide goods and services that were not available. They did not wait passively for UNRRA to do things for them; they took action. They were as keen to

return to "normal" as UNRRA was keen to see them do it, although their "normal" did not always coincide with UNRRA's.

## Chapter 5

### Reversing the ‘utter collapse of law’: DP experiences with civil law in the American Occupation Zone of Germany

It should be made clear that UNRRA officials have no power either to approve or disapprove of marriage, and are not in any sense the legal guardians of Displaced Persons.<sup>1</sup>

If the marriage should take place in Germany, it has to be accomplished in accordance with the formalities prescribed by German law. The necessary information on this subject can be obtained from the Burgomaster of his present place of residence.<sup>2</sup>

For UNRRA, reintroducing the DPs to the law was best approached in a series of steps, all meant to foster a respect for authority and the rule of law. UNRRA saw the restoration of respect for the law as a key part of the process of normalizing life. Their understanding of rehabilitation focused on the reintroduction of prewar social norms, and respect for the law was an important social norm. Respect for the law was not something one could assume that the DPs understood anymore. As Tony Judt argues, “[t]o live normally in occupied Europe meant breaking the law: in the first place the laws of the occupiers ... but also conventional laws and norms as well... Theft—whether from the state, from a fellow citizen or from a looted Jewish store—was so widespread that in the eyes of many people it ceased to be a crime.”<sup>3</sup> There was also a loss of respect for the authority of the state, as the German occupation of Europe had brought about “the utter collapse of law and the habits of life in a legal state.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter, C. J. Taylor, Chief, Field Operations, to Mr. A. Squadrilli, UNRRA Liaison Officer, USFET, subject: Marriage of Displaced Persons, dated 17 April 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 11 “Welfare – Displaced Persons – Marriage.”

<sup>2</sup> Letter, Manfred Simon, UNRRA Legal Adviser, to the Director, American Zone, UNRRA Central Headquarters, Arolsen, subject: Your reference No. 1 – Marriage, dated 5 February 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 19, File 8 “Legal Matters – Marriage.”

<sup>3</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

Adding to the confusion and tension was the fact that, if the DPs were going to remain in Germany for any length of time, they would be forced into at least a minimal level of interaction with the local German authorities as they were the only ones legally able to perform certain bureaucratic functions. In the first instance, this meant registering births and deaths with the local German registrar. It also eventually meant legalizing wedded unions and divorces. Finally, it meant that any DPs charged with criminal acts would likely come into contact with German police. The question of dealing with criminal offences was especially complicated by concerns over jurisdiction. Very early, SHAEF had decided that DPs from the United Nations, as well as former persecutees, would not face trial in German courts. Later, the occupation authorities agreed that the German police would not have jurisdiction within the DP camps. However, this did not stop the German police from arresting DPs outside of the camps. This issue – the enforcement of law and order – was a source of particular tension. As with other issues, UNRRA became the intermediary between the occupation forces, the German police, local German government, and the DPs when it came to legal matters.

DP legal issues fell into two categories: civil law and criminal law. Civil law referred to those legal issues involving institutions and relationships in society not connected to the state. Especially important to the DPs were the civil law concerns of registering births and deaths, legalizing marriages and divorces, recognizing paternity and sorting out questions concerning illegitimacy. In contrast, criminal law concerned crimes and their punishment. For the DPs, law and order within the camps, confrontations with German police outside of the camps, the jurisdiction of German and Military Government courts, and DP legal representation were all important criminal law concerns. In both cases, civil and criminal law, the DPs faced what they considered serious obstacles to their objective of rebuilding new lives for themselves.

UNRRA workers in the field did not have the legal expertise to advise the DPs on all issues. In many instances, they were completely unfamiliar with policies and procedures, particularly in regards to German law. Unless specifically revoked by SHAEF, wartime laws remained the law of the land in Germany. As the Deputy Director of the Displaced Persons Division in the ERO noted in April 1945, “it would seem unfair to expect Assembly Centre Directors to deal with these problems without the assistance of expert advice,” and therefore “it would appear desirable that a small legal staff should be available... generally to deal with the legal problems of displaced persons.”<sup>5</sup> When UNRRA first entered the field as agents of SHAEF, they assumed that SHAEF would be responsible for the provision of any legal personnel, but this never materialized. Thus, early on UNRRA realized it needed its own legal staff, including “someone with a knowledge of private international law, and preferably German law too,” assigned to each of UNRRA’s administrative Areas.<sup>6</sup>

Both UNRRA Headquarters in Washington and the European Regional Office in London organized offices for Legal Advisers immediately. In Germany, UNRRA appointed Manfred Simon as Legal Adviser for the entire country on 7 October 1945. Initially, his primary task was to answer questions about the legality of certain UNRRA operations and agreements in Germany, not legal questions concerning individual DPs. The Legal Adviser and his staff in Germany had originally been hired “as consultants in legal matters affecting the administration and the operation of the organization,” not in DP legal problems.<sup>7</sup> Despite this fact, throughout the second half of 1945 Simon received letters from UNRRA teams throughout Germany with questions regarding the legal rights and obligations of individual DPs. The ERO also appointed a legal adviser, A. H. Robertson, and

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<sup>5</sup> Letter, Fletcher C. Kettle, Deputy Director, Displaced Persons Division, ERO, to Mr. J. A. Edmison, Chief UNRRA Officer, G-5, dated 7 April 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons-Chronological File (ERO Legal Adviser).”

<sup>6</sup> Letter, A. H. Robertson to Dr. Burnay, dated 21 March 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons-Chronological File (ERO Legal Adviser).”

<sup>7</sup> Cumulative Narrative Report, Legal and Political Protection, 1 July 1947-30 June 1949, Hugh L. Hinchliffe, undated, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

when he visited SHAEF headquarters in May 1945 to discuss the relationship between UNRRA and SHAEF, he was also bombarded with questions about the legal status of individual DPs. “We well know that we shall be confronted with myriad situations involving divorce, marriage and estate law, together with endless queries on nationality status,” J.A. Edmison, Senior UNRRA liaison officer to SHAEF, noted. After discussing the problem with Robertson, both he and Edmison agreed that UNRRA would have to provide legal advice to the DPs. Both hoped that “in time we have expert assistance when confronted with such questions as ‘I am a Dane who has not seen my Russian husband for eight years, and I want to marry here in Germany a Pole who was married in Austria, domiciled in Luxembourg and divorced in France.’”<sup>8</sup> In response to this very clear need, in June 1946 UNRRA appointed Legal Advisers for each of the zones of occupation to deal with the myriad questions. The first Legal Adviser in the American zone was M. O. Talent, appointed in June 1946, who was succeeded by Paul Winter in 1947.

The first civil law problems that came to the attention of UNRRA concerned the process for registering births and deaths in the DP camps. The fall of 1945 witnessed a veritable baby boom in DP camps across Germany. As Atina Grossman describes in her study of Jewish DPs, “at the same time that Germans bemoaned the high incidence of suicides, infant and child mortality, and abortion, and German women were desperately seeking to keep alive the children they already had, Jewish DPs were marrying and producing babies in record numbers.”<sup>9</sup> It was not only the Jewish DPs taking part in the baby boom; throughout Germany’s DP camps, children of every nationality were born in record numbers. UNRRA was concerned with providing these children born on German soil with valid legal documents so that they could be successfully repatriated with their parents when the time came. They

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<sup>8</sup> UNRRA Weekly Report, Displaced Persons’ Operation in Germany, dated 26 May 1945, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 219 “Displaced Persons File No 3.”

<sup>9</sup> Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 184.

were apprehensive that any complications during repatriation might lead single mothers in particular to abandon their children before returning home, particularly if the child was illegitimate. During the planning stage, UNRRA's Standing Technical Committee on Displaced Persons had noted that SHAEF had made no initial plans for registering births in the DP camps and it made several recommendations on this matter. According to their September 1944 *Report on Registration of Births and Deaths in the Assembly Center*, members of the Sub-Committee had hoped that the "Assembly Centre Registration Record Card will serve the purpose [of temporary birth certificate] if National Authorities are willing to recognise this as a valid document, at least on a provisional basis," until repatriation, when the Registration Card could be replaced by a birth certificate.<sup>10</sup> They asserted that as only the Assembly Centre Director had the authority to issue the Registration Record Card following the birth of a child in an Assembly Centre, "the card may form the basis of a legal document and that the greatest care will be necessary to ensure its accuracy."<sup>11</sup> They also recommended that each new Registration Record Card be stamped with the words: "This document does not itself constitute a valid certificate of birth" in order to avoid confusion.

Unfortunately the Sub-Committee's plans proved unsuccessful when there was no clear agreement that the Registration Record Card could be used as a temporary birth certificate. No one would accept it as a legal document. At the same time, no state agreed to issue birth certificates for children born in Germany. Instead, SHAEF declared that all births and deaths of displaced persons camp residents had to be registered with the German Registrar, as had been the custom during the war. In their *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, SHAEF declared that the mother be issued a DP ration card for each newborn, and also that the birth be registered according to local

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<sup>10</sup> UNRRA Standing Technical Sub-Committee on Displaced Persons in Europe, Report on Registration of Births and Deaths in an Assembly Centre, dated 5 September 1944, in NARA, RG 331, Box 51, File 10: SHAEF/G-5/2722 Displaced Persons Branch "UNRRA-Standing Sub-Committee on D.P.s."

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

law, which meant registering the birth with the German Registrar.<sup>12</sup> There was some concern, however, that some countries might not recognize these registrations. Thus, over time, the Legal Adviser gathered information from the various national Liaison Officers on the procedure to be followed in registering births for their nationals in Germany so that there would not be any complications upon repatriation.

In November 1945, UNRRA's Legal Adviser sent out a bulletin instructing Assembly Centre Directors on how to register the births and deaths of its Polish residents. According to the Chief Polish Liaison Officer, Polish law required that all births, deaths, and marriages be registered according to local law. Therefore, the Polish Liaison Officer warned, "[c]are should be taken that these occurrences be properly registered by German registrar (*Zivilstandesbeamte*) and that proper extracts of registers (certificates) be handed over to the next of kin or (should there be none) to the Polish Liaison Officer concerned."<sup>13</sup> He reiterated the importance of following the directive strictly so as to avoid any issues upon return to Poland. He also asserted that all problems with the German Registrar should be taken up with the local Polish Liaison Officer.

Births amongst the Jewish DPs posed a particularly difficult problem in regards to registering the births of their children. The Jewish DPs as a group refused to have their newborns registered with the German authorities on the grounds that it was with registration lists that the Nazis had identified and segregated the Jews, both in Germany and throughout Europe. They insisted that they would not allow the Germans to have this information. This put UNRRA in a difficult position as there was no legal alternative. In his response to questions from UNRRA officers in the field, Manfred Simon responded that "all civilised States have taken great care to lay down rules as to who is obliged to

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<sup>12</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5, SHAEF, May 1945, p. 13, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 3 "383.7 Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany."

<sup>13</sup> Letter, Dr. J. Kaczmarek, Colonel, Polish Chief Liaison Officer, Office of Military Government (U.S. Zone), dated 9 October 1945, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 22 "013.9/B Legal Assistant to D.P. – Registration of Births."

declare a birth, as to how and by whom the registration of this Declaration has to be carried out, and as to the penalties attached to the non-compliance with the rules pertaining to birth registration.”<sup>14</sup> He explained that no other document could replace an official birth certificate because no state would recognize it as a legal document. If the parents continued to refuse to register the birth of a child with the German authorities, Simon stated that the Camp Director should make a declaration to the German Registrar in the interests of the child. “As the legislative measures pertaining to birth registration contained in all National laws – the German included – are designed in the interests and for the protection of the child,” Simon explained, “the disposition of the German law ought to be complied with when children, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, are born in UNRRA-directed Displaced Persons’ Camps.”<sup>15</sup> While Simon’s ruling made perfectly clear the legal necessity of registering births with the German registrar, he had failed to recognize the very real concern of the Jewish parents, namely the fear that the Germans would use this information for their own nefarious purposes. Only over time were the UNRRA welfare workers able to convince the Jewish DPs of the necessity of proper documentation for babies born in the DP camps. In the end, they told the parents that if they refused to register their children, the camp director had the authority to undertake the registration, and that regardless the births would be recorded with the German authorities.<sup>16</sup>

The DPs were also forced into contact with the German Registrar if they wished to get married. Whether from Poland, the Ukraine, the Baltic states, or elsewhere in Europe, the DPs brought their prewar understanding of wedded union with them. Of these, the most complicated system was found in interwar Poland, which had no less than five separate civil law codes. These distinct codes were the product of Poland’s pre-WWI partition between the Russian, Prussian and

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<sup>14</sup> Letter, Manfred Simon, Legal Adviser, to Chief of Operations, subject: Registration of Jewish Births in Displaced Persons Camps, dated 13 August 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 22 “013.9/B Legal Assistant to D.P. – Registration of Births.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Austro-Hungarian empires. Each empire had followed a separate legal tradition which proved difficult to meld in the interwar period. The issue that was the most problematic was divorce. As a devoutly Catholic country, divorce in Poland was not authorized; but in certain districts, including the town of Wilno, divorce was granted provided that the couple renounced their Catholic faith. In response to the interwar government's attempt to standardize the issue of divorce across the country, both the Catholic Church and its critics challenged the civil law proposed by the Codification Commission. The result was that no unified law was promulgated. As a result, marriage in interwar Poland was defined according to the five pre-WWI law codes.<sup>17</sup>

Those DPs coming from territories under the control of the Soviet Union, in contrast, understood marriage not as a religious celebration, but as a civil ceremony performed by a government official. Following the Russian Revolution, all territories that fell under Soviet control had done away with the religious celebration of marriage in favour of civil marriages. As Becky L. Glass and Margaret K. Stolee explain, Soviet law instituted changes that “attempted to create the legal foundations for a transformed society.”<sup>18</sup> In 1919, civil marriage became the only recognized form of legal marriage, and, as a result, annulment of a marriage was considerably simplified. Whereas in western Europe, civil marriage had been the norm since the French Revolution, this was the first time that civil marriage was implemented in eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup> However, while civil marriage in western Europe was almost always accompanied by a religious ceremony, the Soviet authorities tried to eliminate the role of religion in Soviet society and the religious celebration of marriage along with it. Therefore the DPs brought with them very different understandings of how to celebrate weddings

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<sup>17</sup> See Aleksander Witold Rudzinski, “Sovietization of Civil Law in Poland,” *American Slavic and Eastern European Review* 15:2 (April 1956): 216-243.

<sup>18</sup> Becky L. Glass and Margaret K. Stolee, “Family Law in Soviet Russia, 1917-1945” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 49:4 (Nov. 1987): 896.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Dittgen, “The Form of Marriage in Europe: Civil Ceremony, Religious Ceremony, Survey and Trends,” *Population: An English Selection* 7 (1995), 97.

depending on their home country's customs. When they wished to wed in Germany, the legal regulations and customs of their home country shaped the DPs' understanding of how to go about marrying in Germany.

This was problematic because, according to international law, a marriage was required to meet the laws of the country where the marriage was taking place in order to be considered valid in other jurisdictions. Therefore, any marriage that was legalized in Germany required that the couple meet the conditions set out by German law. Marriage in Germany had been governed by the Marriage Law for Greater Germany, dated 6 July 1938, but in the immediate postwar period this law was modified slightly to eliminate its racist prohibitions. As Andrew Szanajda explains, "Control Council and U.S. military government expressly forbade the application of National Socialist principles in the administration of justice from the beginning of the occupation."<sup>20</sup> The Nazi marriage law was officially replaced on 20 February 1946 with Control Council Law No. 16, "Marriage Law." As Magdalene Schoch explained, the new law only made minor changes to the wartime process for legalizing marriages.<sup>21</sup> The new law, like the old, stated that the religious celebration of marriage was not recognized in Germany; only marriage ceremonies conducted by the Marriage Registrar were considered legal. Furthermore, the marriage of all foreigners in Germany required two preliminary steps. First, each couple had to publish banns. This was a long-held tradition throughout much of Europe that involved making a public announcement, often in the form of a published newspaper announcement, of an upcoming marriage. It was an opportunity for people to present any information that might challenge the proposed marriage, such as a previous marriage, lack of consent on the part of one of the parties or their family, or a close blood tie between the betrothed couple. In a February

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<sup>20</sup> Andrew Szanajda, *The Restoration of Justice in postwar Hesse, 1945-1949* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 175.

<sup>21</sup> Magdalene Schoch, "Divorce Law and Practice under National Socialism in Germany," *Iowa Law Review* 28 (1943), 225-255.

1946 letter, Manfred Simon further clarified the conditions for publishing banns, explaining that “[a]rrangements for publishing of bans [sic] of marriage can be made by a close relative of the person concerned. The bans have to be published for three weeks running before the marriage takes place. The marriage has to take place inside three months after the last publication of the bans.”<sup>22</sup>

The second step that each couple had to complete before a marriage between foreigners could be legalized in Germany was to acquire a Certificate of Nubility, sometimes also called a Certificate of Eligibility or a Marriage Ability Certificate. This Certificate was to be provided by the domestic authorities of each person’s home country and it had to state that there were no legal impediments to the marriage.<sup>23</sup> The certificate was to include each applicant’s name, birth date, religion, their last place of domicile before entering Germany, as well as all of the details concerning their parents.<sup>24</sup> The couple was also required to submit certain documents, such as birth certificates. The couple submitted these to either their Liaison Officer or an UNRRA Administration Official, who then passed on the relevant information to the local Marriage Registrar.<sup>25</sup>

In the autumn of 1945, UNRRA workers on the ground began writing to UNRRA headquarters for clarification about the legal status of certain marriages, questions which were forwarded to the Legal Adviser. One such letter, sent by Joseph G. Nicoletti, an American Supply Officer with UNRRA Team 52, neatly encapsulated many of the issues. In his August 1946 letter,

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<sup>22</sup> Letter, Legal Adviser, UNRRA Central Headquarters, Arolsen, to Mr. A. T. Berney-Ficklin, Assistant Director, subject: Your reference No. 1 – Marriage, dated 5 February 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 19, File 8 “Legal Matters – Marriage.”

