

060

*Elston, Charles*  
WOMAN, SARAH

Elston, Chas.



28 DEC 1945

Obo Wahn, Samuel

Hon. Charles H. Epton  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Charlie:

I have seen your letter of December 10 to Governor Lehman enclosing one from Rabbi Wohl, and with the Governor's permission, I am taking this opportunity to write you personally.

I know something of the conditions which exist in the various Displaced Persons camps in Germany, as well as the frustrations and heartaches experienced by individuals who want to do a good job. I can assure you that from my own observation, the vast majority of the camps are well run and the people are given the best facilities available and practicable. As you know, there is very little in the way of good living accommodations left in Germany so that UNRRA and the Army have had to select old Army camps and institutional buildings in order to house the displaced persons adequately. In some places we have been able to get a few of these people into German homes but most of the homes in the large communities suffered seriously from destruction so they are not what one would call available for housing displaced persons.

Specifically the Landsberg incident was a product of frustration and disappointment brought on by cramped housing conditions which resulted from the influx of refugees from some of the surrounding areas. As soon as these matters were called to the attention of the Army by UNRRA authorities, everything possible was done to make them more comfortable. We have assurance on the following points:

1. That there is no danger from epidemics.
2. That the overcrowded condition was corrected very promptly through the securing of additional shelter. Much of this is now a thing of the past.
3. That the diet is well balanced and each person receives 2,500 calories per day.
4. That warm clothing is provided for the people as they enter the camp. Although there has been a shortage, this has been in the process of correction for some time.

✓ x obo Epton, Charles

✓ x 400 Goble, Lee (Re)

✓ x Landsberg Camp 657

✓ x Summary 640 (June)

✓ x obo Smith, Buckel (Gen)

✓ x Landsberg Camp 510 (32009  
551 (criticism))



In a situation like this UNRRA and the Army have joint responsibility and it is unfortunate that an UNRRA employee would be so critical when it is his responsibility to carry most of the burden of providing supplies even though the Army has the basic responsibility for securing them for us. The difficulties which the Army encounters both in transportation and securing supplies of a kind needed are always passed on to UNRRA and UNRRA officials in Germany must develop a persistence of effort rather than a capacity to complain in public. This has been emphasized over and over again and I am sure that most of our employees recognize their full responsibility in this regard.

You can assure Rabbi Wohl, and I will be glad to do so personally, that everything possible has been done and is being done to meet the needs of people who have suffered so seriously under Hitler. I have seen this effort and can testify to it.

With kind personal regards and best wishes for the New Year, I am

Sincerely yours,

Fred A. Hochler  
Director,  
Division on Displaced Persons

FH:hochler/rm

26 December 1945





28 DEC 1945

Rabbi Samuel Wohl  
Wise Center  
Redding Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Samuel:

Congressman Elston has sent a copy of your letter of December 6 to Governor Lehman and I took advantage of this opportunity to write to Charlie Elston and also to send you a copy of my letter to him which undoubtedly you will receive via his office.

The next time I am in Cincinnati I shall see you and tell you firsthand some of the things which I have witnessed in Germany myself. I think you ought to know that this staff from Governor Lehman on down is deeply concerned about conditions in Germany and some of the things which people have to face there, but the destruction and serious shortage of necessary supplies have made the Army's problem and ours very difficult. Every possible effort is being made to improve this situation and it is going forward rapidly every day. Our great hope is that these people might find a home somewhere and that those who cannot return to the country of which they are nationals find settlement elsewhere.

With kind personal regards and every good wish for the New Year, I am

Sincerely yours,

Fred K. Hoehler  
Director,  
Division on Displaced Persons

FKHoebler/rm



## INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM



TO H. E. Caustin  
FROM Herbert H. Lehman

SUBJECT Attached letter from Congressman Elston

DATE 13. December

Will you please have a reply prepared for my signature to the attached letter from Congressman Elston. While we have not received any detailed advices, we have had cabled reports from General Gale or General Morgan regarding the Landsberg Camp. If these reports are not sufficient on which to base a reply, I would suggest that you get a copy of the article which appeared in the New York Tribune and the New York Times giving General Smith's report. This article should be enough to send to Elston's correspondence.

*HLL*

Attachment

*Immigration*

*Mr. Cohen*

*I assume you have all the material necessary regarding the Landsberg Camp. Could you please draft the reply. Col Jackson and Dandson should see it first. I think*  
*H. E. Caustin 15/12*



# Generals Inspect Camp for Jews, Rebuke Its Head

Conditions Generally Good,  
Except for One Barracks,  
Smith and Truscott Find

LANDSBERG, Germany, Dec. 6 (UP).—Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, heading a high-ranking American Army investigating commission, today rebuked the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration supervisor of the Landsberg Jewish displaced persons camp for conditions he found in one barracks.

