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I now have the real pleasure of presenting to you Dr. Olga Feinberg. She has been the director of the Hashid Camp in Aden for the last two years.

Dr. Feinberg has just arrived in this country from Israel to visit our offices and to see all her friends, after an absence from the United States of almost 22 years.

Before she speaks to us, I would like to tell you a few things about her, because I really believe this is one of the most amazing careers I have ever heard of:

She was conducting a most successful medical practice in Chicago before she decided to move to Palestine, where she became a pioneer settler in 1927. She carried on work in that country for a number of years before moving to India. Two years ago, while enroute from India to Palestine, she stopped over in the British Protectorate, and there found hundreds of Yemenite Jews, some living in the streets and others in the squalor of the Hashid Camp.

She was so horrified by what she saw that she stayed there and cabled to Dr. Magnus in Jerusalem, volunteering her services for the JDC's work.

Dr. Magnus accepted her offer, and she became Director of the Hashid Camp.

The JDC will be everlastingly grateful to Dr. Feinberg for the splendid job she has done on behalf of the refugees in that part of the world. She is able to be with us today because of the fact that the problem in Aden is well on its way to solution. Several thousands of Yemenite Jews have been transferred by the so-called Operation Magic Carpet.

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While she was in Aden, Dr. Feinberg, supervised the airlift operation, which evacuated the Hashid Camp.

I know she will have a great deal to tell us about this in her remarks, and I now have the great pleasure of presenting Dr. Feinberg to you.

Report by Dr. Feinberg to the Aden Committee
March 1948
~~DR. FEINBERG:~~ I am very happy to see all of the friends who have helped us and who have made my work in Aden so much easier.

I came to Aden, as your chairman has explained, purely by accident from India, where I had to go from Israel for a while. On my way back, I found the people living in miserable conditions.

I did not know who these people were when I walked through the streets.

It is not just Aden. The area I am speaking about ~~it~~ is greater. Aden is only the coast where the government offices and government buildings are. Aden is where the Jews and the other native peoples live, but the area is much greater.

It is very congested, too. The streets were narrow and like a ghetto.

When I found these people on the sidewalks, living in the middle of the streets and everywhere, I did not know who they were, because the women were not dressed like Jewish women. Until I saw the men with the locks on their temples, I did not know they were Jews.

I saw misery which I could not believe possible. I could not believe that human beings could live like that. I was told there were worse places, but I could not think of anything worse.

I went six miles from Aden to a small Arab town where Jews were living and had been living for generations. Their forefathers were born there. They were more or less in a normal condition, but they were

living in a place built for cattle, with a high wall of mud, and in the middle were just little partitions. There were 475 people crowded in there, men, women and children.

To me, these were even worse conditions than I saw in the streets of Aden, because at least those people ~~were~~ living in the streets ~~in~~ were in the fresh air. Of course, at night they had to go inside because the police would not leave them on the sidewalk.

That place was packed. The people were packed in like herring, and it was much worse than the streets of Aden.

Finally, after I searched for a representative of the Jewish Agency, to find out what had been done and what could be done about it, I found that there was a camp with a thousand people more, and why those people were in the camp and not in the streets was something I found out later.

I went over to the camp, and I found that the doctor who had been there from the Jewish Agency and the nurse were supposed to leave the next day, because they had to go back to Israel.

Another doctor, who has supposed to be sent from Israel, had not come yet. He had been held up and could not come.

I was not too well, not well enough to accept any heavy work, but when I saw those conditions, I forgot my own pains and sent a telegram to Dr. Magnus, volunteering to help those unfortunate people. Dr. Magnus was very happy to have me, and I remained there.

My first aim was to take the most miserable ones from the streets in Aden, the children and the women to the camp. It was not very much of an improvement, but it was somewhat better than the streets.

In the camp they had only huts of straw mats, and there were two wooden houses, one supposed to be for the staff and the other one I was assigned for the little hospital. That was all.

Then I started to take the people from the streets to the camp. I found only 1,000 people in the camp, but soon I had 2,000. Finally they were coming from Yemen by dozens, children, orphans who were saved by the Jewish people there, who took them away because, under the laws of the Government of Yemen, each child left without a father is put in a police camp. There were a few Jews there in Yemen who took any child who was left without a father out of the city and collected these children in bunches and sent them over to us.

That made about 400 more, so we had 2,400.

All these things were not so easy to do, but, thank God, we did it.

All the materials were very hard to find. We had to get them from the Arabs, little sticks and straw mats, and things like that. We also had to get food from the Arabs. Only the more staple foods, like flour and sugar and beans and so on we could get from the local government.

I had arranged with the government to get enough supplies. Of course, they were limited pretty much on everything, but we got as much as possible to keep all these people alive.

Everything was going quite satisfactorily until the pogroms.

The doctor who was supposed to come arrived, but soon he was recalled for some reason. I was left all alone, without a nurse and

without an administrator.

Dr. Magnus sent word to me that he could not get anyone.

* They were trying to get someone for Cyprus and they could not get anyone.

It had to do the best I could. I trained some girls in the camp and some boys to help me, and there were two teachers, one from the Jewish Agency, who helped me in every way to administer the camp.

Besides all my medical work, I had to go to the government representatives to get all kinds of things.

Unfortunately, to our great sorrow, the pogroms started in December. We had no telephones because the government said we must not have anything permanent, and not only did we have no telephone, but we were not supposed even to build a row of mud bricks. So we were actually cut off from the world, and when the pogroms started, we did not know until lorries packed with women and children came into the camp, and then we found out what had happened in Aden.

These lorries were full of wounded who were in an awful condition. Soon we had 700 people from Aden. Here I was alone.