<sup>23</sup> Letter, Office of the Legal Adviser, Arolsen, to Assistant Director, Relief Services, Central Headquarters, dated 17 May 1946, subject: Certificate of Capacity to marry for Balts and Stateless Persons, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 “013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons.”

<sup>24</sup> Letter, M. L. Barblé, Assistant Legal Adviser, Arolsen, to Mr. Moore, Deputy Chief Welfare Officer, dated 25 June 1946, subject: Questions of Procedure to be followed by D.P.s desirous to contract Marriage in Germany, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 “013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons.”

<sup>25</sup> Procedure to Facilitate the Marriage of Certain Persons in Germany, undated, in UNA, Series 425, Box 19, File 8 “Legal Matters – Marriage.”

Nicoletti explained that he wanted to marry a Latvian woman, Eizenija Cikutis, and adopt her son. However, Eizenija had been previously married in Latvia. Her husband had been forced to join the army and she had subsequently lost contact with him. In October 1944 she was forced to leave Latvia for Germany and, at the time of Nicoletti's letter, Eizenija had not heard from her husband in more than two years. After the war she had approached the Tracing Bureau, placed ads in Latvian newspapers, and even asked for help from a Russian Liaison Officer, but was unable to find any information about her husband. Nicoletti explained that he very much wanted to marry Eizenija, but he did not know how to contract the marriage.<sup>26</sup>

The response from the Assistant Legal Adviser, Marie-Louise Barblé, was not a propitious one. Barblé explained that, because Eizenija could not prove that her husband was deceased, she could not likewise show that her marriage had been legally dissolved. As a consequence, she could not legally remarry. Barblé pointed out that there was some differentiation between states on this matter: some governments would allow a Declaration of Death to be issued after ten years had lapsed without contact or evidence of the individual being alive; but other governments asserted that the marriage would never be considered dissolved, regardless of how long the spouse had been absent unless the spouse was proven dead. Barblé conceded that it would take her more time to ascertain which category Latvia fell into, but that either way there was no way for Eizenija to marry in the foreseeable future without proof of her husband's death.<sup>27</sup> The outcome of Nicoletti's efforts to marry Eizenija is not known. However, the likelihood was great that they were not able to legalize their union. Unless they could secure proof of the death of Eizenija's husband, they would not meet the legal criteria for the Certificate of Nubility.

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<sup>26</sup> Letter, Mr. Joseph G. Nicoletti, UNRRA Team 52, to Legal Adviser, Central Headquarters Arolsen, undated, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 "013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons."

<sup>27</sup> Letter, Officer of the Legal Adviser, Arolsen, to Mr. Joseph G. Nicoletti, Supply Officer, UNRRA Team 52, dated 13 August 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 "013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons."

The problem of collecting the necessary documents was one experienced by DPs of all nationalities in the early postwar months. Given the destruction of the war and the large-scale movements of people, it is not surprising to find that many were no longer in possession of their documents. In many cases they were taken from them by government authorities to ensure that they would not be able to move without government permission. For others, the documents simply got lost in their travels or destroyed by the ravages of war.

In the spring of 1946, mail service was finally restored throughout much of Europe. This brought hope to those many DP couples wishing to marry who knew who to contact for copies of their documents. However, even for them there were many difficulties associated with procuring them by mail. With the collapse of regional and national governments across Europe, it was unclear which bodies (if any existed) had the authority and the means to certify and post personal legal documents. There was also the real possibility that those authorities would refuse to do so. UNRRA officers were confronted with many such cases. In one instance, Hans Meyerhof, a German man residing in Italy, asked UNRRA to forward a letter to the mayor of Hildesheim, Germany. In the letter, the man demanded that the mayor reissue birth certificates for himself, his wife and his son. He explained that the documents had been “lost during the persecutions I have suffered (concentration camps, prisons, etc)” and that he hoped “that the little refaction [sic] for all I have suffered by culpability of the Germans, viz the sending of the asked three documents, will be settled without resistance from your side.”<sup>28</sup> Meyerhof complained that his previous requests for new copies of the birth certificates had been ignored, and that if he did not hear from the mayor concerning this latest request, he would be forced to bring the issue to the attention of the United Nations, hoping that invoking UNRRA would be a sufficient threat to elicit a response.

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<sup>28</sup> Letter, Hans Meyerhof, Palermo, to the Major of the City of Hildesheim, dated 14 August 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 “013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons.”

In addition, according to the laws of their country of origin, nationals from Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia required a pre-marriage medical examination certificate.<sup>29</sup> UNRRA wrote to the President of Germany's Supreme Court of Justice requesting blank pre-marriage medical examination certificate forms in the spring of 1946. In response, the Director of the Supreme Court explained that he did not have any forms for the pre-marriage examination of a foreigner because this was not a German law, but rather a requirement of certain foreign governments. The Germans were only following these rules to ensure that any marriage documentation generated would be deemed acceptable in a DP's home country, and this meant that it needed to be performed by doctors in their home country. For a time the German government waived the need for this certificate. "Under present conditions," The President of the German Supreme Court asserted, "it is doubted that the request reaches its destination or is fulfilled. Therefore, if it can be proved that it is impossible to get such a certificate the President of the Supreme Court of Justice will certify that it is not necessary to submit such a premarriage medical examination certificate."<sup>30</sup> He explained that proof of the impossibility of procuring such a certificate could be shown if a "trustworthy person" witnessed the posting of the request for the certificate, and if afterwards the certificate had not arrived in a reasonable amount of time, which he estimated to be approximately six weeks, or if the request was altogether refused. However, each foreigner had to at least attempt to procure the necessary documents. Initially, some foreigners were able to marry in this way.

In acknowledgement of the difficulties associated with procuring the necessary documents, the German Registrar allowed some of the formalities for registering marriages to be waived. For instance, foreigners who were unable to collect some of the required documents could take an oath in

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<sup>29</sup> Letter, Michael Krampf, Director of the Supreme Court of Justice, Germany, to UNRRA, Pasing, dated 21 May 1946, re: Marriage of D.Ps., in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 11 "Welfare – Displaced Persons – Marriage."

<sup>30</sup> Letter (Translation), The President of the Supreme Court of Justice, undated, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 11 "Welfare – Displaced Persons – Marriage."

front of the Officer of Civil Status, verbally providing all relevant information and explaining why they could not procure the necessary documents, as well as declaring that there was no reason that their marriage should be prohibited.<sup>31</sup> However, this process of taking an oath in lieu of official documentation came to an end in the spring of 1946. In April of that year, the German government issued a proclamation clarifying their laws with regards to the marriage of foreigners. The proclamation stated that because the European mail system was once again operating, “it is possible to mail to foreign countries concerning personal affairs and remarks. Therefore it is also possible to request marriage ability certificates from the homestate of foreign betrothed couples.”<sup>32</sup> The proclamation instructed all registrars that the ‘marriage ability’ certificates could no longer be replaced by other documents, and that they would in the future be required for all marriages involving foreigners. “To avoid troubles and costs for the applicants,” the Minister President warned, “it is requested to inform these people in the camps already, that the situation has changed and to induce them to request marriage ability certificates.”<sup>33</sup>

For those couples unable to procure the necessary documents by mail, the only alternative was to turn to the black market. The trade in stolen or forged documents in the black market has not been well researched, largely because of the paucity of documentary evidence. However, there is much written about the existence of forged documents during the war, and every reason to believe that such a trade continued in the postwar period. Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt explain that, during the war, “[m]any Poles needed false papers—the resistance, the underground army, Jews. Document production flourished. Some were skilfully done, others were crude. And some cost a lot

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<sup>31</sup> Letter, M. L. Barblé, Assistant Legal Adviser, Arolsen, to Mr. Moore, Deputy Chief Welfare Officer, dated 25 June 1946, subject: Questions of Procedure to be followed by D.P.s desirous to contract Marriage in Germany, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 “013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons.”

<sup>32</sup> Statement of the Minister President, to the Standesamt, Dingolfing, subject: Marriage of foreign persons, dated 4 April 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 11 “Welfare – Displaced Persons – Marriage.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

of money, while others were given free of charge.”<sup>34</sup> This trade in documents continued into the postwar period, and was certainly one way in which a DP could acquire the necessary documents for a whole host of purposes, including legalizing a wedded union. The only drawback was that this method could be costly.

When all else failed, DPs could also turn to military officials for help. There are numerous accounts of military personnel forging official documents. For example, in his account of the way in which Jewish DPs joined the *Bricha*, or the illegal movement of Jews to Palestine before the creation of the state of Israel, Alex Grobman explained that “[t]he first phase of the operation required typing about five hundred copies of a letter authorizing the bearer, a United Nations displaced person, to enter the American zone to search for missing relatives. The document was signed by a nonexistent colonel and had a big red advertising stamp on it.”<sup>35</sup> Grobman also recounted a situation in which false papers prepared by Jewish chaplain Hebert Eskin were combined with “Eisenhower jackets and army watches” to bribe border guards into letting him bring Jewish DPs across the border into Italy.<sup>36</sup> Although there is little known about exactly how these documents were created and by whom, it is clear that American soldiers were certainly capable of providing false documents when they deemed it necessary.

Apart from the problem of procuring the necessary documentation, the other serious obstacle facing many DPs in their attempts to legalize their marriages was the national Liaison Officers. As was the case with registering births, the German authorities had to be sure that a marriage would be legally recognized in the home countries of the DPs involved before they could allow it. As one German lawyer explained, “German judges were obligated under German international private law to

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<sup>34</sup> Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2002), 339.

<sup>35</sup> Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry, 1944-1948* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1993), 113.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 117-8.

check the capacity to marry according to the home laws of the applicants before authorizing the marriage.”<sup>37</sup> The Liaison Officer was one of the only individuals able to communicate with authorities in the home country, and by default he also became the official arbiter of the legality of all marriages in his state. According to SHAEF, the official role of the Liaison Officer was simply to “issue repatriation visas” and “assist in the care and repatriation of their displaced nationals.”<sup>38</sup> The Liaison Officers were generally expected to convince as many of their nationals as possible to return to their country of origin: they required people to help in the reconstruction after so many years of struggle and destruction. However, these duties effectively granted them wide-ranging powers, and, as a result, they also had the power to comment on applications for marriage. Their position on any particular marriages was often shaped by the impact the marriage might have on the repatriability of “their” national. In cases where the DPs were both from the same country of origin, there was less chance of denial, as the marriage would not necessarily impede the possibility of repatriation. However, in cases where two DPs of differing nationalities hoped to wed, creating an ‘inter-national’ couple, chances of being denied were much higher because it was assumed that at least one of the DPs would not be returning to their country of origin. The Liaison Officers from their home countries, with the dual responsibilities of approving marriages and encouraging repatriation, were much less likely to agree to marriages when there was a chance that their nationals would not be returning home.

For still other DPs, there was no Liaison Officer at all to whom they could turn for help in these matters. Those DPs deemed stateless had no national representatives in Germany, neither did nationals from the Baltic republics. This was because the American and British governments refused

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<sup>37</sup> Walter O. Weyrauch, “The Experience of Lawlessness,” *New Criminal Law Review: An International and Interdisciplinary Journal* 10:3 (Summer 2007): 421.

<sup>38</sup> Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, Administrative Memorandum 39, Displaced Persons and Refugees in Germany, dated 18 November 1944, p. 8, in UNA, Series 517, Box 114, File 218 “Displaced Persons – files No 2.”

to recognize Soviet control of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Therefore, although the Soviet LOs claimed jurisdiction over the Baltic DPs, they were only permitted to work with those DPs who self-identified as Soviet citizens. However, the British and American governments also refused to recognize the Baltic republics as independent states. Consequently they would not allow any other Baltic representatives to assume responsibility for the Baltic DPs either. This left the Baltic DPs in the western zones without access to any Liaison Officer, which meant that their ability to wed in Germany was significantly hindered. As Simon explained, “[i]n cases in which the nationality status of a person cannot be ascertained or in which the provisions of the law of his home state are not known, the parties to an intended marriage may be faced with a serious difficulty.”<sup>39</sup> In place of the Liaison Officers, UNRRA officials accepted their documents and forwarded requests for marriage to the German Registrar. Following complaints from UNRRA and pressure from the occupation authorities over the problems encountered by both Baltic and stateless DPs, the German Registrars again began to perform marriages based on sworn oaths, and not documentation.<sup>40</sup> However, the Germans remained hesitant to legalize a marriage that had not followed the letter of the law, including the submission of a Certificate of Nubility, as there was evidence that some bigamous marriages had been inadvertently legalized in this way.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Letter, Charles Fahy, Legal Adviser, OMGUS, to UNRRA Central Headquarters for Germany, subject: Certificate of Capacity to Marry for Balts and Stateless Persons, dated 29 April 1946, p. 5, in NARA, RG 260, OMGUS Legal Div/Legal Advice Branch, Box 51 “LA-24 Displaced Persons, Refugees, Internees.”

<sup>40</sup> Letter, Michael Krampf, Director of the Supreme Court of Justice, to UNRRA, Pasing, subject: Marriage of D.Ps., dated 21 May 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 11 “Welfare – Displaced Persons – Marriage.”

<sup>41</sup> In one particularly striking case, the first wife of a Polish DP travelled to Germany after the war and confronted her husband, Ignacy Kaczmarek, and his second wife, Lotte (nee Rogulka). Ignacy had never legally divorced his first wife in Poland; therefore the second marriage was bigamous. This information led the second wife, Lotte, to petition for an annulment of her marriage, despite the fact that two children had been born. In her response to Lotte, Legal Adviser Barblé explained that in order to annul her marriage to Ignacy, Lotte would have to provide proof of her husband’s first marriage. The Legal Adviser suggested that Lotte would have a much easier time annulling her marriage based on her husband’s treatment of her, rather than on the charge of bigamy. Lotte complained to the UNRRA Team Director that Ignacy threatened on several occasions to kill her and her parents. See UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 21 “013.9/A Legal Assistance to D.P. Marriage of Displaced Persons.” According to J. W. Brown, Deputy Director of the Preparatory Commission

The Jewish DPs presented a unique case in postwar Germany for several reasons. First, the Jewish DPs had access to a special group of advocates in the form of the American army's Jewish chaplains. A total of 311 Jewish chaplains served in the American armed forces, and ninety of these chaplains were in direct contact with displaced persons in Europe. The chaplains had been recruited by the Committee on Army Navy Religious Activities, a special commission organized by the National Jewish Welfare Board, a group comprised of representatives from the three major Jewish affiliations (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism). All of the chaplains were graduates of recognized theological seminaries and practicing rabbis. They had attended a Chaplain's School, organized by the War Department, although this training focused solely on the duties of the chaplains with regards to military personnel, so that "nothing was mentioned at these meetings about the Holocaust and the displaced persons."<sup>42</sup>

In his study of this small but influential group of men, Alex Grobman explained that the rabbis were thus ill-prepared for the conditions they witnessed in the early postwar months, but that most were willing to do anything possible to relieve the suffering of those Jews they encountered. The chaplains used the resources available to them, and at times resources that were not theirs to give, to help the Jewish DPs they encountered. They worked to alleviate the hunger that they encountered by ransacking German stores, appropriating supplies from German farmers, and even sharing their own provisions. They also focused on raising the DPs' morale: they compiled lists of survivors, and they used the military postal system to send mail to DPs' relatives in the United States. Grobman detailed the experiences of Chaplain Mayer Abramowitz:

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for the IRO, there were enough bigamous cases in August 1947 to warrant publicizing the punishment for bigamy throughout the DP camps. Cases of bigamy involving DPs were heard before Military Government Courts and those found guilty were punished by confinement for six months to five years. See FNA, AJ 43, Box 822.

<sup>42</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 11.

At least once a week, Abramowitz traveled from Kassel to Fulda visiting the cities and towns in the area. During this fifteen hundred mile journey, he found many displaced persons. In Bad Hamburg, he discovered sixty to seventy young girls and gave them nylon stockings, lipstick, and cosmetics. These items, he learned, had more healing power than bread and butter... Of all of the places he visited, he enjoyed Kibbutz Buchenwald the most. He officiated at their weddings; and when leaders of the kibbutz asked for fake orders authorizing them to travel to France, he readily complied. Abramowitz saw it as his personal responsibility to make the lives of the displaced persons better and to help them get to Palestine.<sup>43</sup>

This was a mission that many, though not all of the chaplains, assumed. Their position was complicated by the fact that they were members of the American armed forces and as such charged with providing religious ministrations to soldiers. DPs did not fall within their jurisdiction, and therefore their efforts to help the Jewish survivors were sometimes overlooked by their superiors, and often condemned.