The investigation showed, however, that conditions at the camp generally were good despite a shortage of staff attendants, and it was believed that better liaison between the camp, U. N. R. R. A. headquarters and the Army would result.

After the investigation, Dr. Leo Srole, welfare director of the camp, withdrew the resignation he had sent yesterday to the U. N. R. R. A. and Army headquarters in protest against conditions.

Smith, who is chief of staff of American forces; Lieutenant General Lucien Truscott, 3d Army commander, and their staffs rode in a train all night through a heavy snowstorm to investigate Srole's charges at once, including his warning that an epidemic was imminent.

## Notices Bad Odor

Smith noticed a foul odor from one barracks.

"You as camp supervisor should be ashamed," he told A. C. Glasgow. "I can say no more. The stink speaks for itself."

It developed later that Glasgow had only ten men to handle 6,200 Jews, long oppressed, starved and sometimes tortured, who in some cases lacked strength or initiative to help themselves. In the barracks in question the floor was used as a toilet convenience.

It was understood that in its tour the commission was inclined to agree that:

1. Conditions in the camp were bad and in some cases horrible, but Jews able and willing to seek clean quarters had them.

2. The camp was overcrowded, partly due to the arrival of friends and relatives of internees after fleeing from Poland.

3. Red tape in U. N. R. R. A. and the Army had slowed handling of urgent camp requests for aid. Part of the blame was held to attach to U. N. R. R. A. headquarters at Munich for not properly impressing the Army with the urgency of the situation.

## Inmates Hard to Handle

4. Local U. N. R. R. A. workers have tried hard to get improvements, but in some cases failed to make their requests in writing.

with the county clerk. Under Connecticut law the couple must wait five days before the marriage ceremony.

Wearing a black hat and white scarf and muffler, Mr. Manville waited more than an hour for Miss Campbell at Grand Central Terminal, amid confusion that resulted in blocking passengers and annoying policemen. He paced from one gate to another only to find that Miss Campbell was not on any train she was supposed to be on. Escorting police appeared slightly disturbed because of a crowd trailing Mr. Manville.

Finally the couple met. Miss Campbell, twenty-seven, a native of Kent, England, explained that she had arrived early and had been walking around looking for Mr. Manville.

and accepted oral refusals without pressing higher authorities.

5. Some inmates are difficult to handle and refuse to work. An eighteen-year-old internee was quoted as saying: "Why should I work? I have got the rest of my life to do that." The difficult cases have been oppressed so long that they have given up.

6. Crowded conditions are partly due to the refusal of some inmates to use double-decker bunks or do manual labor.

7. Heating is excellent and food is good. A middle-aged internee complained to Smith: "Why should we eat black bread when Germans eat white?" Many American soldiers eat black bread, as do most German civilians. Many soldiers prefer it.

8. The clothing shortage apparently is not acute. Counter-intelligence reports say that some inmates sell their issued clothing and blankets on the black market.

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# ARMY FINDS CAMP OF JEWS CROWDED

Reports, However, That Inmates, Some UNRRA Officials Are Responsible for Conditions

LANDSBERG, Germany, Dec. 6 (AP)—High-ranking United States Army officials, investigating the displaced persons camp here, today found 6,200 homeless Jews jammed into a space designed for 4,200, with many living in filthy conditions. They placed much of the blame on the Jews themselves as well as on the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration officials operating the camp.

The inspection group was headed by Lieut. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith, United States Chief of Staff in the European theatre; Lieut. Gen. Lucien K. Truscott, United States Third Army commander; Maj. Gen. Albert W. Kenner, surgeon general for the European theatre, and Simon H. Rifkind, United States Army adviser on Jewish affairs.

Accompanied by a score of news correspondents, they came here by special train from Frankfurt-on-the-Main through a snowstorm to investigate charges by Dr. Lee Srole, the camp's welfare officer, that the inmates were under-fed, ill-clothed, overcrowded in unfit quarters and menaced by the threat of a "disastrous epidemic."

## See No Danger of Epidemic

After a day-long inspection, the Army officials asserted there was no imminent danger of an epidemic.

Unsanitary conditions in many of the barracks were appalling. Human defecation littered the floor of some of the rooms. When General Smith saw this, he turned to the UNRRA camp director, A. A. Glassgold of 222 West Twenty-third Street, New York, and said:

"I would be ashamed."

