

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH JEWS

100574

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE November 1, 1944

TO Mr. Lesser
FROM Mr. McCormack

At your request I explored the possibility of securing for the Federation of Polish Jews in America a speedier method of transportation than is being afforded them by Russian War Relief, Inc. Unfortunately, neither War Shipping Administration nor the Air Transport Command is in a position to offer their facilities. From all I have been able to learn the Federation now has available to them the only transportation to Russia available from this country. The American National Red Cross is currently engaged in shipping some ten to fifteen million dollars' worth of medical supplies to Russia for their armed forces. The Russian Government itself is interested in seeing to it that these supplies go forward quickly, and they are going forward in the same bottoms that would be afforded to the Federation of Polish Jews in America.

In connection with this proposed medical and food program for the Polish Jews in the Lublin sector, I learned from a telephone call from Mr. Seymour Prince in New York (the Prince Company) from whom the JDC purchased 5,000 of our 15,000 parcels in August, that his firm had contracted with the Federation of Polish Jews in America to supply 300,000 food parcels. Mr. Prince explained that he was having a great deal of difficulty with the governmental agencies such as FEA, WPB, and War Food Administration in fulfilling the contract. He told me that neither Russian War Relief nor the Federation were very active in helping him cut through some of the red tape to make this program a reality.

In an effort to expedite this very worthy program of the Federation, I talked with Mr. Ringland of the President's War Relief Control Board only to learn that that agency was in the best position to lend the greatest amount of assistance in expediting this program. The President's War Relief Control Board has been given an emergency allocation of food which is prorated to all of the private agencies registered with them and established procedure for a program, such as that undertaken by the Federation, requires that the details of the program should be supplied to the President's War Relief Control Board who would follow through with such agencies as FEA, OPA, WPB, and WFA in the interest of getting the program under way in the shortest possible time. Mr. Ringland intimated that this was his first knowledge that the Federation was interested in a project of this nature and urged me to call Mr. Blumenstock's attention to the fact that it would be necessary for the Federation to clear through them. Such a procedure would eliminate the difficulties now confronting the packer and expedite the shipping of the goods. I telephoned Mr. Blumenstock and made him aware of these requirements, and at the same time told him that he was to feel free to call upon me to assist him in the event that he runs into difficulties when he comes to Washington on Friday of this week. He expressed satisfaction at this assistance from the Board and disclaimed knowledge of the requirements of the President's War Relief Control Board.

EBM

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EMANUEL CELLER
10TH DISTRICT NEW YORK

MEMBER OF
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON SECRETARIES:
BESSIE EFFRAT MARGARET BROOKS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

NEW YORK OFFICE:
1450 BROADWAY
NEW YORK CITY

1524 NEW HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON

NEW YORK SECRETARIES:
JACOB GRALLA MARY DOUGHERTY

New York, Oct. 24, 1944

Hon. John W. Pehle
Exec. Dir. War Relief Board
Treasury Department Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Pehle:

This letter will introduce to you Mr. Morris Blumenstock, of the American Federation of Polish Jews, a well regarded and representative organization.

Mr. Blumenstock desires to speak with you concerning the dreadful conditions confronting the Jews in Lublin, Warsaw and other stricken Districts. I bespeak for him your kindest consideration.

With cordial greetings and kindest regards,
I am

Sincerely yours,

Emanuel Celler

EC:MAD

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AUG 1 1944

Dear Mr. Myer:

Attached is a copy of a telegram dated July 31, 1944, from the American Federation for Polish Jews in which they request permission to meet the boat bringing the 1,000 refugees to this country. A copy of our reply is also enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

A. Gene Laughlin

Anne Laughlin
Special Assistant
to the Executive Director

Mr. Dillon Myer, Director
War Relocation Authority
Barr Building
Washington, D. C.

Enclosures

Copy to: Miss Laughlin

Laughlin:ma 8/1/44
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AUG 1 1944

Gentlemen:

We can readily understand and appreciate the interest of the American Federation for Polish Jews in the expected arrival of the 1,000 refugees coming to this country from the refugee camps in Italy.