Secondly, as was the case with registering Jewish births, Jewish DP marriages were complicated because they also refused to register their marriages with the German Registrar. For many Jewish DPs, the crucial point was having their marriages officiated by a rabbi. As Margarete Myers Feinstein explained, “[e]ven secular Jews wanted a religious wedding ceremony as a means of forming links with the past and to ensure family continuity.”<sup>44</sup> Even those Jews who did not plan on following a strictly observant lifestyle felt that a Jewish wedding which embraced the orthodox traditions was necessary. In the first instance, an orthodox wedding ceremony required the construction (or, in some cases, reconstruction) of the *mikvot*, or ritual baths, used by married Jewish women to purify themselves before marital relations. In some cases women made do by immersing themselves in rivers, a practice that some rabbis considered sufficient, but soon there were calls for the rebuilding of the baths, both as a practical measure to fulfill Jewish law, and also as a means of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>44</sup> Margarete Myers Feinstein, “Jewish observance in Amalek’s shadow: Mourning, Marriage, and Birth Rituals among Displaced Persons in Germany” in *“We are here”: New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, ed. Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2010), 269.

reasserting Jewish survival.<sup>45</sup> Orthodox Jewish marriage also required the wife to cover her hair after she was married. At first women used kerchiefs or hats to cover their hair, but, as Judith Tydor Baumel explained, after the initial months “the increase in the number of orthodox DPs – with the influx of repatriated from the USSR – and the reawakening of aesthetic sensibilities, demanded a different solution.”<sup>46</sup> Baumel reported how one rabbi “combined Italian import, German manufacture, and orthodox DP know-how” to produce wigs for orthodox DPs, thus reinstating a religious practice that had fallen to the wayside during the war years.<sup>47</sup> The Jewish chaplains supported the DPs in all of these efforts. “Determined Orthodox DPs were successful in enlisting the aid of Jewish chaplains and relief workers in obtaining the property and materials necessary for the construction of ritual baths,” and at Landsberg they even helped facilitate the order that local Germans build the bath for the Jews residing there, a moment which Feinstein described as one imbued with “satisfaction” and “the sense of retribution.”<sup>48</sup>

In their efforts to help the Jewish DPs in any way possible, many chaplains presided over religious wedding ceremonies in the DP camps, as had Chaplain Abramowitz. There are numerous accounts of these weddings. What they shared in common was a mixture of hope for the future with remembrance for the past. As Michael Brenner makes clear, “even weddings could not obscure the tragic situation of those who had just been saved. The ceremony under the traditional wedding canopy usually began with the memorial prayer for the murdered parents of the couple. Only in rare cases were surviving family members present at the wedding.”<sup>49</sup> The formal proof of a Jewish wedding rested in the *ketubah*, or marriage contract, which was signed by the couple, two witnesses,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 270.

<sup>46</sup> Judith Tydor Baumel, “DPs, Mothers and Pioneers: Women in the She’erit Hapletah” in *Jewish History* 11:2 (Fall 1997), 103.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Feinstein, “Jewish observance in Amalek’s shadow,” 270.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Brenner, *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 26.

and the presiding rabbi. According to Jewish law, this contract was considered a legally binding document. In this way, the Jewish army chaplains allowed the Jewish DPs to circumvent the rules that required all other foreigners in Germany to register their marriages with the German Registrar.

However, as Control Council Law No. 16 made clear, religious marriages were not recognized by the state in Germany. As such, Jewish DPs married by rabbis were not granted certificates of civil marriage. In order to qualify for the certificate issued by the German Registrar, they needed to comply with the rules outlined in the Marriage Law, something that many Jewish DPs would not do. This distinction between religious and civil weddings played a particularly important role when it came time for the couple to leave Germany.

For those Jewish DPs planning on moving to Palestine, there was no question of the validity of these marriages. So long as they were presided over by a rabbi and included the necessary marriage contract, they were considered valid in Palestine. Under the terms of the British mandate in Palestine, all “matters of personal status in the courts of the Moslem, Christian and Jewish communities, which was vested by the former regime in accordance with the principle of *laissez-juger*, has been fully maintained.”<sup>50</sup> Allowing each religious group to decide matters such as this for themselves was a holdover from the pre-Mandate Ottoman administration, and one that the British were loath to replace if just for lack of a better alternative. In Palestine, the Jewish community was led by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the organization “recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters.”<sup>51</sup> Although the Jewish population in Palestine comprised both traditional Jewish communities, which strictly observed Jewish laws and customs, and agricultural communities, known as *kibbutzim*, which were generally secular bodies, the Jewish Agency’s policies reflected orthodox

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<sup>50</sup> Norman Bentwich, *England in Palestine* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1932), 291.

<sup>51</sup> Article Four, *Mandate for Palestine and Transjordan*, League of Nations, signed 24 July 1922.

Jewish practices, including the religious celebration of all marriages. For any DP hoping to immigrate to Palestine, it was clear that the religious celebration of marriage, and in particular the signed *ketubah*, would be necessary and sufficient proof. Even after the formation of the state of Israel, legal marriage certificates remained unnecessary for those Jews wishing to immigrate to Israel. The only form of marriage recognized in Israel for Jews continued to be religious marriage, or a marriage conducted by a member of the rabbinate.<sup>52</sup> There was, and continues to be, no institution of civil marriage in Israel. For this reason, marriage certificates issued by state authorities were not considered necessary for those people who knew definitively that they planned to settle there, neatly resolving the dilemma for some.

However, for those Jewish DPs who chose not to immigrate to Israel, but instead to either return home or emigrate to countries such as Canada, the United States, or Australia, a legal marriage certificate from the German Registrar was necessary. For this reason, many Jewish couples ultimately did register their marriages in Germany. “Sleepy Bavarian registry offices,” Atina Grossman explains, “were staggered by the stream of Jewish DPs—as many as fifteen daily—who suddenly appeared, offering their rations of American cigarettes in exchange for official certificates registering marriages and births.”<sup>53</sup> Still, not all Jewish DPs officially registered their marriages, and in some cases, they had to legalize their marriages years after the religious ceremonies had taken place in order to acquire the official marriage certificates. In his study of postwar Germany, Walter O. Weyrauch, a law student and court clerk during the American occupation of Germany, explained the legal consequences of this. Weyrauch described the situation faced by a Jewish couple who were

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<sup>52</sup> In the months leading up to the establishment of the state of Israel, there was debate between religious and secular Jews in Palestine over the nature of the new state, and especially over the role of religion. Issues such as education, *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws), and keeping of the Sabbath were hotly debated, but the question of allowing civil marriages was never seriously considered. See Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis*, transl. Arlen N. Weinstein (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 233-262.

<sup>53</sup> Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 208.

married in the Warsaw ghetto and had been issued a *ketubah* from the rabbi, but no marriage license from the Polish authorities. After the war, when the couple returned from Germany to Poland, they applied for passports, only to find that the Polish state would not recognize the legality of their original marriage. “The [Polish] state authorities,” Weyrauch explained, “were incapable or unwilling to recognize that the Jewish community under Nazi domination acted validly under its internal norms.”<sup>54</sup> The couple were required to officially register their marriage in Poland, after which time they were issued Polish passports. This was certainly not the only case in which a government refused to accept the religious certificate as proof of marriage, and a couple forced to remarry, but this time in a civil ceremony recognized by the state.

One of the most difficult problems associated with the marriage of DPs in Germany concerned the legal citizenship of married women. Across Europe, women who married men from a different country traditionally took their husband’s nationality and at the same time forfeited their original nationality, although there had always been exceptions to this rule. With the swell of international marriages both during and after the war, the problem of ascertaining a woman’s nationality could become quite complicated. In November 1946 Third Army Headquarters attempted to address this issue. They collated the effects of marriage on women’s nationality and compiled it in a report entitled *Inter-national Marriages and their effects on national status*. This report confirmed the fact that, in almost all instances, women took on the nationality of their husband when they married. In certain cases women could apply to keep their previous nationality, as was the case with Belgian women who married German men. The report explained that “[i]f a Belgian female marries a German, her national status is German, though she might keep her Belgian citizenship by filing application inside of six months after the wedding, in which case she will be given a certificate

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<sup>54</sup> Walter O. Weyrauch, “The Experience of Lawlessness” *New Criminal Law Review: International and Interdisciplinary Journal* 10:3 (Summer 2007): 437.

proving Belgian citizenship if such is issued by her Government.”<sup>55</sup> In the case of Czechoslovakia, a German female marrying a Czechoslovak male would acquire his citizenship, except in cases where the marriage was not approved by the Czech authorities, in which case “they consider the marriage null and void.”<sup>56</sup> Similarly in Denmark, a marriage required official sanction from the Danish authorities. “If a Danish female marries a German or a male of other nationality, she loses her Danish nationality, and her children will not be considered Danish nationals.”<sup>57</sup> The Dutch case allowed a woman in some cases to hold dual citizenship, so that if she married a German male, she was considered both Dutch and German. In the Yugoslav case, a Yugoslav female marrying a German retained her Yugoslav citizenship, but if she married a man of any other nationality, she took her husband’s nationality.

The differences in each country’s laws caused a great deal of confusion about the nationality of women after they married. In one revealing instance, UNRRA Legal Adviser Paul Winter was asked by UNRRA headquarters to clarify the legal position of a Czechoslovak woman who had married an Italian man. The woman, one Cecily Eve Northoff, born in Prague on 22 November 1920, had married Ernesto Remani from Merano, Italy, on 22 January 1942. Where this happened is unknown. In October 1942 the couple dissolved their marriage. Ernesto had never registered his marriage in Italy. UNRRA workers in the field wanted Paul Winter to comment on Cecily’s citizenship in 1947. Winter explained that Cecily would have given up her Czechoslovak citizenship when she married Ernesto. Given that Ernesto’s government did not recognize divorce, being a Catholic nation, the divorce would not have been considered legal. The Italian government only permitted annulments, which was a legal presumption that the marriage had never taken place. It was

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<sup>55</sup> Report, P. L. Nielsen, Eligibility Officer, Repatriation Division, Inter-national Marriages and their effects on national status, dated 1 November 1946, in UNA, Series 411, Box 2, File 4 “Marriage – Laws, Dependants, Eligibility, Etc.”

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

complicated; Cecily had legally given up her Czechoslovak citizenship when she married Ernesto, but the annulment of her marriage also voided her Italian citizenship. By 1947, Cecily had in fact been rendered stateless. The problems encountered by Cecily and Ernesto only scratch the surface of the multitude of difficulties associated with marriage in the wartime and postwar period. The war had moved millions of people beyond the borders of their homelands. It had also created opportunities for large numbers of ‘inter-national marriages,’ or unions between people of differing nationalities. These marriages proved problematic in the postwar period, as the military looked to classify people according to their citizenship, and countries wanted “their” nationals back.

Given the difficulties, why was it so important for couples to marry? The DPs themselves had several reasons for wanting to do so. For some, marriage was a means of reasserting control over their lives. After the initial months in the DP camps, the residents remained powerless in many aspects, but the one thing that they believed they could control was their marital status. For others, it was a chance at a normality that they had not experienced during the war years. Weddings were a powerful reminder of everyday life before the war, as well as a pledge to the future, and “DPs themselves often looked to marriage, the family, and childrearing as the means to reconstruct their lives.”<sup>58</sup> For others, marriage had more practical implications; for some it vastly improved their chances of being accepted as an immigrant to their country of choice, as an example.

In all of this, it is clear that UNRRA workers played an important part. Although not an officially stated goal, UNRRA strongly encouraged DP couples, and especially those with children, to marry legally. They saw marriage as a key step in taking responsibility for one’s actions, and personal responsibility was a core tenet of American professional social work, and one in which many UNRRA workers strongly believed. As Tara Zahra explains, “workers anointed themselves agents of

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<sup>58</sup> Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe’s Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 95.

psychological reconstruction,” and the first step in this process was to foster a sense of responsibility in each displaced person.<sup>59</sup> Their training taught them that the purpose of counselling and casework was to “help the individual to recognize and develop the resources within himself, to utilise all individual and community resources for the enrichment of individual and family life, and to afford protection and guidance needed by those unable to cope with conditions with which they are faced.”<sup>60</sup>

UNRRA welfare workers worried about the effects of the social disintegration that had been actively encouraged by Nazi policies. In particular, they were concerned about sexual promiscuity and illegitimate children. They worried about both mothers and fathers abandoning their families. “While American social workers worried about deserting husbands,” the European social workers “were equally concerned about the morality of women and children left in Europe without male supervision.”<sup>61</sup> They worried that unwed mothers would not want to raise their children and that hundreds, if not thousands, of children would see the end of the war without either parent. In order to address these problems, UNRRA focused on responsibility as the core principle of rehabilitation and on marriage as one way of instilling a sense of responsibility for one’s actions as well as a means of limiting the number of abandoned children.

For those couples that UNRRA welfare workers had convinced to legally wed, many faced the dilemma of wanting to marry but finding themselves unable to fulfill the necessary criteria for marrying legally in Germany. For this reason, marriage proved to be an important and sensitive issue in the postwar period. The DPs believed that the decision to get married was one over which they had control, or should have. At the same time, UNRRA enthusiastically encouraged unwed couples, and particularly those with children, to legalize their unions, although at least initially completely unaware

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>60</sup> Personal Counselling and Individual Treatment (Assembly Centres) Lecture Summary, UNRRA, Welfare Division, ERO, UNc 543, undated, in UNA, Series 527, Box 268, File P300.4B “Unaccompanied and/or Stateless Children.”

<sup>61</sup> Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 44.

of the numerous obstacles they would face. When the couple came from two different home countries, the obstacles greatly compounded. In attempting to legalize ‘inter-national’ unions, these couples were simply trying to move on with their lives and construct something new, but were stopped from doing so because postwar governments were intent on having their nationals repatriated. The LOs ensured that these marriages did not inhibit their goal of bringing all of their nationals home, even if this meant hindering the marriage of “their” nationals to foreigners.

Alongside the rush to marry, there were also efforts on the part of the DPs to legally dissolve their unions. UNRRA’s legal advisers recognized several reasons why a DP might want a divorce: “one spouse has either been deported by the Soviets, is missing as a result of Nazi persecution, has got separated by war events, has not succeeded in leaving the home country, or has stayed behind because of different political belief.”<sup>62</sup> The person requesting a divorce might require legal dissolution in order to apply for resettlement (rather than repatriation) or in order to legalize a new union. The surge in divorces was certainly not unique to DP camp residents; German couples in the immediate postwar years experienced elevated divorce rates as well. As Frank Biess explains, wartime experiences and separation meant that “normative prescriptions of gender relations therefore stood in marked contrast to the social realities within postwar families in general,”<sup>63</sup> and Atina Grossman adds that marriages often failed when couples were “unable to withstand the shock of reunion between veterans brutalized by war and imprisonment and women toughened by responsibilities on the home front.”<sup>64</sup> For DPs as well as Germans, sometimes it was not possible to

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<sup>62</sup> Cumulative Narrative Report, Legal and Political Protection, 1 July 1947 - 30 June 1949, Hugh L. Hinchliffe, undated, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

<sup>63</sup> Frank Biess, “Survivors of Totalitarianism: Returning POWs and the Reconstruction of Masculine Citizenship in West Germany, 1945-1955” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 72.

<sup>64</sup> Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 76.

go back. These couples required the legal dissolution of their marriages, particularly if they had any hope of resettlement or remarriage.

Much like marriage, they encountered numerous problems in legalizing their divorces. Divorces had to be sanctioned by a German court, but a “German court [was deemed] competent to dissolve a marriage only if the country of nationality of the husband will recognize the decision of the German court.”<sup>65</sup> Polish DPs had a particularly difficult time legalizing their divorce because their government refused to recognize any divorce conducted in Germany. “Judgements in divorce cases rendered by German courts,” stated the Chief Polish Liaison Officer, “where both parties to the divorce suit are Polish citizens, will, as a rule, not be recognized in Poland. This has been clearly established by a ruling of the Polish Supreme court of 29 May 1937.”<sup>66</sup> This ruling was not altered in the postwar years. For those Polish DPs who were married outside of Poland and whose marriage had not been registered in Poland, it was possible to obtain a divorce if the couple could convince the court that “it is indifferent whether the divorce be recognized in Poland or not, since the marriage as such has never been valid and recognized in Poland.”<sup>67</sup> The most difficult divorce cases were those in which one of the spouses was not present in Germany, as in the case of Eizenija. As one observer explained, “[h]ere, in addition to the difficulties already reported in Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslavian divorce cases, the main difficulty is the proper safeguarding of the interests of the missing spouse, in ensuring that he or she be informed about the proceedings.”<sup>68</sup> This was never an easy problem to overcome when the person could not be located, especially if they were presumed dead, but not proven so.

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<sup>65</sup> Cumulative Narrative Report, Legal and Political Protection, 1 July 1947 - 30 June 1949, Hugh L. Hinchliffe, undated, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Another issue surrounding divorce was the question of which courts were competent to decide the issue. One Relief Services Officer wrote to the Legal Adviser in June 1946 for a resolution to a case involving two Lithuanian DPs seeking a divorce. The two individuals lived separately and wanted to legalize their divorce, but they did not know who had the authority to make the ruling. As was the case with registering one's marriage, it was the court in the country of residence that had the authority to rule on the legality of the divorce. Neither had any intention of repatriating to Lithuania and they wanted the matter settled. The UNRRA officer asserted that, "it can not be expected all foreigners will postpone their affairs for a long time without a decision."<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately the Legal Adviser did not have a satisfactory answer, as he replied, "there is no provision made for handling civil proceedings between such persons" and therefore "in the case contained in reference letter no divorce proceedings can be brought, and the matter between the Lithuanian and her husband will have to await the time that either some provision has been made by Military Government or they establish a permanent residence here in Germany or elsewhere in some other country."<sup>70</sup> The only option for them within Germany was to give up their DP status, at which point the German courts could then hear their case. Not surprisingly, this was not an option they were willing to consider.