Later he told a committee of camp inmates that "you folks are



not doing your part to keep the place sanitary."

General Smith also attributed much of the overcrowding to Jews who were slipping unauthorized into the United States zone from the British and Russian areas at the rate of nearly 3,000 weekly. Nearly 80 per cent of them are coming from Poland.

### Repatriated Poles Return

General Smith estimated that 90 per cent of the Jews repatriated to Poland were returning, with many bringing their relatives.

General Kenner said the food at the camp was adequate, though monotonous and too starchy. He said that he had found no evidence of malnutrition. He also said that he had found that the Jews were warmly clad, though short of undergarments. All quarters, he added, are sufficiently heated by stoves.

General Smith told the inmates' committee that the Army would seek additional housing, the lack of which he attributed partly to the UNRRA officials for their failure to make proper requisitions in writing.

Reports that many real deficiencies were caused by the inmates trafficking in the black market with their supplies were discounted by both Army and UNRRA officials, although they admitted some black marketing had been going on.

Dr. Srole, who announced his resignation yesterday in making public his charges, said tonight that he had reconsidered and would remain on the job.

### Say Some Reuse to Work

LANDSBERG, Germany, Dec. 6 (UP)—It was understood that in their tour the commission inclined to agree on other points, including the following: (1) that inmates who were able and willing to seek clean quarters had them. (2) That some inmates were difficult to handle and refused to work. An 18-year-old internee was quoted as having said: "Why should I work? I have got the rest of my life to do that." (3) That crowded conditions were due in part to the refusal of some inmates to use double-decker bunks or do manual labor.

UNRRA

# INCOMING TELEGRAM

NUMBER:

Unnumbered

FROM:

Frankfurt

DATED:

9/12/45

RECEIVED:

10/12/45 - 3:25 a.m.

From Margolin Frankfurt cable Number 081600.

Herewith extracts from memo General Smith to General Morgan about Landsberg Camp conditions: "No typhus cases have developed. Our Chief Surgeon after complete inspection informs me that if instructions issued by this Headquarters are carried out there is no danger of a typhus epidemic. Adequate supplies of DDT are available as are all necessary vaccines and serums for inoculation and immunization. There is however danger of epidemic of typhoid and dysentery due to complete disregard of elementary sanitary precautions in some parts of the camp." Then he describes filthy conditions found in some parts of camp. He also comments on fact that Dr's wouldn't work to clean up camp. Camp Committee promised General they'd clean up camp if given tools such as brooms, disinfectants, etcetera on subject overcrowding General comments on refusal campers to sleep doublebunk style because such doublebunking was like Concentration Camp. This psychiatric problem but General gave orders for immediate doublebunking. General said "The Hospital which was excellent was well below capacity in patients and many more sick people could be accommodated" charge of underfeeding was answered by General thusly "there is not the slightest evidence of malnutrition in camp. The population generally is well nourished even fat - the diet is adequate and certainly contains the 2,500 calories per person per day prescribed for this theater and is more than French civilians



are receiving at present time. 'Tis definitely monotonous and more meat should be provided. I tasted the luncheon menu which consisted split pea soup, potatoes, meat hash, white bread, coffee. Meat in hash almost infinitesimal. Camp Committee protested against smallness of bread ration which is little more than half large loaf white bread per man per day. All Inspecting Officers shocked at food waste. Garbage cans filled with potatoes untouched slices white bread and other foods of noon meal all of which palatable and well cooked. Taste this kind not permitted any military mess and obvious from contents garbage can that camp inhabitants were not hungry. I did not see single individual who lacked warm clothing. I considered residents of camp well dressed. All had warm overcoats some furlined, heavy shoes or boots and warm hats. There is serious shortage underwear and shortage socks, towels. Adequate supplies available and Camp Authorities have been informed of measures necessary to procure. There has recently been shortage of blankets for undetermined causes. 6,000 on requisition and supplies have already begun to arrive. Except for these shortages allegation completely without foundation. The various officers who inspected camp were indeed appalled at evidence of ineffectiveness as indicated by comments to allegations mentioned above. The Directing Staff are educated cultured well-intentioned people whose desire to do a good job in assisting the remnants of a persecuted race is unquestioned but in all of my service I have never found such complete ineffectiveness along lines of Administration of large group of people concentrated one area. Any Junior Officer or noncommissioned Officer of the Army with 2 or 3 years service would cope more effectively with conditions outlined above than these gentlemen have done. However they are making progress. Present Camp Director impressed me most favorably. While he lacks experience this kind of work he is learning fast and during relatively short tenure office had done great deal. I believe that he will develop into good Administrator but is quite useless to expect inexperienced people to take over problem this kind and handle it successfully. They completely ignorant most elementary principles command which inevitably must be applicable to any group human beings concentrated under supervision in restricted area. The excuse given for unsatisfactory conditions mentioned above was that residents of camps had been persecuted and their moral fibre had been destroyed and that under no conditions can be directed or ordered to do anything even simpler things necessary for health and sanitation of community. They even disregard most flagrant violations by individuals of basic sanitation principles which might threaten welfare and health community at large.