Not long after that, other lorries came, and the people were brought to the camp. Their houses had been burned, and some of the people were killed, and those who remained alive were brought in.

Soon we had over 1500 people thrown into the camp in addition to the ones already there. These people came in two days. None of them had so much as a piece of bread.

I had no help. I was without a nurse, without even enough bandages and medicines to take care of them. It was such a mess.

We could not go any place. We could not go with the car, because it was not safe. We could not call in help, because there was no telephone, and we had to take tablecloths and sheets to make bandages, and we did what we could about medication.

This went on for three days, until some officials from the government came out to see us. It happened that the Governor himself came, asking me whether I was the sister of a woman who lived there who had been killed. I told him I was not killed, and that I was here. There were rumors that I had been killed.

Our contact became very, very cordial, and nothing I wanted, nothing I asked him for was ever refused. It was fortunate that my relations with the Governor were very, very good.

We could not get supplies, so the Governor ordered some Arabs to bring us all the supplies from the government office that we needed.

There was another man, a very charming person, a Scotchman named Dunn. We had to collect some children from that little town, children whose mothers and fathers had been killed, leaving them in the street. I asked Mr. Dunn to take me there to see what I could do, because I knew there were a lot of children. He took me in a lorry, and I found the children in the streets. This man, Mr. Dunn, had gotten milk and fed them in the street, and we brought them to the camp.

The conditions were awful. It is hard to describe them unless one sees them with his own eyes. We had a mass of people, wounded, one baby being born in one corner in the camp, another dying in another corner, a third bleeding to death. I was alone but in spite of the difficulties and the distress, I think we did well.

We did not lose too many lives, and those were people who could not have been saved anyhow.

Then came the question of food. Aden itself is not such a big place, and we were getting all our supplies from the countryside. The Arabs were afraid to go for supplies, because they said if they supplied the Jews they would be killed too, so they could not do it.

I had to ask the government officials to give me some men, and I went myself. As an American, I was regarded with more respect, and I went with some lorries to collect some supplies.

Meanwhile, there was danger to the camp itself. We did not know what would happen to the camp. We had a barbed wire enclosure with almost 4,000 people, and if even 100 Arabs attacked, they could kill all the people. There was not even a telephone to report it.

With great difficulty, because they did not have enough weapons, they did not even have police, they managed to give us some kind of security, some guard around the camp. We did not have a stick in our hands to defend ourselves.

The Governor was very good in this respect, and we were sent some forty men to watch us.

I arranged for eight hundred men from the camp itself who watched day and night in turn, watching around the camp inside.

These people, of course, could not have done much if we had been attacked with guns. However, at least it was something, and I collected the women and children around my little hut, the wood house.

In the other wood house, which was supposed to be a hospital, I had only 35 beds there, and I had to put 95 people in there. Every foot of space on the floor was taken.

And so we were going on until we saw that we were more or less safe. The Arabs did not come to the camp. They did not have anything to loot, and that is the reason I think they did not come.

Then, when everything was settled, I had to establish some provisions for the maternity cases, because babies were being born; life was going on. We did not have anything except these straw mats. The government kept telling us we must not have anything permanent. Finally, after some months, I got a telephone and I got permission to build up something from local bricks, and our own people from the camp did the building, and I made some kind of a little maternity ward, a house where I could treat my cases.

Also I afterwards built a shelter for the babies, training girls to take care of the babies and teaching them.

We had our three rooms where we lived in the wood house, and by and by another teacher came, and later came one administrator. We had no room for them, so we had to build something for all these people to live in, to keep them there.

It is remarkable that in spite of all this, in spite of all that misery, in spite of this lack of food, which we could not even get with money, and the primitive way of living altogether, these people have lived, although in a terrible condition. We carried on in a way that even surprised me.

It was impossible to think that a baby could be delivered somewhere in the corner of a mud hut or a little tent on the floor, just putting a blanket around the corners, because the children had to live there, although the man could go out.

I had one case where I kept the mother and child from dying. I could not explain it. It was not my skill; it was God's help.

Soon we had help, medicines and vitamins, which came from America and from Israel. We could give the people vitamins and medicines, and we could give them better food.

The teachers were marvelous. They kept the children in wonderful shape. You could never believe it, that in two months they were all speaking Hebrew and singing Hebrew songs.

We tried to arrange things to cheer up the people a little bit, with all this misery, and we had shows with Hebrew texts, and the boys and girls were marvelous at it. They took to it very quickly and learned things by heart, even though they never knew a note, never knew of such things in their life. We had shows and even Hebrew dances. We taught them. They are born singers and dancers, and we taught them some of the Hebrew songs and Hebrew dances, and it was absolutely wonderful.

So, with all our worries and sorrow, we had a little pleasure in seeing how these children were growing up, healthy, strong and with a wonderful spirit.

Their only hope was to go back to Israel. Of course, they have never seen anything of Israel except from pictures, but they have lived with the spirit, and their only hope is to go to Israel. That will

be the day of their dreams.

I thought with all the suffering I have been through, all the distress was worthwhile.

I must thank all of my friends, you people who have made it possible to do such a wonderful thing, to take these people out of their miserable conditions.

I want to say that another airplane came from the continent, and the children all went out, and all of them started to sing and dance, all of them dancing the same thing, the Horra, as if they had known each other for years and years.

It is due to your efforts that you have made my life so much easier and so much better, bringing up these wonderful children, who I am sure will be an asset in the future to Israel.

My thanks to you ~~who~~ have helped us so much.

(Applause)

I must excuse myself for being so sentimental, but I could not help it.