Alongside questions of marriage and divorce, another aspect of civil law that UNRRA faced was illegitimacy. As early as September 1945, UNRRA attempted to coordinate efforts to deal with the problem. In a report on the subject, one UNRRA officer noted that his office "had received numerous reports from Centers indicating serious problems concerning illegitimate children."<sup>71</sup> He

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<sup>69</sup> Letter, Olive Biggar, Relief Services Officer, to Milton Talent, Acting Legal Adviser, UNRRA Headquarters, Pasing-Munich, subject: Court Proceedings of a Lithuanian, dated 19 June 1946, in UNA, Series 424, Box 10, File 18 "District 2 – legal Cases."

<sup>70</sup> Letter, M. O. Talent, Acting Legal Adviser, to Olive Biggar, Relief Services Officer, subject: Court Proceedings for a Lithuanian, dated 5 July 1946, in UNA, Series 424, Box 10, File 18 "District 2 – legal Cases."

<sup>71</sup> Circular, Vernon R. Kennedy, Director, U.S. Zone, to All Team Directors, Attention Welfare Officers, subject: Report of Illegitimate Children, dated 17 September 1945, in UNA, Series 437, Box 14, File 3 "Displaced Persons-Children-Child Welfare Policy-Illegitimacy."

explained that “children have been abandoned by mothers” and “UNRRA officers have been requested to accept care responsibilities [sic] for the children.”<sup>72</sup> In *The Wild Place*, Kathryn Hulme’s account of her experiences as an UNRRA welfare worker, the author described an incident in which a pregnant girl sought out a soldier who had already returned to the United States. She recounted, “The girl looked at me with unbelieving eyes as she told the Countess in Polish that Joe was her fiancé, they were to be married this month, he would never have run away from her like that, without a word, without a farewell...There was a mistake somewhere.”<sup>73</sup> She also described a particularly gruesome instance in which she came across a baby that had been killed. “I thought of a baby that had been spilled out of an ashcan the week before, a perfectly formed full-term male child with a faint lavender thumbprint on the front of his neck.”<sup>74</sup> She attributed these deaths to mothers whose boyfriends had abandoned them and who no longer wanted to raise the children.

The problem of illegitimate children was two-fold: some of the fathers of illegitimate children were DPs or local Germans, while others were soldiers from the occupation army. For those women whose GI boyfriends refused to recognize paternity, they had little recourse to action. In a March 1946 letter to Commanding Generals and Members of Military Government, the Adjutant General outlined the policy with regards to children fathered by troops serving in Germany. He explained that, “since only US law can determine who is an American citizen, and since such American citizens are assimilated to the status of United Nations Nationals for the purpose of treatment as displaced persons, such minor children having dual nationality should receive United Nations displaced persons treatment and care.”<sup>75</sup> In cases in which the father willingly admitted to paternity, soldiers could ask

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1953), 15.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>75</sup> Circular, L. S. Ostrander, Brigadier General, Adjutant General, to Commanding Generals, Third Army, Seventh Army, Berlin District, and Director of Military Government for Greater Hesse, Wuerttemberg-Baden

their commanding officer for assistance in providing financial assistance to the mother. However, in cases where the mother made a complaint against a soldier, the soldier was under no obligation to respond. In a follow-up memo, the Adjutant General asserted that “[n]o member of the military service will be returned to a foreign jurisdiction against his will to answer a complaint in paternity or support cases” and, once the soldier had been relieved of active duty, “the writer will be informed of the separation and that the War Department no longer has jurisdiction in the premises.”<sup>76</sup> In other words, American soldiers had no responsibilities for children they fathered while on service in Germany.

The problem was also complicated for women with illegitimate children by DP fathers. In a December 1945 letter to UNRRA Headquarters, the Director of UNRRA Team 168 asked for guidance on the problem of illegitimacy in his DP camp. He explained that he had discovered several such cases in his camp. He asked, “what action can we take, either in establishing paternity, or what action can be taken against the putative father in the support of the child born of the illicit relationship.”<sup>77</sup> In response, the Zone Director admitted that he had purposely avoided the question of illegitimate children in the DP camps, hoping that the DPs would be repatriated and that UNRRA would not have to deal with this problem.<sup>78</sup> The Zone Child Welfare Specialist suggested that, in cases where the father admitted to paternity, the mother could ask the father to fill out a form,

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and Bavaria, subject: Displaced Persons Care for Alleged US Citizens, dated 7 March 1946, in NARA, RG 165, Box 827, File 7 “Displaced Persons Care for Alleged US Citizens.”

<sup>76</sup> Memo, Lt. Colonel J. V. Sheldon, Assistant Adjutant General, USFET, subject: Paternity Claims of Non-Nationals, dated 5 March 1946, in UNA, Series 437, Box 13, File 20 “Displaced Persons-Children-Child Welfare Policy-Colored Children.”

<sup>77</sup> Letter, S. B. Milus, Director UN 168, to Mr. Ernest C. Grigg, Regional Welfare Office, subject: Policy on Pregnancy Cases, dated 7 December 1945, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 1 “Welfare-I. Orders, Instructions, Interpretations-Zone Headquarters-Welfare/Relief Services.”

<sup>78</sup> Letter, J. H. Whiting, Zone Director, US Zone, to UNRRA Central Headquarters, Child Welfare Officer and Legal Adviser, subject: Procedure in handling Paternity Cases; Release of Children for Adoption, dated 23 February 1946, in UNA Series 425, Box 62, File 1 “Welfare-I. Orders, Instructions, Interpretations-Zone Headquarters-Welfare/Relief Services.”

admitting to the paternity of the child, and this form could then form the basis of an application for support in the home country. In cases where the father refused to admit to paternity, the mother was advised to approach her Liaison Officer as the case could not be taken up in the German court. “You are right in your implication that the laws of the countries from which the parents come probably have a bearing on the matter,” she explained, and therefore “we suggest the participation of the liaison officer in handling such matters.”<sup>79</sup>

In cases of illegitimacy, UNRRA believed that it was always best for the child to remain with the mother, even if the mother did not initially want to accept responsibility. “There may be many [mothers] who are anxious and uncertain about returning home,” one welfare report noted, “and, in the case of those who are unmarried, some may wish to be relieved of the responsibility of their baby. Under no circumstances, however, should a child be separated from his mother except where it is clearly in his interest.”<sup>80</sup> In other words, UNRRA encouraged its welfare workers to convince unwed mothers to keep their children. They believed that the best possible outcome in situations of illegitimacy was for the parents to marry. The Zone Child Welfare Specialist reinforced the importance of counselling as a means of encouraging this. She asserted that “[s]ound social advice to the mother and assistance in considering various plans for the child, as well as the relationship with the father, are perhaps the most important services which can be given in any of these cases.”<sup>81</sup>

However, even when they were convinced, often times these couples ran into problems legitimizing the children. When parents approached the German authorities, the German Registrar

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<sup>79</sup> Letter, Cornelia D. Heise, Child Welfare Specialist, to Mr. E. C. Grigg, District Relief Services Officer, subject: Policy in Paternity Cases, dated 23 February 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 1 “Welfare-I. Orders, Instructions, Interpretations-Zone Headquarters-Welfare/Relief Services.”

<sup>80</sup> Report, Welfare Services for Displaced Persons in Assembly Centres: Services for Women and Girls, Welfare Division, ERO, undated, p. 4, in UNA, Series 520, Box 246, File 8 “Complete Set of all Papers on Welfare Services prepared in ERO.”

<sup>81</sup> Letter, Cornelia D. Heise, Child Welfare Specialist, to Mr. E. C. Grigg, District Relief Services Officer, subject: Policy in Paternity Cases, dated 23 February 1946, in UNA, Series 425, Box 62, File 1 “Welfare-I. Orders, Instructions, Interpretations-Zone Headquarters-Welfare/Relief Services.”

was reluctant to recognize the father legally. “There have been certain complications in the past in regard to the legitimation [sic] of children born out of wedlock in this Zone – of whom there is a considerable number – by the subsequent marriage of the parents,” one official noted.<sup>82</sup> In one such instance, a DP child, Olga Heidemko, was registered with a DP card using her mother’s last name when she was born because her parents were not married. In 1946, her mother, Maria, legally wed her father, Wasyl Hajdamaka. When the girl became ill, the father registered her in the hospital under his last name, “thinking that it was legal, because he has married the mother.”<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately this was not the case, and the “persons in charge of the Registration has done an error evidently in changing the name without legal documents.”<sup>84</sup> The marriage had not automatically legitimized the child.

As a whole, the civil law cases involving DPs point to the central importance of the law of their country of origin and to the power of the Liaison Officers. As the only people with access to communication with the home country, they became not only conduits, but also interpreters of national law. They had the power to acknowledge the legality of birth registrations, marriages, and divorces based on their understanding of the law. They also had the power to reject them if they did not meet what they considered the proper criteria. This proved the most challenging problem for DPs who wished to marry. In particular, marriages between ‘inter-national’ couples were denied by Liaison Officers because it threatened the repatriation of all of their nationals. For those DPs who did not have access to a Liaison Officer, either because they were from the Baltic Republics or because they were designated as stateless, these difficulties were no easier to overcome. With no Liaison

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<sup>82</sup> Cumulative Narrative Report, Hugh L. Hinchliffe, Legal and Political Protection, 1 July 1947-30 June 1949, undated, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

<sup>83</sup> Letter, M. Levy, Deputy Director, UNRRA Team 1061, Reinhardt-Kaserne, Neu-Ulm, to Mr. J. Brown, Deputy Director UNRRA Team 1061, Leipheim, subject: Tscherkasenko Olga or Haidamaka Olga, dated 31 January 1947, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 822.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Officer to turn to for help and no national law to interpret, they had only the UNRRA welfare workers. However, the UNRRA officers were not trained in the law, and in many instances UNRRA workers had little understanding of the complex web of rules and guidelines governing these matters and could not help the DPs resolve their civil law issues. This lack of knowledge did not, however, stop them from putting considerable pressure on many DP couples to legally wed. Unfortunately, in many cases the DPs remained unable to settle these issues in Germany, and this left them in a legal limbo that prevented them from normalizing their lives.

Even with these problems, it is clear that UNRRA was successful in its efforts to instill a respect for civil law. Despite initial hesitation on the part of all DPs, and Jewish DPs in particular, there was by and large acceptance that births and marriages should be registered with the German Registrar, as dictated by law. Even when they were not able to fulfill the requirements, DPs understood the importance of the official documentation the Registrar provided. Whether they planned to return home or hoped to emigrate abroad, they collected the necessary documents and applied for birth certificates and marriage licenses in Germany in the manner proscribed by local authorities. However, this respect for civil law did not halt the abandonment of children or force fathers to take responsibility for their illegitimate children. Respect for civil law did not necessarily include acceptance of all of the social norms UNRRA promoted; they took heed of UNRRA's suggestions only when they believed that it was in their best interest to do so. For those DPs either returning home or looking to emigrate, it was clearly in their interest to apply for the necessary documentation so that their marriages would be deemed legitimate in the eyes of foreign governments. This understanding, however, did not extend to the acceptance of all social norms proposed by UNRRA welfare workers, only those that were absolutely necessary.

## Chapter 6

### **‘Whole populations of criminals’: DPs, crime, and authority in the American Occupation Zone of Germany**

The 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1946 at 12,00 o clock a.m. the resident of Camp Winzer RYBIJ, Mania took water of a fire barrel near the wooden barrack No. 12. As the water in these barrels is assigned as protection in case of fire, the fireman on duty LAJBYK, Mychailo drew her attention to this fact and asked her to pour the water back. Mrs. Rybij did not want to do it, this resulted in a scolding between Lajbyk and Mrs. Rybij, wherein Lajbyk used some bad expressions in regard of her.

The woman went to her husband, RYBIJ, Stefan and related to him the incident and when she finished, the couple hurried into the room of Lebjyk [sic] and Rybij threatened him with a knife because of the pretended offense of his wife. It came again to a quarrel, wherein again both sides used disagreeable expressions. Rybij wanted already to go home, but his wife gave two hits the fireman into the face [sic], in the same moment Rybij came back and stabbed the fireman Lebjyk into the left shoulderblade, Labjyk then took an axe and wanted to beat Rybij with it, but other inhabitants of the room mixed in and it did not come to another scuffle.<sup>1</sup>

The case of stolen water from the barrel designated for fire prevention and the ensuing scuffle highlights one of the many breaches of law and order in the DP camps in Germany. UNRRA believed that the DPs no longer understood the need for rules, even if they were there for their own protection, as the water barrel clearly was. They believed that under normal, prewar conditions, the DPs would have accepted the necessity of the water being kept aside in the event of a fire; it was their wartime experiences that had caused them to forget these social norms. “Many displaced persons,” write Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, “had become masters of subterfuge to survive in concentration camps.”<sup>2</sup> The rule of law meant little to a concentration camp inmate or forced labourer. Therefore, a key part of the process of rehabilitation as UNRRA understood it was to reintroduce a respect for rules. The DPs needed to be reminded that society required certain

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<sup>1</sup> Report, Theodor Baran, Camp Leader, D.P. Camp Winzer, UNRRA Team 1047 A, dated 25 November 1946, in UNA, Series 424, Box 13, File 7 “District 3-Displaced Persons Camps-Incidents.”

<sup>2</sup> Susan Armstrong-Reid and David Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 194.

guidelines in order to function properly. As part of the larger process of normalizing life, the DPs needed to be re-taught the importance of law in society.

In contrast to civil law, which proved to be a section of law that was most directly related to the DP-UNRRA relationship, criminal law affected and was affected by the relationship that the DPs had with three groups in postwar Germany: the Germans themselves, the Military Government, and UNRRA. The evolution in DP experiences with criminal law was directly correlated to the changing relationship between Military Government and the Germans. When hostilities ended, the American military was most interested in punishing the Germans and aiding the DPs. In this period, the Americans were generally uninterested in legally pursuing any but the most violent of crimes committed by the DPs. The military certainly knew about the roving bands of DPs who were stealing from the Germans and generally intimidating them. However, little effort was made to prosecute the DPs for these crimes. Many American soldiers saw these acts as acceptable given the wartime experiences of the DPs while under German control; it was retributive justice. They allowed the DPs to act out because they felt pity for them, but this attitude only lasted the summer. As one observer noted, “Military Government authorities took a tolerant attitude towards the desires of the displaced persons for a fling after their liberation, but when their actions took the form of exacting revenge from their former German masters, serious problems of public order were presented.”<sup>3</sup>

By the fall of 1945 there was a marked change in the way that the American military reacted to these acts; they were no longer willing to let them continue, and instead they began to arrest and charge DPs. This change in disposition stemmed from several factors. First of all, the military finally had enough soldiers on the ground to deal with the large number of DPs. Second, once fighting had ceased, soldiers could turn their attention to the challenges of managing the DPs and of reinstating

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph R. Starr, *Denazification, Occupation and Control of Germany, March – July 1945* (Salisbury, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1977), 29.

law and order. The American zone of occupation was considerably smaller than the area of advance that the American forces controlled at the close of hostilities, and therefore they were able to spread more men over less territory. By 17 July the zones of occupation had been clarified and the soldiers shifted accordingly. The American zone of occupation included the Lander of Bavaria and Hesse, as well as the northern portion of Baden-Wurttemberg. From their position at the line of contact with Soviet forces, American troops had withdrawn from positions as far east as Leipzig.

At the same time, throughout late 1945, and particularly through the course of 1946, there was a clear change in the way that the Americans viewed the Germans, and this change had a marked influence on the way that they treated the DPs as well. The early postwar focus on punishing the Germans for their wartime actions meant that the American military had been completely unwilling to turn to the Germans for any help in policing the DP camps or arresting DP criminals. Therefore, in the first postwar months, the military took on this task alone. However, as focus turned from punishment of the German people to reconstruction of their country and economy, the military's position on the Germans' role in their own policing changed markedly. As it became clear that the DPs would not be returning home as quickly as once hoped, it also became necessary to reconsider the question of policing the DPs. While the military helped organize DP police for inside the camps, outside the camps they soon changed their minds and allowed the German police to pursue DP criminals. This new American reliance on German police changed the nature of the DP-military-German relationship.

Key to this change, too, was the burgeoning black market. The pressure on the military to deal with the problem of the black market coincided with discussions in the middle of 1946 to consolidate the DP camps and close them down. UNRRA's tenure was coming to an end and it hoped to close up operations by the end of 1946, although this goal in the end proved illusory.

Nevertheless, the planned shutdown set the tone for the second half of 1946. Increasing pressure on black marketeers, especially those DPs who were involved, was just one of the means used to encourage DPs to repatriate. The military believed that if the black market was shut down, these people would be more inclined to accept repatriation. This move to encourage the DPs to repatriate was part of Military Government's larger process of returning Germany to German administration; a process that was complicated by the continued presence of so many DPs in Germany. Changes in criminal law affecting DPs can only be understood in light of these ongoing developments.

Reports on DP crime come from primarily two sources: UNRRA reports and Military Government reports. These reports show that there were three main phases in crime management and in policing during UNRRA's administration of the DP camps in Germany. The first period, lasting the summer of 1945, saw high DP crime rates in many areas, but an unwillingness on the part of the military to prosecute all but the most violent of crimes. Although crimes ranging from petty theft to murder took place in this period, the majority of crimes were random acts, consisting largely of robbery, assault and destruction of property. Most of these crimes were spur-of-the-moment events. The second period in DP crime management took place from the autumn of 1945 to the spring of 1946, and was characterized by continued looting, but a general decline in crime due to increased prosecutions and a general crackdown on crime by the military. With the reconstitution of the German police force, DPs could now be arrested by German police outside of the DP camps. Random acts of violence subsided as the culprits were now arrested and charged for these acts.