The refugees at the point of debarkation and until they reach Fort Ontario will be the responsibility of the United States Army. Representatives of the War Relocation Authority and of the War Refugee Board have discussed with representatives of the Army the possibility of permitting interested persons to meet the boat at the port. It is not possible for the Army to grant this permission and I am confident that you can understand the decision. We regret that we are not in a position to grant your request.

Visitors will be permitted at Fort Ontario, and I suggest that you write to Mr. Dillon Myer, Director of War Relocation Authority, for permission to visit the Shelter. The administration of the Shelter is the responsibility of the War Relocation Authority.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

American Federation for
Polish Jews
New York, New York

Envelope addressed to:
225 West 34th St.

Copy to: Miss Langhlin

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Langhlin:man

7/21/44

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JT NEWYORK NY JUL 31 QORR EQEP

W PEHLE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT WAR REFUGEE BD

1944 JUL 31 PM 4 09

WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST PERMISSION FOR ~~RERE~~ REPRESENTATIVES FROM
 THIS ORGANIZATION TO MEET ARRIVING POLISH JEWS AMONG THE ONE
 THOUSAND REFUGEES ARRIVING HERE FOR REFUGE AT FORT ONTARIO
 THIS FEDERATION IS CENTRAL BODY REPRESENTING AMERICAN JEWS
 OF POLISH DESCENT AND HAS FOR LAST 35 YEARS BEEN ACTIVE IN
 ALL MATTERS AFFECTIVE INTERESTS OF POLISH JEWRY WOULD
 APPRECIATE PERMISSION TO MEET BOAT BRINING REFUGEES TO
 AMERICAN PORT

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH JEWS.

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August 1, 1944

Dear Dr. Kornfeld:

Your telegram, addressed to Mr. Pehle, requesting permission for a representative to meet the ship bringing the refugees to Fort Ontario has been referred to Mr. H. H. Tozier, public relations director of the War Relocation Authority, who will handle press arrangements covering the refugees' arrival. You will hear from Mr. Tozier in regard to your request.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Virginia M. Mannon
Public Relations Division

Dr. I. Kornfeld, Editor
Polish Jew
American Federation for Polish Jews
225 West 24th Street
New York, New York

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*Am Fed for Polish Jews
225 W 34 St*

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JT NEWYORK NY JUL 31 1944 313P

J W PEHLE, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1944 JUL 31 PM 4 03

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE PRESIDENT WAR REFUGEE BD

POLISH JEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO INTERESTS OF POLISH
JEWS AND OFFICIAL ORGAN OF AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH
JEWS REQUEST PERMISSION FOR ITS REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET
BOAT BRINGING REFUGEES AMONG THEM MANY POLISH JEWS FOR
TEMPORARY HAVEN AT FORT ONTARIO

DR I KORNFELD EDITOR POLISH JEWS.

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Amended for Polish Jews

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE April 1, 1944

TO Mr. Pehle
FROM Mr. Abrahamson

*Handled
JST*

Attached is a copy of a memorandum prepared by Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. You will recall that a few days ago the Secretary expressed interest in this organization and that a brief memorandum was submitted. This longer memo is in the nature of a fuller report.

I shall appreciate the return of this report when you are through with it.

all

100582

March 1944

Memorandum Prepared By

COUNCIL OF JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND WELFARE FUNDS
165 WEST 46th STREET
NEW YORK CITY

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH JEWS
225 West 24 Street New York City

The American Federation for Polish Jews was incorporated in New York State in 1908 as a central organization representing several hundred societies (landsmanshaften) of Jews of Polish origin. It conducts a program of organizational and educational activity whose aim it is to stimulate and mobilize the interest of Polish Jews on behalf of their compatriots abroad. A monthly publication, "The Polish Jew", serves as a channel for disseminating information about Jews abroad and for maintaining contact among the local societies.

In addition to its organizational program, the Federation has, at various times, undertaken special activities in order to provide assistance to Jews in Poland. From 1935 until the outbreak of the war, funds were raised annually for transmission to Polish philanthropic institutions. After 1939, and until the liquidation of the Polish ghetto in 1943, some assistance was sent through cooperation with the Polish Government in Exile. The Federation has also taken some responsibility for assisting Polish-Jewish refugees in their adjustment in the United States.

