

WAR Emergency Conference of World Jewish Congress

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WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS  
Rescue Department

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PROGRAM  
of general measures of  
RELIEF AND RESCUE OF JEWS  
threatened with extermination by the enemy

Submitted on March 3, 1944  
to the  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD  
by the  
WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

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In setting up a War Refugee Board the President declared that "it is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death, and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

The release issued on January 22nd by the Secretary of the President stresses the President's view "that it is urgent that action be taken at once to forestall the plan of the Nazis to exterminate all the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe."

The Acting Executive Director of the War Refugee Board has repeatedly proclaimed the need for a bold program, which would not be held up by the cautions and conventional formalities which might be proper in less pressing circumstances. On the way to the rescue of the remnants of European Jewry many a Gordian knot will have to be cut. Any attempts to untie it would be wasting the little time left, and the cost would be counted in human lives which can still be saved.

It is generally admitted that the situation has immensely changed for the worse since the World Jewish Congress representatives in Geneva first acquainted the United States Minister in Bern with the facts relating to the extermination of the Jews of Europe. In Axis occupied Europe there are no longer any legally free Jews. There are Jews who are more or less legally free only in Hungary and, to some extent, Rumania (with the exception of occupied Transnistria). In all the other regions of Axis Europe, the Jews are either in hiding or interned in death, concentration or labor camps.

A cable sent from Jerusalem to the Congress on February 6th reads as follows:

"POLISH JEWS ARRIVED HERE RECENTLY REPORT OF UNINTERRUPTED EXTERMINATION. ONLY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS REMAIN OR MILLIONS OF POLISH JEWS AND OTHERS EXILED TO POLAND. THE SURVIVORS ARE IN LABOR CAMPS OR IN HIDING. BOTH CATEGORIES ARE UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF EXTERMINATION. IN THE CASES THE WEAK OR SICK ARE KILLED. THE SAME DATE WAITS THOSE HIDING WHO ARE CAUGHT AS THE GESTAPO IS OFFERING REWARDS."

If the purpose of the War Refugee Board is to be fulfilled, customary procedures must be superseded. The rescue of Jews from the clutches of the Nazis now falls for the most part within the spheres of underground activity, and commando and guerilla warfare. For example, there is no legal way, with the exception of exchange, to get a Jew out of Nazi occupied Europe. Since autumn 1941, a rigid ban on exit permits has been enforced inside the Greater Reich and in German occupied countries. "In fact," states Sir Herbert Emerson in his report of August, 1943, to the League of Nations, "with very few exceptions, people who have managed to escape since that time have done so in a

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clandestine manner." The High Commissioner had himself taken up some individual cases of intending emigrants. "Not a single successful case can be reported. Even people over 65 years of age, whose maintenance was guaranteed in Switzerland for the rest of their lives, and in respect of whom the Swiss authorities granted entrance permits, were not able to avail themselves of these facilities." And Sir Herbert concludes: "These facts need be stressed, as public opinion does not seem to appreciate them fully."

The general measures of rescue to be taken can be subdivided as follows:

I. Psychological and Diplomatic:

1. Solemn Warning and Appeal.
2. Dissemination of Information of the Facts of Extermination.
3. Trials of Criminals and Accomplices.
4. Continued Pressure on the Satellites.
5. Encouragement of the Neutral States.
6. Recognition of segregated and interned Jews as Civilian Internees.

II. Practical:

1. Public:
  - a- Havens and Camps of Refuge.
  - b- Rescue of Children.
  - c- Transportation and Transit Facilities.
  - d- Exchange Possibilities.
  - e- Food, Medical Supplies, Clothing.
  - f- Periodic Inspection by Red Cross Delegates.
  - g- Funds for Red Cross Activities.
  - h- Removal from Liberated but Unsafe Regions.
  - i- Relaxation of Censorship.
2. Underground:
  - a- Hiding.
  - b- Smuggling.
  - c- "Documents".
  - d- Funds for Underground Activities.

I. Psychological and Diplomatic Measures:

I. Solemn Warning and Appeal.

The World Jewish Congress has repeatedly insisted from the outset of the extermination process on the immense value of solemn, specific and reiterated warning. Such warning would be addressed by the leaders of the United Nations, especially President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, to the Nazi leaders, their satellites, accomplices and agents, and would make it clear that they will be held responsible for their crimes against the Jews and brought to trial at the earliest opportunity. The heads of the United Nations would also urge the populations, on grounds of humanity and religion as well as of self interest, to resist the policy of persecution by succouring the victims.