The third period of DP crime management began in the spring of 1946 and lasted throughout UNRRA's remaining tenure. This third period was characterized by decreasing reports of random crime combined with increasing reports of premeditated crime, and in particular two types of crime: black market activity and rioting amongst DPs. The DPs came to play an increasingly large role in

the black market. With access to the goods in care packages provided by voluntary agencies, the DPs now possessed commodities that were in high demand throughout Germany, and this gave those DPs choosing to take part in the black market the means to do so. Certainly not all DPs took advantage of this situation, but many did. The summer and fall of 1946 was a period of a rising number of arrests for black market activity. In an October 1946 incident report, Welfare Officer Marion van Binsbergen from UNRRA Team 621, located in Windsheim, related an incident involving the presence of a live ox, purchased on the black market, at her camp. She explained that on Wednesday 2 October, 1946, the German police requested permission to enter the DP camp. She described the scene thus: “the cellardoor [sic] was locked and nobody could find the key. We climbed in through a cellar window and found a live ox there. The D.P. Police was summoned and opened the cellar door. Captain Wheeler led the ox up the cellar steps and into the Street.” Upon further investigation, it became clear that an inhabitant of the DP camp, known as Kahn, had purchased the ox from a German man for 6000 marks. The welfare officer argued that both the German and the DP would be charged for black market activities.

Alongside black market activities, another crime that became increasingly prevalent in the summer and fall of 1946 was rioting by DPs. Faced with the resurgence of the German economy, and feeling increasingly marginalized by the re-emergence of German society, the DPs often lashed out against any show of authority, especially on the part of the German police. Both the German police and UNRRA officials turned to the military authorities to contain these increasingly volatile situations. There were several major riots in the U.S. Zone of Germany in 1946. In one instance, in July 1946 a riot broke out in Föhrenwald DP camp in Munich during a funeral march. On 25 July, a Jewish Agency for Palestine (JAFP) representative alerted officials that she believed there was cause for alarm. A resident of the camp, a young boy, had been killed by a German policeman who was

conducting searches of DPs accused of black market activities. The boy had been standing nearby and when an argument ensued between the policeman and DPs, he was accidentally shot. The JAFP representative worried about a possible clash between the military and the Jewish DP residents of the camp when the boy's funeral was held.

Her fears were well-founded. While the DPs had obtained permission from the local Military Police unit for sixteen people to take part in a funeral procession outside of the camp, this information was not passed on to the 39th Infantry Division, who immediately halted the procession at the gates of the camp. The JAFP official reported that "the soldiers used their bayonets in an attempt to force to people back. Several people were stabbed. All of them stabbed in the back while trying to push the people back, together with us and the Army."<sup>4</sup> She also noted that the confusion between the various groups, including the Military Police and the Infantry Division, would not have escalated except that the Camp Director was not present at the time, and therefore "[t]here was no one there equipped to deal with the situation in such manner as to avoid from the very beginning the clash and misunderstandings between the Army, the DP's and UNRRA personnel."<sup>5</sup> Camp directors were often the only ones who could prevent these types of disagreements from escalating. Their intimate knowledge of all parties allowed them to come up with unique, but workable solutions in many instances. When the camp directors were away, these clashes had the propensity to spiral out of control.

Similarly, the DP camp at Landsberg was described in a May 1946 monthly report as being the site of a roving band of ten to fifteen Jewish DPs who indiscriminately assaulted German civilians. The Zone Director reported that the "assaults had increased to riot proportions and the

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<sup>4</sup> Letter, Shmeul Zamri, JAFP, to C. J. Taylor, Deputy Zone Director, UNRRA American Zone, subject: Report on Incident at Fohrenwald DP Camp, UNRRA Team 106, dated 29 July 1946, p. 2, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:60 II "Reports a) Regular and Special Reports Zone Headquarters – Welfare – Relief Services, March 1946 – August 1946 (Sec. 2)."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Public Safety Officer estimated that 5,000 to 6,000 Jewish Displaced Persons took part in assaulting German civilians when the affair was at its height.”<sup>6</sup> Eighteen Germans were reported as requiring medical attention at the local hospital. In the monthly Legal Aid Report, C. A. Mintzer reported a worsening of relations between the two groups, which was negatively impacting public order. He suggested several reasons for this deterioration, including the fact that the DPs had remained in Germany long past the time it was originally expected by German and DP alike, and also that the DPs felt they were being pushed into an inferior social and legal position relative to the Germans. He also mentioned that the DPs felt that the military no longer took care in investigating cases of mistreatment by the Germans. “The result is a potential hysteria,” he explained, and also “an aggravated use of force when its necessity might be questioned on the part of the Military which frequently explodes into riot and disorder, for the most meagre causes.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, there was an unnecessary escalation taking part on all sides whenever confrontation occurred.

Riots and black market activity came to define DP crime in the second half of UNRRA’s tenure, from the spring of 1946 to UNRRA’s closure in July 1947. This third period of DP crime, which was characterized by less random crime but more organized crime, also coincided with two important phenomena that were taking place at the time. The first was the arrival of the so-called ‘infiltrates’ in the spring and summer of 1946, those European Jews who had spent the war behind Soviet lines, but who had escaped to the western zones of Germany, and in particular the American zone of occupation, following the defeat of the Wehrmacht. These infiltrates badly overcrowded the DP camps and put pressure on already thin supply lines. The second phenomenon was the arrival of

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<sup>6</sup> Letter, J. H. Whiting, Zone Director, to Lt. General Sir Frederick Morgan, Chief of Operations in Germany, subject: Landsberg Incident 28 April 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3 File 16 “013.6 Arrest and Trial of Displaced Persons. “

<sup>7</sup> Monthly Report, William C. Morris, UNRRA Protective Service Office, to Mr. R. C. Raymond, District 2 Director, dated: 26 May 1946, p. 2, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.1:9 “District Monthly Reports, March 1946 – June 1946.”

the *Volksdeutsche*, ethnic Germans who had been living beyond the borders of Germany proper before the war, and who were expelled from their residences following the war. The official transfers of ethnic Germans from their former homes in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary brought millions more people into Germany, all competing for already limited housing and food. Increasing German frustration with the continued presence of the DPs was certainly heightened by the arrival of the *Volksdeutsche*. The overcrowding caused by the arrival of this new group of refugees put increasing pressure on the already fragile relationship between the DPs, the Germans, and the Military Government, and it led many German communities to lash out. They argued that the DPs were an unwanted drain on their meagre resources, that the DPs were increasing the crime rate, and that the DPs were not only using the black market, they were facilitating it. They wrote newspaper articles and sent petitions to the Military Government complaining about the activities of these foreigners and their accusations became increasingly inflammatory.

The black market was pervasive in German society. The severe shortages meant that any goods available on the black market were being traded for several times their prewar value. During the war the black market was made up largely of interactions between German people from the cities with German farmers from the countryside. This form of trading was sometimes the only means of finding fresh fruit, vegetables, and meat. As one economist noted, “[e]very family was involved, at more or less frequent intervals, in the black market sale of some possessions and the purchase of some ‘black’ foods, stimulants, clothing, etc.”<sup>8</sup> After the war, the black market continued to thrive because of the occupation authority’s desire to suppress inflation by continuing price controls that had been instituted by the Nazis in the last years of the war. The Allies limited the prices charged for the food and meagre manufactured goods that were available with ration coupons. For those goods that

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<sup>8</sup> Horst Mendershausen, “Prices, Money and the Distribution of Goods in Postwar Germany” in *The American Economic Review* 39:3 (June 1949), 653.

were not available for ration coupons, the black market was often the only other place to obtain them. The most valuable commodity for trade was the cigarette, but coffee was also very valuable. In this way, the black market functioned as a forum for the bilateral exchange of goods. In the postwar era, farmers continued to bring their surplus crops into the cities to barter on the black market. Foreigners in Germany, including the DPs, were able to take part in this illegal economy as well. This was because, after the war, they had the means to participate in the form of the food and other supplies that they received from aid groups, most notably UNRRA. Malcolm Proudfoot, a captain in the American army, noted that the DPs “soon discovered that their rations of soap, cigarettes, and candy could be exchanged for large sums on the black market, and this provided them with alcoholic drinks, women, and other pleasures, which in some measure relieved their boredom.”<sup>9</sup>

Even after the military crackdown on DP crime, the DPs had several reasons to continue taking part in criminal activities, including black market trade. For many DPs, they saw bartering for goods with the Germans as an economic necessity. While the DPs were provided with enough food, they often found it bland and tasteless. Their diets consisted mainly of bread and soup, and lacked fresh meat and fruit. In contrast, the Germans looked upon the DP camps as “magical kingdoms” because of the care packages filled with chocolate and cigarettes that the DPs received.<sup>10</sup> As a result, each side had something to offer the other. A second reason why the DPs continued to take part in crime, and in black market activity in particular, is because they had no respect for German law in particular. They were not concerned that black market trade was outlawed by Military Government because it undermined the effectiveness of price controls and rationing. They believed that shortages were just punishment for the Germans given their wartime actions, but that the DPs should not be

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<sup>9</sup> Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees: A Study in Forced Population Movement* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1956), 128.

<sup>10</sup> Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 164-5.

punished for German wrongdoings. Therefore, many DPs continued to participate in black market trade. They believed that it was their right to take advantage of the situation, just as the Germans had done during the war. A third reason why the DPs participated in criminal activities was because it was a means of utilizing their particular skills. Before their wartime displacement, many DPs had taken part in barter economies in their hometowns. They had experience trading manufactured goods for agricultural produce in the provincial towns of Eastern Europe. They brought with them the experience in trade, and they used these skills in their black market interactions with the Germans. Finally, the DPs continued to participate in criminal activity because they felt increasingly marginalized in society. They witnessed the slow but eventual reconstruction of German society and the German economy, and they were dismayed that the Germans were allowed to rebuild while they continued to live in the DP camps, their future uncertain.

The military had expected problems concerning DP criminality from the beginning. They had been drafting procedures for handling DP crime since the planning phase preceding the occupation of Germany. Clearly anticipating problems, criminal activity was thoroughly addressed in the *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany* drafted by SHAEF in September 1944: “experiences which they [the DPs] have undergone during the past few years may make them difficult to control; they may have little initiative; their desire to take revenge may result in looting and general lawlessness; and their pent-up feelings against their former oppressors may express themselves in resentment of any type of discipline and authority.”<sup>11</sup> Initially the military preferred to deflect responsibility by stating that “[w]henver satisfactory arrangements have been or can be made for the imposition of adequate punishment by authorities of the displaced person’s nationality, this method

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<sup>11</sup> *Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany*, Displaced Persons Branch, G-5, SHAEF, May 1945, p. 1, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 3 “383.7 Guide to the Care of Displaced Persons in Germany.”

will be used in preference to all others.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, SHAEF hoped that the Liaison Officers would be capable of keeping all of their nationals in line. The Guide also suggested that a list of center regulations should be issued in each center, including prohibitions against theft, damage and destruction of property, bartering, and “any other undesirable activities to which it is thought desirable to draw particular attention.”<sup>13</sup> SHAEF called for the formation of a police force for each center, selected from amongst the population. This force would be responsible for the general maintenance of law and order in each centre, as well as the organization of a system for fighting fires.

The SHAEF Guide suggested several punishments for offences against center rules. For minor offences deemed punishable by fine or imprisonment, the best option was that a Liaison Officer be empowered to try the case and impose the punishment. When this was not possible, the case should be presented before a Military Government Court, generally a Summary Military Court. In certain cases, military commanders were permitted to appoint Assembly Center Directors as judges in Summary Military Courts. “Persons convicted by such a court of limited jurisdiction,” the Guide explained, “would have the same rights of petition for review and otherwise as in courts of full jurisdiction.”<sup>14</sup> In minor matters, Assembly Center Directors were permitted to impose “administrative discipline,” which included restrictions on movement, reduction of privileges, extra work assignments, and reduction of rations. In July 1945, SHAEF distributed an amendment to the Guide relating to offences committed by Soviet nationals. Adjutant General R. B. Lovett asserted that in cases where the commission of a crime warranted a harsher punishment than administrative discipline, “the offender will be delivered, together with a file showing the charges and evidence

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 43.

against him, to the nearest Soviet Repatriation Representative for disposition.”<sup>15</sup> The only time that a Military Government Court could try a Soviet defendant was when the offence was made against a national of the United States or the United Kingdom, or in instances where “an immediate trial must be held in order to maintain law and order.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, in cases where the commission of a crime led to mass unrest in a DP camp, the Military District Commander was permitted to hold a trial in order to quell the unrest.

Despite the careful preparation of plans for responding to DP crime, in the summer of 1945 the military had done little to stop much of the looting by the DPs. The military reports from this period detail DPs participating in numerous serious crimes, but there is no evidence of any attempt to bring the perpetrators to justice. A July 1945 weekly report on Displaced Persons stated that:

the MGO Detachment at Schwaebisch Gmuend [sic] received a total of 36 written and 20 verbal complaints against such depredations. On the night of 24 July 2 Germans were shot and seriously wounded and another stabbed by a group of Polish nationals. Heilbronn reported gangs of Polish and Italian nationals threatening shopkeepers and farmers, stealing cattle, and destroying potato and onion fields... Two Germans were slain at the hands of an Italian national at Obergriesheim. A similar situation was reported at Karlsruhe.<sup>17</sup>

There were even reports that the soldiers had encouraged the DPs in their revenge against the local German population. “Partial responsibility for this aggravated situation is attributed to a misunderstanding which may exist among the Security troops. For instance in the case of Gerlachsheim, the police complained that the DPs were encouraged by the tactical troops to disregard

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<sup>15</sup> Memo, Brigadier R. B. Lovett, Adjutant General, USFET, subject: Jurisdiction of Military Government Courts over Displaced Persons, dated 23 July 1945, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 5 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Vol. I OMG 1945-46.”

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Displaced Persons Report No. 41, Combined Displaced Persons Executive, G-5, USFET, dated 27 August 1945, p. 10, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 78, File 863/128/1 “D.P.s – UNRRA – Central H.Q. for Germany – Semi-Monthly Reports, October 1945 – August 1946.”

and resist orders of the German police,” they explained.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, in their own reports of the period, UNRRA noted no major incidents inside the camps.

While crime went unprosecuted in the early postwar months, in the fall the military changed its position. Throughout the summer and fall of 1945, American troops who had taken part in the rapid advance across Germany were shipped stateside and replaced by new soldiers who had not taken part in the liberation of concentration camps or the opening of German factories filled with slave labourers. These new troops did not have the same understanding of what the foreigners in Germany had experienced, and therefore they also did not have the same sympathy. As early as July 1945, the American Third Army Command was complaining that caring for the DPs was a large and unnecessary burden. Lieutenant Colonel Bogia argued that, “[a]dministration of DP’s in present location can be an interminable burden on resources of U.S. Government. Suggest that a date be determined and set after which DP’s not repatriated become a responsibility of the country in which they now reside, become a citizen, or get out. DP’s must make this decision.”<sup>19</sup> Clearly the goodwill that the military had once felt towards the DPs was beginning to wear thin.

As part of the process of lessening the burden on the military, the handover of responsibility for policing took place, although in stages. First the German police forces were reconstituted. When the Seventh U.S. Army first crossed the Rhine River, “the German police force was found to be almost nonexistent in the small villages and had completely disappeared from the larger towns,” but as the army made its way further east, and as their advance was made more rapidly, “police forces were usually found relatively intact, even in large places like Stuttgart and Rottweil.”<sup>20</sup> These police forces, however, were overwhelmingly manned by Nazis, who would have to be replaced.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Letter, Lt. Col. R. A. Bogia, Headquarters, U.S. Group Control Council (Germany) Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons Division, Prisoner of War Branch, to Brigadier General Wood, subject: Displaced Persons, dated 23 July 1945, p. 2, in RG 260, Box 167, File 1 “383.7 Administration of DPs.”

<sup>20</sup> Starr, *Denazification, Occupation and Control of Germany*, 17.

Denazification regulations were originally outlined in JCS 1067, written by the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, for implementation during SHAEF's tenure. When SHAEF operations ended in July 1945 and responsibility for governing the zones of occupation was handed over to the zonal occupying forces, efforts were made to coordinate denazification efforts in all four zones through the joint Control Council.

At the Control Council meeting at Potsdam at the end of July 1945, the goals and policies of denazification were agreed upon, and then released as "Control Council Law No. 2" in October 1945. This agreement stipulated that the Nazi Party and all associated Nazi organizations would be dismantled, including the paramilitary organizations (the *Sturmabteilung* or SA, the *Schutzstaffel* or SS, and the Hitler Youth). Those police units which had been specifically formed in order to support the regime's political policies, such as the *Gestapo* (Secret Police), were likewise abolished. All persons in positions of public office, including police officers, were required to fill out and submit *Fragebogen*, questionnaires which asked about a person's employment, military service, and relationship to the Nazi party. These questionnaires were then reviewed by Military Government officers and compared to all available information from German police and Nazi party records.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the police force, the Military then followed a process of selecting a man who they deemed reliable and recruiting amateurs to fill positions below him. In this way, wholly new police forces were created. However, this took time to accomplish. As well, the military had made a point of disarming all civilians in Germany, including policemen. Thus, following the surrender, German police were barred from carrying firearms, and they were instead issued nightsticks.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Elmer Plischke, "Denazification Law and Procedure" *The American Journal of International Law* 41:4 (Nov. 1947): 823.

<sup>22</sup> Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1975), 270.