UNRRA

# INCOMING TELEGRAM

-3-

There was lack of knowledge and imagination on part of Administrative Staff of rudiments organization. They were ignorant relationship UNRRA personnel working this zone to Military Commander responsible for care Displaced Persons. They knew little or nothing about channels of requisition and felt that they were as they termed it repeatedly up against blank wall when request of local authorities was not met satisfactorily and promptly. Requisitions for heavy clothing have been excessive and when I suggested possible excessive demands by individuals I was informed by representative Jewish Distribution Committee that any check of personal clothing was considered invasion rights individuals. When I pointed out that justification of definite need was only payment asked by unistates for clothing and other items furnished without charge to DP's 'twas evident my viewpoint not understood. On other hand field of recreation and welfare where 'tis expected former social worker might excel accomplishment Camp Directors have been excellent. There is first class vocational school in operation with woodworking, blacksmith, machine, radio repair shops. Academic classes extremely good. Small Rabbinical Seminary in process establishment. Recreational facilities unusually good. Coffee shop and recreational assembly room very attractive well furnished, bright, artistic, cheerful. Facilities available for entertainments movies, concerts. This direction Camp Director deserving high commendation. Summary: I and other General Officer satisfied

- (a) That there is no danger serious epidemic except that inherent in failure of residents of camp themselves to comply with basic sanitation requirement.
- (b) That camp is overcrowded. This condition being corrected as rapidly as additional shelter can be provided and could be corrected with present available facilities if intelligent regrouping or redistribution of resident population be made.



(c) That present diet adequate reasonably well balanced and contains required 2,500 calories per person per day. However it is monotonous and capable great improvements with slight addition meat and few minor luxuries.

(d) That all residents of camp have warm clothing adequate for winter conditions but that there is considerable shortage undergarments and socks. This being corrected."

Last two paragraphs deal with black market rife among camp residents. Camp Committee admitted same stating residents swapped what they received for shoes other items not provided regularly. General Smith has given permission to do anything we saw fit with report. Army may release it. I feel it's Armys show not ours.

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(FREE BOOKS)

UNRRA

# INCOMING TELEGRAM

NUMBER: Unnumbered  
FROM: 1 Frankfurt  
DATED: 7/12/45  
RECEIVED: 8/12/45 - 4:20 a.m.

Cable number 071505.

Landsburg Camp protest accompanying resignation Doctor Leo Srole, Team Welfare Officer, 95 percent unfounded. Srole resigned to American Press. UNRRA never received resignation. I got copy through friend. When General Bedel Smith held Press Conference he gave Srole statement to press which seeking headlines only ignored generals admonition thereby must draw no conclusions until investigations completed. He added that Army had corresponsibility with UNRRA DP Operations unistates zone. I accompanied as UNRRA observer 12 correspondents to Landsberg leaving Frankfurt special train with General Smith Wednesday Night, arriving Landsberg Thursday morning. General Smith made complete investigation holding court in Camp Directors office for nearly 3 hours with press present. Others present General Lucian Truscott, Third Army Commander; General White, Corps Commander; General Albert Kenner, Surgeon General Theatre, assorted AMG Officers, AC Glassgold, Team Director; Srole, Helen Matouskova, Field Supervisor; Sam Zisman, Regional Director and Team Medical Officer. After close question by General Smith Glassgold admitted that requests for food supplies, housing were never made in writing; that when he was turned down by Lowly Officer he just folded without taking to higher authority. General Truscott cited example his approving written request from UNRRA which had been disapproved by all lower eckelons concerning additional housing in Munich for badly overcrowded Landsberg DP's. Discussion