Dr. Wise took up this matter again during his visit to the President in August, 1943, and in a letter, dated August 17, 1943, to General Tetsen, he confirmed "the suggestion to which the President seemed to assent, that this is the time for a most emphatic and solemn warning to the Hitler-ruled countries against the continued slaughter of civilian populations and especially those whom it is resolved to exterminate, namely, the Jewish people."

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Unfortunately, there has been no such specific warning since the messages addressed to Dr. Tise by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill in July, 1942, and the statement of the United Nations of December 17, 1942. In the opinion of many informed and experienced people, a new warning should be issued without delay as, whatever its disadvantages may be supposed to be, they would be more than outweighed by the following probable effects:

- a) The warning would counteract Nazi propaganda, which presents America and Great Britain as the homes of growing anti-Semitic movements, a propaganda which carries with it the suggestion that crimes against the Jews will not be punished;
- b) It would deepen the moral cleavage between the Nazi leaders who are responsible for the acts of extermination and those sections of the German population who disapprove of them;
- c) It would have a deterrent effect on tens of thousands of non-German officials, police officers and agents with whose help the Nazi policy of extermination is being carried out;
- d) It would encourage the satellites in their desire to adopt a policy which, on the day of settlement, could be brought up as a mitigating circumstance;
- e) It would strengthen the hands of the Gentile population in occupied Europe in its efforts to aid the Jews to escape persecution;
- f) It would give support in neutral countries to those sections of public opinion which favor a liberal policy with regard to the admission of refugees;
- g) It would hearten and prolong the endurance of those Jews in occupied Europe who would hear of it.

## 2. Dissemination of Information on the Facts of Extermination.

The question whether the German population is aware of the mass killings of which the Jews are the victims in Eastern Europe is the subject of controversy. It remains a fact, however, that the German leadership consistently refrains from telling the German people the facts of extermination. Even Hitler and Goebbels allude to their policy of annihilation in abstract terms; in boasting about it they resort to somber circumlocutions.

The fact that the Nazis conceal from the German people the gruesome story of the murder of a people proves the importance of telling it.

There has been recently in this respect some improvement in the policy of the BBC and OWI. Barring the facts of extermination, in particular the cruelties against children, the methods employed in the killings, should become an integral element in psychological warfare. But radio broadcasts are not enough. The facts should be made known also by means of leaflets, dropped from planes regularly over Germany and German held territory, until the populations are seized with horror and their silent complicity become for them an unbearable burden.

The need for such leaflets, devoted specifically to the Jewish martyrdom in Nazi Europe, has been repeatedly stressed in conferences and memoranda to the Administration. It is not known whether it has been recognized and acted upon.

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### 3. Trials of Criminals and Accomplices.

As the war moves slowly forward and the promise of victory, though certain, does not appear to be immediate, the pledge of retribution is likely to lose its effect if no public attempt is made to implement it.

It cannot but be regretted that the proceedings of the Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes have so far not been calculated to inspire confidence in its intention to carry out the pledges made by the Governments. It was on October 7, 1942, that Lord Simon first announced the establishment of the Commission, but it was not until October 15, 1943, that the Commission held its first meeting. And even at that meeting the opportunity was not taken to make a public demonstration of the Commission's determination to bring the criminals to justice. A declaration by the representatives of the principal powers of their resolve to punish all administrative acts, as well as the actual atrocities themselves, which were designed to effect or hasten the extermination of the Jews, could have produced great repercussions. The apparent inactivity of the Commission reassures and emboldens those who proclaim that their crimes will remain unpunished.

That is why the trial held in Algiers, of the torturers of the Colomb Bechar camp, is of such historic importance. Its proceedings and verdict should be beamed to Europe in the most effective way. The decision, if it is made known, will have a deterrent effect on the minor officials among the Quislings, who have accepted collaboration because of its immediate benefits, but who are certainly not willing to risk their lives.

Similar trials should be conducted whenever and wherever possible, without waiting for the end of the war. Those, for instance, who were responsible for the Cyrenaica deportations, which cost the lives of 50 members of the Benghazi Jewish community, should be sought out and brought to justice.