Only in September 1945 were the German police again allowed to carry arms. This decision had followed a lengthy debate in which the Control Council weighed the issues of manpower shortages, the need to maintain law and order, and their desire to continue punishing the Germans. At the root of the dilemma was that the troops were being redeployed or demobilized rapidly and as a result, the military argued it could no longer be held responsible for maintaining law and order in the zone. They would have to rely on the German police, and this meant that the DPs would have to respect their authority. Lt. Col. Roy Cochrane explained that “on many occasions military police and tactical troops have not given the German civilian police the moral and physical reinforcement which is vitally necessary to the performance of their duties.”<sup>23</sup> In order to remedy this situation, Lt. Col. Cochrane ordered that a Military Police Officer be on guard at all times in each German police precinct in order to “assist them as an ‘on-the-spot’ Army representative in quelling incidents and disorders.”<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, there had been numerous instances in which Military Police instead stood by and watched, amused, as German police attempted to handle situations involving the DPs for which they were not equipped to manage.

At the same time as the Germans were rebuilding their police forces, the DP camps were creating police forces of their own to keep order in the camps. The DP police were comprised of DPs representing the various national groups in each camp. They were responsible for enforcing UNRRA regulations, protecting UNRRA buildings and materiel, sounding the alarm in case of fire, accident, or disorder in the camps, and generally keeping law and order.<sup>25</sup> UNRRA strongly supported this move as it was an important form of rehabilitation – the DPs would be responsible for policing

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<sup>23</sup> Letter, Lieutenant Colonel Roy Cochrane, Assistant Adjutant General, Third United States Army, subject: Cooperation with German Police, dated 22 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:20 Field OPS File 8 “February 1946 – November 1946.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Report, Randolph K. Stone, Chief, Office of Protective Service, “History of DP Police,” p. 2, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 135.

themselves and keeping each other in line. This was a key form of responsibility, as UNRRA understood it, an important means of teaching the DPs to be responsible for their actions and also responsible to their communities. At first the DP police were trained within their individual camps, but in August 1946 a DP Police training school was opened in Schleissheim. The school offered a four-day course on proper police methods and it was run by military police officers from District Headquarters. The police officers were provided with uniforms, helmets, truncheons and flashlights.<sup>26</sup>

The debate over arming the German police was echoed in a similar debate about arming the DP police. In his July 1946 Monthly Report, the District Director noted that the question of arming the DP police remained a critical problem. He explained that there were several instances in which the DP police were at a distinct disadvantage because they did not possess firearms. “At several camps the DP Police have refused to accept the responsibility for guarding warehouses and supplies.”<sup>27</sup> They feared that people seeking to loot the warehouses would have weapons, and that their jobs put them in danger needlessly. If they had their own weapons, the DPs argued, they could defend themselves and the warehouses. They also believed that the fear of an armed response would deter thieves. While the tactical units of the military agreed to such a provision, the division commanders refused to provide the DP police with firearms. Although the reasoning is never clearly outlined, it appears that the American military commanders did not trust the DPs or their intentions. They worried that the DPs would use the weapons for other purposes, or even turn them against the military. They had only to turn to the crimes being reported each month as evidence. “Theft and pilfering continue,” one monthly report noted, “and reports of armed robberies have been received from Land Württemberg-Baden. Specific cases mentioned concern about armed bands of DPs of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> District 1 Monthly Report, 31 July 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.1:4 “Director’s Monthly Report 31 July 1946.”

Polish nationality. Several cases involving black market operations have been uncovered but the quantity of goods sold was not very great.”<sup>28</sup> As a result, the DP police were never armed.

Participation in the black market brought those DPs involved into direct contact with the German police. When pursued, DPs would typically race back to the camps where they resided. Both UNRRA and military reports highlight numerous incidents in the winter of 1945 and spring of 1946 in which the German police were used in large numbers in camp searches, known colloquially as raids. On 24 January 1946, German police entered the UNRRA camp at Wagenried twice. First, they arrived at 4 o’clock in the morning and asked to use the camp telephone. Then they returned three hours later, this time accompanied by U.S. military personnel. According to the UNRRA Director of Team 306, Joseph Berger, UNRRA was not notified prior to the raid. Berger explained that “the German police were rough,” and the “police impounded and removed from the camp properly acquired belongings of United Nations Displaced Persons, including articles properly issued to them by UNRRA for their use in accordance with Army directives.”<sup>29</sup> Berger argued that this search did not comply with military policy. In particular, he was concerned that UNRRA officials were not made aware of the search ahead of time nor were they present for the searches. They also objected to the timing of the raid, which was early in the morning while people, including women and children, were still in their beds.

The Americans soon faced a major backlash for allowing the German police into the DP camps, especially after a Jewish DP was killed by a German policeman during a raid at a Jewish DP camp in Stuttgart on 29 March 1946. When the German police entered the camp, the DPs rioted, and

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<sup>28</sup> Displaced Persons Monthly Report No. 8, UNRRA Central Headquarters for Germany, dated 31 March 1946, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>29</sup> Letter, Joseph A Berger, Director, UNRRA Team 306, to Commanding Officer, Anti-Tank Company, 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, APO 9, subject: Search at Wagenried Camp on 24 January, 1946, dated 25 January 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:20 “Field OPS File 8, February 1946 – November 1946.”

during the melee one of the DPs was shot.<sup>30</sup> The Jewish DP, Schmul Dancyger, had survived Auschwitz and Mauthausen and had only reunited with his family just before his death.<sup>31</sup> After this incident, German police were banned from taking part in searches of Jewish DP camps. Instead, the American military was responsible for pursuing suspects and maintaining order in the Jewish camps, alongside the DP camp police. UNRRA staff in Jewish DP camps strongly supported this move. In his report on another camp search conducted following the new rules concerning Jewish camps, Team 306 director Berger reported that he was generally satisfied with the methods followed, although some items remained missing from the DPs' possessions, including two watches and approximately 2,300 Marks. This time, the search was conducted by only American troops, not the German police, and UNRRA was notified ahead of the raid. Berger reported that "none of the residents has been arrested or charged in any way with crime or misdemeanor" and that the only illegal goods found were "two pistols discovered in a large unoccupied attic and an unoperational transmitting set discovered in a large unused cellar."<sup>32</sup>

American soldiers remained confused about military regulations regarding law and order in the DP camps. "In one detachment, in the opinion of the PSO [Public Safety Officer], he was not authorized to enter the camp without approval from the local Military commander," noted the Adjutant General. However, "[i]n other detachments the PSO's [sic] were of the opinion they could enter without any approval. This situation should be clarified."<sup>33</sup> In order to clarify military procedure, on 7 June 1946 USFET released Standard Operating Procedure No. 81 (SOP 81),

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<sup>30</sup> Cumulative Narrative Report, Maintenance of Law and Order, and Fire Control, 1 July 1947 to 30 June 1949, IRO U.S. Zone Germany, p. 2, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

<sup>31</sup> Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 176.

<sup>32</sup> Letter, Joseph A. Berger, Director, UNRRA Tea 306, to Mr. S. B. Zisman, Director, UNRRA District No 5, subject: Searches at E Caserne and Schluter DP Camps, Freising, made on March 15, 1946, dated 22 March 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:20 "Field OPS File 8, February 1946 – November 1946."

<sup>33</sup> Memo, Lt. Col. G. H. Garie, Adjutant General, to Director, OMG Bavaria, subject: Check and Search Operations in UN DP Assembly Centers, dated 22 July 1946, in NARA, RG 260, Box 91, File 1 of 2 "AG 383.7 Displaced Persons (Refugees, Expellees, Internees)."

Checking and Searching Operations in United Nations Displaced Persons Assembly Centers. The directive explained that only division commanders had the authority to conduct camp searches. In some special cases, such as the search of Jewish DP camps and those DP camps in American-occupied Berlin, only the Commander General of the Third U.S. Army had the authority to plan and conduct searches. The directive further declared that German police could be used in camp searches, but in cases involving Soviet or Jewish DPs, “German police or other German individuals may accompany US military personnel as individuals when they are required to identify persons involved in criminal acts committed outside centers or to identify material evidence incident to such acts.”<sup>34</sup> These policemen, however, were not acting in an official capacity. In cases in which German police were permitted to accompany US soldiers, they were required to be unarmed and limited to one or two in number.

According to SOP 81, the purpose of a search of a DP Assembly Center was to end any criminal activity that was known to be taking place in the camp either by halting black market activities, seizing illegal weapons or other illegal goods, or by apprehending criminal suspects, counterfeiters, or members of resistance organizations. In all cases the military authorities required either clear evidence or reliable information from a trusted source, although what this constituted was not further clarified. The criminal activity in all cases must have warranted a full search, not simply the arrest of the DPs concerned. The directive also required the military authorities to notify UNRRA of any searches. “Compliance with this provision,” the directive stated, “by the officer conducting the operation will include notification of the objectives, time, manner of conducting the operations, participants and other pertinent information.”<sup>35</sup> All troops involved were to be carefully briefed about their duties, as well as the status of United Nations DPs as “allies and neutrals” and their

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<sup>34</sup> Standard Operating Procedure No. 81: Check and Search Operations in United Nations Displaced Persons Assembly Centers, USFET, dated 16 May 1946, pp. 1-2, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 435.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 2.

corresponding rights. During the search of an assembly center, guards were to be posted at all exits and had the authority to detain anyone attempting to escape. Camp police were not permitted to take part in the search. If, in the course of the search, any DPs were arrested, they were to be handed over to the Military Commander, along with a file listing their offences. The directive warned that searches of DP camps “require the highest standard of discipline” and “[w]anton destruction of property will not be tolerated or condoned. Courteous, but firm dealing with United Nations displaced persons will be required by all commanders.”<sup>36</sup>

As a result of the arrest of ever larger numbers of DPs in the spring and summer of 1946, the question of where DPs awaiting trial would be held became a serious issue. While some DPs were returned to their camps, others were placed in German jails. There were several accusations of DP mistreatment in German jails, and this became an untenable situation that had to be corrected. Pre-trial incarceration was clarified in a revised statement on the Maintenance of Law and Order among United Nations Displaced Persons in August 1946. Those DPs arrested either inside or outside of assembly centers were to be surrendered to the director of the nearest Military Government Security Detachment for trial no more than twenty-four hours after their arrest. Taking into account earlier questions about the care of Jewish DPs, this directive clarified the procedure to be followed with regards to arresting Jewish DPs. The directive stated that persecutee DPs, including Jewish DPs, could no longer be held in German jails, but that instead:

military authorities having custody over such arrested displaced persons will cause them to be brought before the nearest summary court within twenty-four hours from the time of the arrest (Sundays and US holidays being excepted from the running of such time) for an immediate trial or for release on bail or recognizance, or under such other conditions as the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 4.

court may deem proper, or for remand to custody pending trial thereafter, as the circumstances may warrant.<sup>37</sup>

DPs not deemed persecutees could continue to be held in German jails pending trial, but the military authorities would inspect German prisons regularly to ensure that detained DPs were not being held for lengthy periods so that “no United Nations Displaced Person in being detained therein without arrangements having been made for trial before a proper tribunal and that no such person is being persecuted or mistreated by prison personnel.”<sup>38</sup>

The military also attempted to clarify the rules for sentencing DPs convicted of crimes. A July 1946 revised directive entitled “Repatriation of United Nations Displaced Persons Convicted by Military Government Courts” rescinded the sentencing structure imposed by SHAEF and substituted new rules that called for the repatriation of any DP sentenced to a prison term by Military Government Court. “United Nations Displaced Persons, except persecutees and stateless persons, convicted by an Intermediate of General Military Government Court and sentenced to a term of imprisonment are subject to be being repatriated regardless of their personal wishes.”<sup>39</sup> All cases involving the law and order of displaced persons, and in particular any cases involving firearms, were to be automatically heard by an Intermediate or General Military Government Court. In a trial involving an accused displaced person, “after pronouncement of sentence” the DP involved was to be permitted to “present any evidence at his disposal which would indicate that after being forcibly repatriated he would suffer an overall punishment disproportionate to the crime for which he has been convicted and far greater than that suffered by Germans for like or similar offences.” In the event that

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<sup>37</sup> Letter, Colonel George F. Herbert, Adjutant General, to Commanding Generals, subject: Maintenance of Law and Order Among United Nations Displaced Persons, dated 31 August 1946, p. 2, in UNA, Series 425, Box 45, File 6 “Security - Various Matters - Maintenance of Law and Order.”

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Letter, Brigadier General L. S. Ostrander, Adjutant General, to Third U.S. Army, OMGUS, Continental Base Section, and Berlin District, subject: Repatriation of United Nations displaced Persons Convicted by Military Government Courts,” dated 1946, p. 1, in NARA, RG 260, Box 168, File 5 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Vol. I OMG 1945-46.”

the DP was unable to present convincing evidence, the court documents would be sent to USFET, G-5 for review before any DP would be forcibly repatriated. If repatriated, case records of trial would accompany those being repatriated and would be “delivered to representatives of the receiving Government at the turnover point.”

The directive on sentencing explained that USFET would also organize a Central Detention Center in each Land in the U.S. Zone of Germany, including in Berlin and in the Bremen enclave, to hold all DPs sentenced to imprisonment. Under no circumstances were the DPs to be housed in German prisons. The U.S. Third Army would be responsible for the transport of convicted DPs to the Central Detention Centers. If the Court deemed forcible repatriation suitable, USFET would contact the DP’s national representative and organize their handover, along with an assurance that the DP would not be permitted back into the U.S. occupation zone. Along with the DP, the court files would also be turned over to the liaison officer. In cases where forced repatriation was not deemed acceptable, the DP would be returned to “the Director of the appropriate Office of Military Government for completion of the remainder of their sentence.”<sup>40</sup> Any displaced person could likewise volunteer for repatriation. The military hoped that these revised rules would deter the DPs from further criminal activities, and remove those who had been convicted of crimes from Germany.

Like the military, UNRRA hoped to deter the DPs from criminal activity. They too believed in the necessity of introducing a respect for German law amongst the DP population. This was a central aspect of rehabilitation as they understood it. UNRRA saw its primary goal as instilling a sense of responsibility in each individual, including responsibility for one’s actions. To this end, UNRRA focused its responses to crime in the DP camps on efforts to make each person responsible to the community at large. At first, each camp director was responsible for issuing minor punishment

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 3.

within the camp. These punishments included reduced rations and loss of certain privileges. Any infraction deemed worthy of a more severe sentence was to be turned over to the military. However, as part of the process of rehabilitation, and in keeping with the ideal of making the DPs responsible to their communities, several DP camps introduced Honour Courts. The purpose of the honor courts was to “mete out internal discipline on matters judged better left internal.”<sup>41</sup> They were peopled by camp residents, often including those DPs with some legal background, but also encompassing laymen, and they could hand out the same punishments as a camp director. Honor Court appointees were generally those camp residents whom everyone agreed would act fairly and impartially and who would generally work for the good of the community. In some instances these courts were later charged with overstepping their grounds by handing out harsher sentences than permitted. In December 1946 the Camp Court at Wolfrathausen was admonished for confining a nineteen year-old DP after several camp residents accused him of beating concentration camp inmates while a resident of Görlitz concentration camp. When the wife of the accused learned of his incarceration, she contacted the military, who in turn contacted the camp director. The accused was transferred to officials of the War Crimes Commission.<sup>42</sup> While the Honor Courts generally kept detailed documents and accounts of the trials they held, they appear only rarely in UNRRA’s reports. This is one of the few instances in which the camp honor courts are mentioned by UNRRA, and then only because the military became involved. It appears that UNRRA preferred to allow the DPs to mete out their own justice as part of the process of rehabilitation. It would be in keeping with UNRRA’s belief that this was an important means of making the DPs responsible to their community.

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<sup>41</sup> Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 99.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, Paul N. Winter, Acting Legal Adviser, UNRRA, to Mr. R. W. Collins, Deputy U.S. Zone Director, Division of Field Operations, subject: Mr. Carl Atkins, Deputy Director, UNRRA Dist. No. 5. – Request by G-5 TUSA for Investigation and Disciplinary Action, dated 10 December 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 6, File 25 “018 Legal.”

In cases where DPs were charged with crimes outside of the DP camps, welfare workers did their best to support the DPs involved. When DPs were charged and tried by military court, UNRRA officials could act as Friends of the Court. UNRRA's legal adviser, Paul Carter, explained that "UNRRA Team Welfare Officers or other designated Officers... act, as of the time of arrest of a Displaced Person, in the capacity of 'Friend of the Court' – viz., as a channel through which background information in an individual case, factual or influencing, may be had."<sup>43</sup> According to UNRRA's Friend of the Court Guiding Principles, the purpose of this position was to "assist in the expeditious and proper administration of justice."<sup>44</sup> A Friend of the Court could only be appointed with the permission of both the Military Government officer in charge and the DP's camp director. Once appointed, the Friend of the Court was "permitted a confidential visit with the accused at the place of arrest or detention." At that time, the arrest record and charge sheet would also be made available to the Friend of the Court. The Friend of the Court also had the power to secure the release of the accused into their custody, however in no cases was the Friend of the Court allowed to act as the DP's legal counsel. While respecting the authority of the courts, UNRRA wanted to ensure that the rights of the DPs were respected.