Present Program

1. The Federation acts as spokesman in the interests of Polish Jewry. In this connection representations have been made, in cooperation with the American-Jewish Conference and the World Jewish Congress or independently, to UNRRA, Polish Government in Exile, Polish War Relief, etc. It appealed in a similar capacity to the American public by publishing, at the end of 1943, "The Black Book of Polish Jewry", a record of Nazi persecution of Polish Jews, based on documents coming for the most part, from underground sources. The volume, is being distributed on a wide scale to all members of Congress and to other public figures. The cost of publication was about \$25,000.

2. The Federation maintains an information bureau which is used by Polish Jews in the United States, and which, through correspondence, maintains contacts with Polish Jews in Canada, North America, Africa, Asia and European countries. The location of relatives is a major function of the bureau. At the request of relatives in the United States, refugees are traced through the International Red Cross and through the Polish Government in Exile, with whom the Federation maintains a close contact. Lists of names received by the Polish government are, in turn, made available to the Federation, which then attempts to locate relatives here. Advice is also given by the Federation to relatives who wish to send packages or prepare affidavits for immigration visas. (See Comments).

The above information is privileged and is for the use only of person or organization addressed.

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3. The Federation transmits to the Jewish Agency for Palestine orders placed by relatives here for the sending of packages to refugees in Soviet Russia. For the most part, relatives pay the cost of these packages. About 20 parcels per month are sent at the expense of the Federation (about \$5 per parcel).

A warehouse is maintained where old clothing is being gathered and stored. Most of the clothing will be used when facilities become available after the war although some articles are being shipped now when opportunities for shipment arise.

Organisational Structure

An annual convention of representatives of the Landsmannschaften elects the officers and Administrative Council of the Federation. The work is administered by a staff of three professional and three clerical workers. District officers are maintained in eleven cities. These are served by volunteers, but clerical salaries are paid by the national office.

Officers

- President - Benjamin Winter, N. Y.
- Vice Presidents - New York:
 - Jacob Brown
 - Mrs. A. F. Kaplan
 - Jacob Leichtman
 - Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum
 - Nathan Marshaw
 - Benjamin J. Weinberg
 - Abraham Wurman
- Out-of-Town
 - Sol Perleger, Philadelphia
 - Arthur Rabinovits, Boston
 - Isidore Mallin, Detroit
 - Nathan E. Korn, Chicago
 - Jacob Gottlieb, St. Paul
 - Karl Trangle, Minneapolis
 - Aaron Levinstone, Newark
 - Sam Perke, New York
- Treasurer -
- Chairman Advisory Committee - Hon. M. Malcolm Fertig, New York
- ~~Chairman Administrative Committee~~ - ~~Moses Leavitt, New York~~
- ~~Chairman Executive Council~~ - ~~David L. Kahler, N.Y.~~
- Director - Morris Blumentook

Finances

Funds are raised from the societies, Polish-Jewish congregations, and from individuals through a mail appeal. The Federation does not appeal for welfare fund support.

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Income and expenditures for the fiscal year ended May 31, 1945 are given below. The budget for the current year is about \$60,000.

Income and Expenditures

(based on certified financial audit)

INCOME

Contributions		
Individuals	\$38,330	
Societies	9,834	
Synagogues	4,045	
		<u>\$49,209</u>
Total		

EXPENDITURES

Functional Service		
Information Bureau	\$ 7,130	14
Foreign Relief	5,178	10
Refugee Relief and Social Service	3,504	7
Publicity and Education (including monthly journal)	9,928	20
Organization of Landsmannschaften	5,171	10
General Administration	12,228	25
Fund raising	8,508	46
		<u>700</u>
Total	<u>\$49,645</u>	

Cumulative deficit as of June 1, 1945 was \$6,381.

Comments

The activities of the Federation in the fields of relief, refugee aid or other forms of social service are incidental to its major program and account for less than a third of its budget. The social welfare activities are in the fields of organization in which such agencies as the Joint Distribution Committee, the Hias, the National Refugee Service, etc. are engaged. There is no objection to these supplementary efforts provided that fund-raising methods are not in competition with the efforts or resources of the established organizations in the overseas relief and welfare field. Widespread appeals for relief funds outside the membership of the Landsmannschaften would necessarily impinge on the money-raising drives of the United Jewish Appeal and other established agencies.