between team and General Smith got down to blankets and underwear. General Smith told team he didn't think they were aggressive enough in their dealings with Army and told them to be most obnoxious people possible to achieve their justifiable wants. General Smith made clear that UNRRA people in unistates zone were "working for the Army" adding "I don't think you've been aggressive enough. Send copies of your requests to higher commands" and make certain you put everything in writing. Questioning disclosed that only one UNRRA team request in writing and that one General Truscott approved. General Smith made thorough inspection seeing best and worst. He impressed with camp but told team and Committee of DP's later in afternoon during conference in private railroad car they've got to clean up camp. He promised DP Committee attempts would be made by Army to vary ration but pointed to Army's own supply problems here explaining unistates Army personnel had first fresh meat in 19 days this past week. During course of both camp and train interviews Judge Simon Rifkind, Special Advisor to Supreme Commander on Jewish DP problem was present and participated in questioning. He said conditions in Landsberg when he visited two months ago nearly perfect but influx of infiltrators from Poland worsened conditions causing General Smith to call situation "emergency". General said that until Army's prime function of "rescue" was completed because of added influx (DP's now bringing back relatives too who never were DP's) nothing in Welfare or Vocational Field could be done by Army but DP's would have to shift for themselves on that score. When DP Committee met with General Smith he approved for farming classes, limited Kosher killing for Orthodox DP's and thousand brooms, soap, for Committee to clean up camp. Surgeon General report was that camp was not (repeat not) in epidemic stage or threatened epidemic. Committee told that unistates Army would unofficially permit continued influx Polish Jews to DP Camps as humanitarian gesture but all must be registered as health measure. General opinion of correspondents was that Sroles charges unfounded and tempest in teapot. I agree that score but do not agree with needling correspondents particularly AP reporter that Bedell Smith said UNRRA to blame. Wish you'd tell AP in New York to stop sending police reporters here who always looking for unfounded sensation headline. Larry Rue of Chitribune along to needle unination generally. His story would be same if he

stayed behind. Responsible press association officials should be made to understand that is not story every time screwball dissatisfied UNRRA employee makes charges it is headlines. Such situation arose with Czech warehouse worker who worked in French zone 23 days, turned out to be lunatic and then tried to sell his expose UNRRA to London newspaper. We trying to do everything we can here but don't dare talk with some correspondents in explaining things to them because they'd quote us immediately. This particularly true AP men here who are worst offenders.

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(SECRET BOOKS)

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32009

Dist. 9:20 a.m.  
sc - 11:45 a.m.



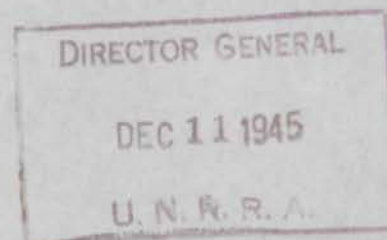
Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

Washington, D. C.

December 10, 1945

*DP-Cohen*

Mr. Herbert H. Lehman, Director General  
United Nations Relief and Rehab. Admn.  
1344 Connecticut Ave.  
Washington, D. C.



Dear Mr. Lehman:

I have received from Rabbi Samuel Wohl of my Congressional district, a letter copy of which is enclosed herewith.

The article to which Rabbi Wohl refers concerns the resignation of Dr. Lee Srole, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Welfare Director for the Landsberg Displaced Persons Camp. Dr. Srole charged that "disastrous epidemic conditions" threaten thousands of lives among the 6,200 Jews there. In submitting his resignation, the article further stated that Lt. Gen. Walter B. Smith, chief of staff of American Forces in Europe, said the Army did not admit their truth and that an investigation was being made.

In order that I might advise Rabbi Wohl of the results of the investigation made by both the War Department and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, I shall appreciate receiving the results of any report on the subject made available to you.

Sincerely yours,

*Chas H Elston*

CHE:mlj  
Enc.

32009

THE ISAAC M. WISE TEMPLE

K.K.B'nai Yeshurun  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Rabbis  
James G. Heller                      Samuel Wohl

December 6, 1945

Hon. Charles H. Elston  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Congressman Elston:

In this morning's Cincinnati Enquirer, under a U. P. date of December 5th, from Frankfurt, Germany, appears a shocking story concerning mistreatment of Jews by the army at a German camp. Attached is the dispatch as it appears in the Enquirer.

I write this letter to you that you may, as a representative of the people, speak and act for me, and for millions of other Americans who are outraged by such a miserable performance. You are now in Washington at the source of American policy and American power. It cannot be that the Congress of the United States will permit people to die after liberation because of inhumanity, and because these people are trapped, when it is our bounden duty to see to it that pledges are kept. This, too, is a result of the iniquitous British White Paper, which barred the doors of Palestine to these victims.

I hope that you will take the appropriate action to investigate and energetically follow through a policy that will bring about effective action.

Most respectfully yours,

SAMUEL WOHL, RABBI