UNRRA's support for the maintenance of law and order did not, however, translate into a thorough reporting of all DP crime to UNRRA headquarters. At first there was no means of reporting on crime. In the first months in the field, UNRRA officers were focused exclusively on providing the means of survival for the DPs that resided in their camps. This meant that there was hardly any time at all to spend filling out reports for UNRRA headquarters. When they did find the time, they often did not have the means necessary to carry out what they considered the essential tasks, let alone

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<sup>43</sup> Letter, Paul N. Carter, UNRRA Legal Adviser, to Special Representative of Director General, subject: Penal processes in Germany as affecting Jewish Displaced Persons, dated 14 June 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 16 "013.6 Arrest and Trial of Displaced Persons."

<sup>44</sup> Friend of the Court Guiding Principles, UNRRA U.S. Zone Headquarters, dated 8 June 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3, File 16 "013.6 Arrest and Trial of Displaced Persons."

compile comprehensive reports. In many cases, they had to be creative. UNRRA welfare officer Susan Pettiss described registering new arrivals on her first day and providing them with meal tickets created using a rubber stamp carved out of an old automobile tire and an ink pad found in a stock room.<sup>45</sup> As well, in the first months UNRRA headquarters was unsure of exactly what information they wanted to collect from the field. According to UNRRA's memo "Reporting from Assembly Centers" from May 1945, initially reporting was confined to the official SHAEF form 'Assembly Centre Weekly Report.' The Centre Director was responsible for preparing this report, which provided only essential information, such as camp populations and housing shortages.<sup>46</sup> It was up to the individual officers to bring to the director's attention any important information or policy recommendations to be included in these reports. "It is hoped to achieve rather more comprehensive reporting at a later date," the memo concluded.<sup>47</sup> Initially, the reports focused primarily on counting heads.

In June 1945 UNRRA revised its directions for reporting from assembly centers and asked welfare officers to include a separate statement including statistical information and a narrative report on welfare services as an appendix to the director's report. The directions called upon welfare officers to "relate information to needs in such a way that requirements can be speedily and accurately evaluated."<sup>48</sup> The statistics were needed to help plan the welfare needs of different groups depending on age. Especially important was the breakdown of the ages of the children, who had very different welfare and supply needs depending on age. UNRRA headquarters also asked for a separate statement on the welfare of unaccompanied minors. UNRRA's field workers were clearly completely

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<sup>45</sup> Susan T. Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped* (Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2004), 53.

<sup>46</sup> Memo, Reporting from Assembly Centres: Guidance to Welfare Officers, Welfare Division, ERO, UNRRA, dated: 1 May 1945 in UNA, PAG 4/1.3.1.1.2.1:22 "Reporting from Assembly Centers."

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> draft, Reporting: Assembly Center Areas, Directions to Welfare Officers on the Preparation of Reports, dated: 6 June 1945, in UNA, PAG 4/1.3.1.1.2.1:22 "Reporting from Assembly Centers."

preoccupied with the all-consuming task of meeting the most immediate needs of the hordes of DPs passing through the assembly centres—food, shelter and medical care. The monthly reports referred to security, but only in passing. For example, in a September 1945 Displaced Persons Report, G-5 made a short note of the security procedures in each DP camp. “Most camps were guarded by the military,” they wrote, “only a few camps had set up their internal police force. The necessity for DPs to produce a pass in order to be allowed to leave the camps causes much criticism and dissatisfaction because the DPs contend that they are treated as prisoners while the Germans are enjoying complete freedom.”<sup>49</sup> In an October 1945 UNRRA Field Supervisor’s Report on conditions in Ulm, Field Supervisor Blackmore similarly noted that “[d]iscipline is generally good and security problems are not serious except that the recent removal of restrictions on liberty has resulted in the unauthorized entry of American soldiers. This situation is now under control.”<sup>50</sup>

UNRRA’s early reports may have touched on the security procedures being implemented, but they do not shed any light on the question of DP crime. One of the reasons for this was that UNRRA workers inside the camps had no first-hand experience of events beyond the camps. They were too busy working to feed, house and clothe the DPs under their care. When they heard about such things, it was always second-hand, usually from army officers. A second reason why there was no reporting of DP crime is that there was no standardized form for reporting it. It was not clear that this was the type of information that UNRRA headquarters was looking to collect. It was not until January 1947 that UNRRA issued an administrative order detailing how DP crime should be reported.

Administrative Order No. 213 outlined the process for reporting crimes, offences and serious security incidents committed by DPs. The order stated that any “UNRRA Officers who has received

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<sup>49</sup> Displaced Persons Report No. 42, Combined Displaced Persons Executive, G-5 Division, USFET, dated 13 September 1945, p. 1-2, in FNA, AJ 43, Box 78, File “Displaced Persons Miscellaneous Reports from Occupied Zones.”

<sup>50</sup> Field Supervisor’s Monthly Report, Team No. 127, Ulm, submitted by R.J.D.G. Blackmore, dated 17 October 1945, in UNA, Series 436, Box 15, File 8 “U.S. Zone – Field Supervisor – Mr. Blackmore – Reports.”

information on an incident will be responsible for preliminary checking of facts reported to him, for amplification of date and for immediately reporting the incident to the UNRRA Officer in charge of the installation.”<sup>51</sup> In cases where the threat of danger was imminent, such as riots, racial disturbances, assault, murder, rape, or fatal car accidents, UNRRA officers were instructed to submit a report by the fastest means possible to the Tactical Unit Commanders responsible for the region as well as the installation director. It was then the responsibility of the director to inform UNRRA District Headquarters. In cases involving theft, unauthorized use of firearms, sodomy, arson, forgery, suicide, embezzlement, willful property damage, or auto accidents where no one was seriously injured, the UNRRA officer was instructed to submit a report to the installation director, who would check the facts before forwarding a report on to the Military Tactical Unit. The administrative order included a Serious Incident Report Form attached, which asked for the date, time and place of the incident, as well as the details of what happened and who was involved. Over a year after UNRRA began operations, and scant months before its closure, UNRRA finally felt compelled to order the regular reporting of DPs’ crimes.

However, even once the welfare workers had the time and the means of reporting on crime, only rarely did it make its way into the reports which were submitted. While there is no clear evidence of why the welfare workers refused to report this crime, there were several possible reasons. Many welfare workers hoped that the DPs would turn themselves around, given the proper rehabilitation program. Criminal activity was just another form of delinquent behaviour that had resulted from the years under Nazi tutelage. Over time, they would learn to overcome these impulses and regain a respect for the law, the welfare workers believed. However, this would take time, and they did not want the DPs to be forever tainted by their actions in the early postwar period. As well,

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<sup>51</sup> Administrative Order No. 213, subject: Reporting of Crimes, Offenses and Serious Security Incidents, UNRRA U.S. Zone Headquarters, Heidelberg, dated: 23 January 1947, in UNA, Series 424, Box 13, File 7 “District 3 – Displaced Persons Camps –Incidents, Folder 1/2.”

welfare workers hated that the actions of a few DPs came to tarnish the reputation of the majority. As UNRRA District 1 Director Guy R. Coddling explained in an April 1946 report, the Army had to be dissuaded “that the DPs are not to be treated as criminals on a wholesale basis. We recognize that there are some DPs who doubtless are violating laws, but whole populations of DPs in camps should not be treated as criminals.”<sup>52</sup>

DP crime came to highlight an important instance in which UNRRA’s dual mandates of rehabilitation and repatriation came into conflict. Any time that crime was reported, it was noted in several places: in reports to the area and zonal UNRRA offices and to headquarters; reports to the military; and also in each DP’s personal file. Once a report was entered into a DP’s file, it could not be removed. Upon repatriation, these files were handed over to the liaison officers. The welfare workers worried that any evidence of misconduct could be used to condemn the DPs upon return. Stories of those DPs who had agreed to repatriate haunted them, as was the case with welfare worker Kathryn Hulme. “Even before Christmas we were reading the portents in the faces of some of our repatriated Poles who reappeared again in the camp, usually tough single men like Tak Tak Schon who had no families to impede their long nocturnal treks westward to the American Zone... They stayed only long enough to whisper their warnings to trusted friends and then disappeared.”<sup>53</sup> The welfare workers were aware that the political situation in Eastern Europe was even less safe for those who were forcibly repatriated. In cases where the DPs sought resettlement, any notes relating to criminal activity would surely hinder this prospect. Resettlement opportunities during UNRRA’s tenure were extremely limited, and any history of criminal activity only lessened these chances.

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<sup>52</sup> District General’s Monthly Report, District 1, submitted by Guy R. Coddling, dated: 29 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.11.3.0:60 II “Reports a) Regular and Special Reports. Zone HQ – Welfare – Relief Services. March 1946 – August 1946.”

<sup>53</sup> Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1953), 154.

“Applications will be considered only from persons who are sound from a security point of view,” the immigration guidelines made clear.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, UNRRA staff soon came to question and resent how the DPs were being treated by the military. UNRRA Legal Adviser Paul Carter reported that he had received informal reports that there was “an atmosphere of insecurity from arbitrary arrest and uncertainty as to pre-trial treatment among D.P.s in the Third Army area.”<sup>55</sup> He explained that the problem stemmed from the fact that “lower Army echelons regard Displaced Persons as an undesirable element unduly and disproportionately complicating disciplinary problems.”<sup>56</sup> He blamed their negative attitude on the fact that these personnel were largely new to Germany and did not understand the horrific circumstances that had brought the DPs to Germany in the first place, or the reasons why they could not return home. In the following month, Carter provided a more detailed account of the injustices. He explained that the most common procedural shortcomings included: failing to notify UNRRA that a DP had been arrested; refusing UNRRA personnel access to the accused during pre-trial confinement; confining DPs in German jail cells with German civil offenders; excluding UNRRA personnel from trials involving DPs; and a “general lack of an understanding on the part of Military Government Court officials of the service UNRRA personnel are in a position to perform as ‘friend of the Court.’”<sup>57</sup>

UNRRA District No. 5 Director S. B. Zisman likewise asserted that relations between the military and the DPs were a serious problem. Zisman attended a number of trials of DPs and

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<sup>54</sup> Displaced Persons Monthly Report No. 8, UNRRA Central Headquarters, dated 31 March 1946, in NARA, RG 260, Box 92, File 6 “AG 383.7 Displaced Persons Reports OMGUS 1945-46.”

<sup>55</sup> Letter, Paul N. Carter, Legal Adviser, to General P. Brown, Deputy Chief of Operations, subject: Reported Displaced Persons Disquiet and Apprehension of Arbitrary Action in Bavaria, dated 28 May 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3 File 16 “013.6 Arrest and Trial of Displaced Persons.”

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Letter, Paul N. Carter, Legal Adviser, to the Director of the U.S. Zone, UNRRA Zone Headquarters, subject: Legal Assistance for Displaced Persons, dated 1 June 1946, in UNA, Series 400, Box 3 File 16 “013.6 Arrest and Trial of Displaced Persons. “

concluded that “the general attitude of MG in this field cannot be termed friendly or sympathetic.”<sup>58</sup>

He explained that because Military Government officers used German personnel, the “attitudes developed are, as a result, wholly one-sided.”<sup>59</sup> Zisman also argued that relations with tactical troops could also be improved. While most Military Government units handed over those DPs caught after minor offences to UNRRA officials, in certain cases Military Government officials refused to follow this course of action for even the smallest of infractions. Zisman raised concerns that the local Military Government officer in Landsberg in particular was unable to “meet the difficulties of the situation with greater skill and understanding,” and recommended that he be replaced.<sup>60</sup>

UNRRA officials also worried that the military’s efforts to crack down on DP crime were having a negative effect on repatriation efforts. In an April 1946 memo concerning the search of repatriates, UNRRA District 5 Director S. B. Zisman explained that the baggage searches conducted on all repatriating DPs was having the effect of discouraging DPs from returning to their home countries. “Because of the adverse effect on the repatriation program,” wrote Zisman, “and also because I was not satisfied as to the procedure of the searches, I instructed Mr. Dawson, Director of Team 547 at Funk Kaserne not to carry on general searches, but to continue spot checks as might be necessary.”<sup>61</sup> Zisman argued that it was required that all searches be witnessed by UNRRA officials, and he asked that “full consideration would be given to the rights and feelings of the displaced persons who are citizens of allied nations, some of whom would be future citizens of the United

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<sup>58</sup> District 5 Monthly Report, S. B. Zisman, Director, District 5, to J. H. Whiting, Director, UNRRA U. S. Zone, dated 30 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:60 II “Report a) Regular and Special Reports. Zone Headquarters – Welfare – Relief Services. March 1946 – August 1946.”

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Memo, S. B. Zisman, Director, District 5 UNRRA, to Lt. Col. Glenn H. Gardner, D. C/s Displaced Persons 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, APO 9, subject: Searching of Repatriates, dated 22 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.0:20 Field OPS File 8 “February 1946 – November 1946.”

States.”<sup>62</sup> Zisman warned that the recent searches had taken on the character of a secret police search, and that while UNRRA was following a liberal policy in terms of what they allowed the DPs to take home with them, the military was then removing items from their luggage that they deem illegal. Zisman explained that those DPs agreeing to repatriation were already unsure of conditions at home, and that the food rations they had been granted were intended to assuage these fears. The same was true of those DPs who wished to bring the tools of their trade with them – so that they could be assured some form of livelihood upon their repatriation. While UNRRA was as interested as the military in stopping DPs from transporting unauthorized goods, Zisman argued, the American military should also keep in mind that “these people on the move are still considered to be citizens of Allied Nations, and are not assumed to be criminals or law-breakers until proved otherwise.”<sup>63</sup>

Alongside their worries about the military’s actions towards the DPs, UNRRA workers were also very concerned about the way in which the German police were treating the DPs. In a memo to UNRRA’s US Zone Director on 12 April 1946, District 3 Director A.C. Dunn explained that incidents in his District involving the German police were becoming increasingly alarming. He argued that the “German police are taking advantage of their restored authorities by persecuting DPs in true Nazi fashion.” Dunn noted that the evacuation of the DPs from their current installations to more “rudimentary facilities,” as part of the process of consolidating the camps, caused the DPs to worry that when UNRRA terminates operations, the DPs will be “left to the mercy of the Germans,” and they will certainly experience both “starvation and persecution.”<sup>64</sup> In his April monthly report, District 2 Director R. C. Raymond also warned that the German police were becoming an increasing problem. In particular, he worried about the effect of the order allowing armed German police to

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Memo, A. C. Dunn, District Director, District 3, to J. H. Whiting, UNRRA Zone Director, U.S. Zone Headquarters, subject: Special Incidents – No. 3 District, dated 12 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.1:14 “Special Incidents – DP Camps, 25 November 1945 – 7 May 1946.”

enter DP camps. Raymond explained that “[d]uring the this particular month there have been no serious outbreaks because of this, but we have been near to several, and everyone concerned feels that it is a dangerous procedure to allow armed Germans into camps.”<sup>65</sup> Raymond called for the immediate suspension of this order. He also argued that the American army was unfairly characterizing the DPs as black marketeers and the DP community as lawless and in fact using them as scapegoats. “In my opinion, the Army greatly magnifies the security problem presented by the D.P. and has made a serious error in allowing entry and search by German Police.”<sup>66</sup>

In some cases, UNRRA was also forced to deal with the problem of German officials working to discredit the DPs. In October 1945, Samuel Herman, UNRRA Field Supervisor for Regensburg, responded to reports that Jewish DPs were looting German houses in Neunberg for clothing for the coming winter. Herman asserted that “no looting or threat of looting on the part of the Jewish DPs” was taking part in his area, and also that the “Jewish committee in Neunberg had been very careful and successful in encouraging its members to maintain a correct attitude towards the German population.”<sup>67</sup> In fact, Herman explained, there were at least two instances in which the mayor of the town had attempted to discredit the community of Jewish DPs in his town. In the first instance, in August 1945, when the non-repatriable DPs were moved to a barracks from the private dwellings they were living in, the mayor informed the Jewish committee that they were being moved in order to repatriate them. “Little was done by Military Authorities,” wrote Herman, “to explain to the DPs that the order to move them to an assembly center was not a punitive deportation, but ...

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<sup>65</sup> Monthly Report, UNRRA District 2, R. C. Raymond, to J. H. Whiting, UNRRA Zone Director, dated 8 April 1946, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.1: 9 “District 2 Monthly Reports, March 1946 – June 1946.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Memo, Samuel Herman, UNRRA Field Supervisor, Regensburg, to Commanding General, XII Corps, and Commanding General Military Government Detachment E-204, subject: Anti-Semitic Campaign by German Officials in Neunberg v.W., dated 4 October 1945, in UNA, PAG 4/3.0.11.3.1:2 “Various Reports, Field Supervisors etc. EMD. July 1945 – Dec. 1945.”

designed to improve their living conditions.”<sup>68</sup> Then the Mayor posted signs throughout the town warning the Germans of the looting that was supposedly taking place. Herman explained that he believed these actions against the Jewish DPs were taking place because of “a lack of clarity in military policy,” and the Germans’ belief that “we can get rid of these Jews and make more room for the local population provided we can convince Military Government that they constitute a troublesome problem.”<sup>69</sup> Herman also explained that the town had been forced to take in an influx of German evacuees, and that this was one of the reasons for the change in relations with the Jewish DPs, with whom they initially had good relations in the months following the end of the war.

These reports on criminal activity highlight the increasingly complicated relationship between the Germans, the military authorities and the DPs. The military was forced to mediate between the Germans and the DPs, and the military played their role as chief arbiter reluctantly. Throughout UNRRA’s tenure in the DP camps, it is clear that the Military Government had to constantly balance the rights of the DPs and the Germans with their own powers and capabilities. While in the first postwar months soldiers on the ground were reluctant to prosecute DPs for their random acts of violence against the German population, their attitude changed in the fall of 1945 with the arrival of new soldiers and a renewed effort to restore law and order. The military soon turned to the German police for help, first reinstating disbanded police forces and then allowing these forces to rearm. As the military came to rely increasingly on German police for help in combatting crime, and in particular black market trade, the DPs came into increasing contact with the German police. There were numerous instances of raids of DP camps which led to rioting on the part of the DPs and displays of force from the German officers. While the military attempted to limit these confrontations

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

by instituting new procedures for the search of DP camps, they did nothing to assuage the fears of the DPs over punitive treatment from the Germans.