In reference to location of relatives abroad, it should be noted that a central index is now being established by several Jewish (JDC, NRS, Hias, and National Council of Jewish Women) and non-sectarian refugee aid agencies. For the time being the index will operate in occupied and newly liberated territory, mainly through the facilities of the International Red Cross.

100585

Memorandum Prepared By
COUNCIL OF JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND WELFARE FUNDS
165 WEST 46th STREET
NEW YORK CITY

March 1942

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH JEWS
225 West 34th Street
New York City

(Information secured from office director of the organization)

Introduction

The American Federation for Polish Jews sets forth that it represents American Jews of Polish origin who are organized in local societies (landmannschaften). The organization states that the membership consists of approximately 35,000 members affiliated with 700 societies. These societies engage in social and cultural activities.

Program The organization is attempting in cooperation with other non-Jewish Polish societies to develop a point of view toward the post-war European settlement of the Polish problem and the subsequent position of the Jews in Poland.

In addition to its organizational activities the Federation has developed various programs to assist the Polish Jews. In 1941 the organization attempted to send food packages and medical supplies to Poland. At present the organization is cooperating with the Polish National Council (Rada Polonia) in sending old clothes to the Polish refugees in Russia. The Polish National Council, with headquarters in Chicago, is stated to be the organization which represents the majority of the non-Jewish Polish groups in this country and was established during the first World War period.

The New York branch of the Polish National Council (25 St. Marks Place) states that it has received permission from the Polish Government in exile to send old clothes to the Polish refugees in Russia. It is stated that this program has the approval of the Russian Government; and that no duties or other payments are required in shipping the clothes. A warehouse is maintained at 320 E. Houston Street, New York City, where the old clothes are fumigated and prepared for shipment by the Polish National Council "on all available boats carrying supplies to Russia". In Russia, the clothes are distributed by the Polish Embassy to Polish refugees, Jews and non-Jews alike.

The Federation for Polish Jews is appealing to its membership to contribute clothing articles for this relief program. The organization is also requesting its members to send individual packages of clothing to refugees in Russia via the offices of the organization. The Federation for Polish Jews has been authorized to receive such individual packages for shipment by the Bank Polska - Casa Opiekni, 907 Broadway, which is the official agency for sending individual packages abroad.

The above information is privileged and is for the use only of person or organization addressed.

100586

FEB 29 1944

In reply please
refer to: 216

Dear Mr. Trausa:

Your telegram of February 23, 1944, to President Roosevelt, concerning the War Refugee Board has been referred to this office.

I am indeed grateful for the interest which you have expressed in this undertaking. I assure you that every effort will be made to realize the objectives of our Government in the establishment of the Board.

Very truly yours,

[Signed] J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Acting Executive Director

Mr. J. H. Trausa,
President,
The American Federation for
Polish Jews,
Chicago District,
Chicago, Illinois.

EBS *RBH* *JST*
RBHutchen:agr 2-26-44

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

216
FILING AUTHORITY
TO: Mail & Files
ANS.....
NO ANS. REQ.....
INITIAL.....
DATE.....

February 23, 1944

Respectfully referred to the
War Refugee Board for appropriate
acknowledgment.

Attention: Mr. John W. Pehle.

M. C. LATTA
Executive Clerk

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The White House
Washington

FEB 23 7 47 AM 1944

CHICAGO ILL FEB 22 1944

HONORABLE F D ROOSEVELT

WHITE HOUSE

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR POLISH JEWS CHICAGO DISTRICT
ASSEMBLED IN CONFERENCE FEB 20 1944 AT THE HAMILTON HOTEL
ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY:

"WE EXPRESS TO YOU OUR PROFOUNDEST APPRECIATION AND
THANKFULNESS FOR APPOINTING A WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO TAKE
ACTION FOR IMMEDIATE RESCUE OF THE VICTIMS OF NAZI SAVAGERY.
AS A BRANCH OF A NATIONAL AMERICAN ORGANIZATION WHICH FOR
35 YEARS HAS BEEN ACTING ON BEHALF OF POLISH JEWRY WE FEEL

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