As a result of their fears over military and German actions, as well as any future repercussions for the DPs involved, UNRRA welfare workers were hesitant to report crime at all. Reports of incidents such as the case of stolen water from the barrel designated for fire prevention are rare finds in the UNRRA files. These episodes were simply not reported. Welfare workers were often conflicted over their competing mandates of rehabilitation and repatriation. Any reports of crime would follow a DP long after they had left Germany: if they repatriated, their file travelled with them; if they sought resettlement, criminal activities would almost certainly hinder this possibility.

What UNRRA wanted most was for the DPs to behave themselves. They wanted the DPs to take responsibility for their actions. They believed that the power of both the DP police and the Honor Courts would work to encourage the DPs to behave themselves. However, when efforts to encourage community responsibility failed to halt criminal activity, UNRRA was at odds as to how to respond and, even more importantly, how to treat those DPs that continued to refuse to comply. This was, UNRRA soon learned, simply not a social norm that the DPs shared or were willing to accept. As Atina Grossman explains, the DPs' "most obvious—and to a military administration, most frustrating—symptom, was an intense 'dislike of authority.'"<sup>70</sup> UNRRA wanted to make it clear that the DPs had to once again learn to respect the law, even if it meant the law that was enforced by the German police. This is precisely where they ran into the most difficulty; for many DPs, there could be no respect for German authority. When a DP committed a crime against a German, many DPs believed that the Germans were only getting what they deserved. As Tony Judt describes,

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<sup>70</sup> Grossman, *Jews, Germans and Allies*, 152.

the desire for retribution also addressed a deeper need. For most Europeans World War Two was experienced not as a war of movement and battle but as a daily degradation, in the course of which men and women were betrayed and humiliated, forced into daily acts of petty crime and self-abasement, in which everyone lost something and many lost everything.<sup>71</sup>

For UNRRA, this proved one of the most trying issues to face. Any attempt to instill respect for the law in Germany was, at best, an uphill battle, at worst, a lost cause. They soon found that rehabilitating the physical person was not nearly as difficult as rehabilitating the conscience.

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<sup>71</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 41.

## Conclusion

The first steps are the most important—they are the foundations on which all subsequent relief or reconstruction are based. Initial organization can make a refugee either into a helpless recipient of food and clothing (a true ‘victim’ of relief) or into a self-reliant, disciplined member of a naturally resurgent community.<sup>1</sup>

When the military authorities first organized the displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany at the end of the Second World War, they expected these camps to house the DPs for only a short period, before they were all repatriated to their countries of origin. However, by the fall of 1945 it became clear that several hundred thousand DPs would not return home, and that the DP camps would continue to be their homes. The military, whose primary focus had been on providing relief (namely food, shelter and medical care), now handed over administration of these camps to UNRRA. UNRRA saw their task as one of relief as well as rehabilitation. The DPs’ wartime experiences required not only the healing of physical wounds, but also counseling in order to heal the unseen scars left by the war.

The DP camps in the American occupation zone of Germany were overseen by UNRRA welfare workers, recruited primarily from the class of professional social workers that had emerged in the United States in the interwar period. Social workers believed that the purpose of their work was to help people become self-sufficient, and to stimulate self-reliance. In order to achieve this goal, social workers drew upon their expertise, and especially on their understanding of social norms and deviations. Social norms were seen as desirable social activities and as features of a self-sufficient life. In contrast, deviations were understood as undesirable social activities, and included any actions that might inhibit the capacity of the individual to organize his own normal social activities. In other

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<sup>1</sup> Bertha Bracey, quoted in Francesca M. Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos: Recollections of Relief Work in and between Three Wars* (London: John Murray, 1944), 274-5.

words, social workers were concerned with the deviations from the social norm that prevented an individual from properly socializing.

As trained social workers, UNRRA's DP camp officials brought these ideas of socialization with them into the DP camps, and they worked to reintroduce the social norms that they believed the DPs had forgotten during the war. There had been no use for the rules of polite society during the war, either in a German factory, or in a concentration camp. In fact, those social graces in many instances meant your death. Life was a struggle, and only the strong survived. After the war, however, these social norms were once again necessary. UNRRA wanted to re-introduce the DPs to these social norms so that they could be successfully reintegrated into their home countries once they were repatriated.

UNRRA workers were at first very idealistic in their plans for the DPs. They came into the field with a very well-developed concept of what they believed the problems would be and how they should address them. From their previous training, they brought a specific set of social norms that they sought to encourage. They began by focusing on housing arrangements. They believed that the most effective way of reconstructing DP families was by providing them with their own private dwellings. Life in the barracks where the military had originally housed them was not appropriate; only privacy could allow each family the time and space to normalize relations. Second, UNRRA turned its attention to personal hygiene. Welfare workers were very concerned about how the DPs looked and how they were taking care of themselves and their living space in the DP camps. Next UNRRA turned to questions of work ethic. They wanted to teach the DPs how to take pride in their work once again. They wanted the DPs engaging in constructive work in the DP camps. The key word here was constructive. Participation in the black market was not constructive; in fact, it was asocial. It kept the DPs on the fringe of society, which went against UNRRA's goal of reintegrating

them. Education was also very important to UNRRA. If the DPs did not have education, did not have skills, then they had to be taught them. Finally, this process of socialization also involved bringing back a respect for the law, both criminal law and civil law, which included such matters as registering births and marriages with the local registrar. A respect for criminal law included an understanding that the black market was not a productive part of society, and therefore that all trade within it had to be ended.

Once in the field, however, the welfare workers soon modified their plans to meet the changing conditions; their planning had failed to account for **both the practical obstacles facing them** and the DP response to their efforts, and as a result they had to take a more pragmatic approach. Overall, UNRRA met with varying levels of success in each aspect of the rehabilitation program. UNRRA's plans for rehabilitation through housing and for educational programming were strongly supported by the DPs. The housing plans involved providing the DPs with as much privacy as possible. In particular, they were focused on providing DP families with their own living quarters. They believed that this was an important part of the process of postwar normalization: after the war, housing each family separately would allow the DPs to reestablish normal familial relations in a way that was not possible if families and single people were all housed together in large barracks, and the DPs strongly agreed. Similarly, the DPs strongly supported UNRRA's efforts to organize educational programs for children and adults alike in the DP camps. The DPs believed that it was important to provide children with educational opportunities, especially since many had not attended school throughout the war years. In fact, educational programs offered the DPs the chance to not only take part in UNRRA's programs, but also to organize these programs for themselves. UNRRA saw this as an especially important form of rehabilitation because it made the DPs active participants in their own care. Similarly, the DPs were also interested in taking part in vocational training opportunities for

adults. These programs provided the DPs with skills that they could then take with them when they left the camps, and they were likewise organized by the DPs themselves, with administrative help from UNRRA.

UNRRA had less initial success with their plans concerning personal hygiene and acceptance of civil law procedures. Once in the field it became clear that the American welfare workers did not share the same understanding of personal hygiene social norms as the DPs. Their prewar lives and wartime experiences left many DPs unfamiliar with American understandings of personal cleanliness and hygiene as brought into the field by the welfare workers. As a result, UNRRA was not reaffirming a prewar understanding of personal cleanliness, but in fact teaching the DPs to see personal cleanliness differently than they had previously. **UNRRA also had to face the very practical challenge of not having access to the necessary supplies that were required in order to keep the DP camps, and their inhabitants, sufficiently well-presented. As a result, this was a slow process, and one which required lectures and reinforcement in order to bring the DPs on side alongside continual demands that the military supply the necessary cleaning and personal hygiene supplies.** Nevertheless, less than one year later the DPs had largely accepted the importance of personal cleanliness as evident by the fact that they no longer failed the military's inspections of their camps. A second area which required some work on the part of UNRRA was in encouraging the DPs to accept the importance of following local civil law provisions. According to international law, if the DPs wanted their births, deaths, marriages and divorces recognized anywhere else, they had to register with the local authorities. In Germany, this meant registering each of these life events with the German Registrar, who then provided the DPs with the corresponding legal documents. This was particularly important for DPs whose relationships during and after the war had led to the birth of children. UNRRA wanted to ensure that the rights of parents and children alike were protected, and

the surest way of accomplishing this was by ensuring that each family member had a clearly identifiable nationality. **Again the welfare workers had to face the practical challenges facing the DPs: in many case they did not possess the legal documents required, such as passports and birth certificates. As a result, in many instances the DPs met with serious difficulties.**

**Nevertheless, there were also many instances in which these practical constraints were overcome, and the DPs were successful in their efforts to register their marriages and births.**

While at first the DPs were skeptical of the necessity of registering their marriages, UNRRA officials successfully encouraged them to register legally and they did so because it suited their purposes.

UNRRA had the least success implementing two additional parts of their program: rehabilitation through work and respect for criminal law. UNRRA believed that an important aspect of rehabilitation was providing the DPs with opportunities to take part in constructive work. During the war their work had been expropriated, they had been slave labourers. After the war, UNRRA recognized that they would have to work hard to once again instill in the DPs the importance of work. In the first months, many DPs took part in camp administration, working in the camp offices, kitchens, and infirmaries, and on camp wood-cutting and maintenance teams. However, this did not provide enough jobs for the entire DP population. Efforts were made to organize work projects outside of the camps, in local German firms, but UNRRA soon recognized that DP wartime experiences left them unwilling to work for Germans, or to contribute to German reconstruction in any way. As a result, the only successful work projects were those which the DPs organized in the camps. There were many examples of successful enterprises begun by the DPs, but the DP camps never reached full employment.

Similarly, UNRRA was never wholly successful in its efforts to encourage DP respect for criminal law. At the heart of their understanding of social norms was the welfare workers' belief in

the importance of respect for the law. The DPs resented the forced labour they had provided for the German economy during the war and the many injustices that they suffered, and they concluded that they were entitled to punish the Germans for their experiences. In the first postwar months this meant looting, assault, robbery, and even instances of murder. When the American military began to clamp down on DP crime, these relatively spontaneous outbursts increasingly turned to two more organized forms of crime: participation in the black market and rioting. Many DPs did not see anything wrong with taking the few goods in their possession (including their share of the Red Cross parcels which they received in the DP camps) and trading them on the black market. In fact, many DPs saw this as an extension of the prewar commerce in which they had been involved in their home communities. UNRRA and the military both saw participation in the black market very differently. For UNRRA, participation in the black market was asocial, it was not productive work, and it would only hinder the reintegration of the DPs into their home communities. **For the military, DP involvement in the black market hindered their efforts to control prices in the short term, and to reconstitute the German economy over time as well.**

Based on UNRRA's uneven success with the various aspects of the rehabilitation program, it is clear that the DPs approached UNRRA's efforts critically. When the DPs agreed that the social norms were in their best interest, they adopted them wholly; when they could not see the benefit, they refused UNRRA's efforts to impart them. For their part, UNRRA welfare workers approached the DPs as they would have approached any social work client in the United States: as an individual with unique strengths and distinct needs. The welfare workers did not take into account the social and political organization that came to define so much of their lives in the DP camps even as the DP committees worked to represent their own group's unique interests, whether they were fighting against Soviet repatriation efforts or demanding restitution from the Germans. **As Anna Holian**

**makes clear, while UNRRA did sort the DPs into camps according to ethnicity, they also believed that all DPs shared similar challenges that required similar solutions, failing to recognize that the DPs divided themselves according to their ethnicity and asserted their claims according to their separateness, not their shared identity as DPs.<sup>2</sup> For the DPs, their identity was strongly tied to their ethnicity. This was in marked contrast to the increasing emphasis placed by Allied governments, the military and the aid organizations on each DP's individual history. As Daniel Cohen explains, "access to the DP world became increasingly dependent on a decipherable and convincing narrative of persecution."<sup>3</sup> Group identity was no longer the sole criteria for eligibility, but instead only one factor taken into consideration during the many screenings which took place. Each DP was now responsible for proving themselves worthy of receiving care, and they did this by demonstrating that they held valid objections to their repatriation.**

Regrettably, UNRRA failed to connect with the DP committees in their rehabilitation efforts. They chose not to approach the DP leadership of each group for help in implementing their plans. Part of the reason for this was that the DP committees came onto the scene relatively late from UNRRA's point of view. During the planning phase, they had expected the DPs to be largely apathetic, requiring extra encouragement to take part in any group activities. This proved not to be the case, and in fact the DPs were in many ways more vocal and demanding than UNRRA had anticipated. They had certainly not expected the high level of political mobilization that the DP committees achieved. By the time that the DPs were well organized, UNRRA had put in place the broad outlines of its rehabilitation program, and did not alter it even as the DP committees became

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<sup>2</sup> Anna Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 49.

<sup>3</sup> G. Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 34.

increasingly important partners in the management of the camps. A second reason why UNRRA failed to connect with these committees was because the DPs themselves soon learned that the military authorities were the ones who made all of the political decisions, and therefore the military was the group to approach with their complaints. While UNRRA was responsible for their day-to-day care, the DPs soon saw that the welfare workers were not in a position to influence policy, and therefore directed their protests towards the Military Government officials who were. As a result of this lack of contact with the DP committees, the welfare workers did not benefit from the high level of organization that already existed amongst the DP population. Instead, they chose to approach each DP individually, hoping to provide a plan of rehabilitation that took into account each person's unique strengths, but failing to connect to the political mobilization that was taking place simultaneously.

In all aspects of rehabilitation, UNRRA was constrained by its relationship with the military authorities. This was particularly true for plans that required additional supplies. UNRRA's idea of how to house the DPs was severely limited by the wartime destruction and the fact that the military controlled the assignment of all housing. In order to provide the DPs with the housing hoped for by UNRRA, the military would have to remove the local German population, something that they were unwilling to do. In some instances DP families were provided with individual dwellings, but for the vast majority of DPs, housing was either in former army barracks or other large, open buildings that were easy for the military to monitor. Similarly, UNRRA's efforts to instill their understanding of personal hygiene were restricted by the lack of cleaning supplies in the DP camps. American military inspectors of the camps chastised the DPs and UNRRA staff alike: the DPs for failing to keep their persons and their dwellings at the level of cleanliness expected by the military; and the UNRRA workers for not instilling these ideals in the DPs quickly and thoroughly enough. The military

refused to take into consideration the fact that the DP camps were severely undersupplied, especially in terms of simple cleaning products like soap, toothbrushes, and lye for cleaning. Only in the early part of 1946 did supplies begin to arrive regularly in the camps, and soon there were far fewer problems with camp inspections. Similarly, UNRRA's education, vocational training and work programs were all severely limited by a lack of supplies. UNRRA soon turned to the voluntary agencies for help in locating supplies for the educational programs. They were less successful in their efforts to encourage the military to provide raw materials from German stocks for DP use.

The continued care and maintenance of the hardcore DPs, those who refused repatriation, came to a head in the fall of 1946. UNRRA could not continue to care for the DPs indefinitely; the cost was too high, and the international support was no longer there. It was clear that if the DPs would not agree to repatriation, then a program of resettlement was needed. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union strongly opposed any move to allow UNRRA to alter its mandate. They continued to call for the return of their nationals, regardless of DP wishes. As a result, in the fall of 1946 plans were underway for a successor agency to take over for UNRRA, one that would have the power to work towards resettlement as well as repatriation. In December 1946, the constitution of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was presented by the United Nations Economic and Security Council, a move vehemently rejected by the Soviets. While handover from UNRRA was scheduled to take place at the end of 1946, this was later adjusted to 1 July 1947. On this date, the IRO took responsibility for the nearly 560,000 remaining displaced persons in Germany.<sup>4</sup> With a substantially reduced budget from that available to UNRRA, the IRO set out to further consolidate UNRRA's DP camps so that a minimal of international staff would be required to administer them. The IRO

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<sup>4</sup> Laura J. Hilton, "Prisoners of Peace: Rebuilding Community, Identity and Nationality in Displaced Persons Camps in Germany 1945-1952" (PhD. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 2001), 199.

inherited many of the same staff members, and also UNRRA's policies and procedures, based on their years of experience running the DP camps.

In its four years of existence, UNRRA came to redefine the landscape of international aid. As an international organization with no previous institutional experience and a staff whose training was ad-hoc and inconsistent, UNRRA's work ensured that rehabilitation has become a central aspect of humanitarian work. UNRRA was never entirely successful in its rehabilitation program; it encountered numerous obstacles along the way. Since then, other organizations have worked to build on UNRRA's model and improve the chances for a successful integration of refugees into their societies, whether they return home or settle abroad, and while understandings of what comprises rehabilitation may have changed since, UNRRA's work brought to the forefront the importance of rehabilitation alongside relief. While many agencies have since continued to administer relief alone, rehabilitation has now become a central part of the dialogue. As the British Quaker Bertha Bracey made clear, UNRRA had succeeded in ensuring that the discussion surrounding aid, whether in Europe's postwar DP camps or under the care of other organizations since then, has included the provision of welfare services which encourage individuals to become self-reliant, disciplined members of their communities, and not simply "helpless recipients of food and clothing."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bertha Bracey, quoted in Francesca M. Wilson, *In the Margins of Chaos: Recollections of Relief Work in and between Three Wars* (London: John Murray, 1944), 274-5.

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