### 4. Continued Pressure on the Satellites.

The pressure on the German satellites to refrain from cruelties and deportations, to facilitate the emigration of their own Jewish populations, to grant asylum to Jewish refugees and to help them leave their territories, should be continued firmly and consistently.

Although it appears that many satellites are inclined to relinquish their anti-Jewish policy, a continuous vigilance is indispensable to counteract the steady pressure of the German diplomatic and military representatives. For such counteraction it is important to enlist the cooperation of the Churches; of the Holy See, in relation to Slovakia and Hungary; of the Exarchate for Bulgaria. In this respect the International Red Cross can also play a considerable role, since the satellites may well be willing to grant it many facilities which are being refused in the occupied regions, as has been proved by recent Red Cross activities in Transnistria.

The most important of these satellites in Hungary, which calls for constant vigilance, alertness and encouragement, not only because it now shelters the largest Jewish community in Europe, but also because it is the country of refuge for the thousands who have succeeded and the hundreds who are still succeeding in escaping the Nazi hell. The task of watching and utilizing the situation in Hungary is such that special attaches of the War Refugee Board might well be appointed in Switzerland and/or Turkey for this purpose.

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5. Encouragement of the Neutral States.

Neutral Governments should be encouraged to continue to receive refugees by offers of help through provision of funds, food, clothing and other requirements, and also by the undertaking to facilitate the repatriation or resettlement of the refugees after the war.

The manner of assistance, of course, would vary with the conditions of the country concerned. For Portugal, Spain and Turkey, for example, early evacuation is essential and practicable; the case of Sweden and Switzerland is for obvious reasons different.

However friendly and humanitarian they may be, the neutral countries need constant encouragement. In Switzerland for instance, while public opinion has not only supported the policy of the federal government but even pressed for greater concessions, the authorities are much concerned about the future. As Switzerland is not, at present, able to provide for even a small measure of reemigration, she is anxious to obtain firm and repeated assurances that she will be relieved of her burden after the end of hostilities. In addition, her food conditions are precarious and her economy needs a special allowance so that she may be able to feed her people and her guests.

Special attention should be given to the attitude of Turkey, which holds a key position in any undertaking intended to rescue Jews from Eastern and Balkan Europe. She should in particular be assured that the Jews whom she will permit to cross her borders or to whom she will grant transit visas will continue their journey.

6. Recognition of segregated and interned Jews as Civilian Internees.

Measures should be taken to secure the status of Civilian Prisoners of War for Jews confined in ghettos, concentration and labor camps.

It appears from explanations offered by the International Red Cross that Germany does not recognize those Jews as civilian internees, but as "detained civilians." No justification has been offered for this distinction. The 1929 Convention on Prisoners of War has been promulgated in Germany, and the Reich has declared that it would be applied by analogy to the civilians who would be interned.

It is the accepted opinion of the foremost international jurists that every individual who is deprived of his liberty by an occupying authority for reasons other than for a common crime has the claim to be treated as a prisoner of war. (Cf. Oppenheim-Lauterpacht, International Law, Vol. II p. 278 seq.)

Germany and Fascist Italy have recently made several pronouncements, stating expressly that their reason for treating the Jews as they do, is a military one. A German spokesman, Guendemann, declared at a foreign press conference on October 7, 1943, that the German measures against the Jews were caused by the fact that the Jews were a power waging war on Germany.

In addition, the draft of the Republican Fascist Constitution, adopted by the Fascist party congress at Verona, on November 17, 1943, states under Art. 7, that "Jews are foreigners who belong to an enemy nationality."

In view of this theory there can remain no doubt that the surviving Jews in Nazi Europe and Fascist Italy are entitled

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to be treated as civilian prisoners of war, and to benefit by the protection of the International Red Cross.

The recognition of the Jews in ghettos, concentration and labor camps as civilian internees, and the inclusion of their care within the scope of International Red Cross activities, can spell the physical deliverance of remaining European Jewry.

It is submitted that the first steps to be taken in this respect are the following:

a) The International Red Cross should approach the Nazi Government and ask for a justification of the distinction it has established between civilian internees and "detained civilians";

b) It should examine the advisability of making a public statement that it considers the Jews confined in ghettos, concentration and labor camps as civilian internees and is prepared to give them the assistance to which they are entitled, by analogy, according to the Convention of Prisoners of War.

## II. PRACTICAL MEASURES:

### 1. Public Methods:

#### a) Havens and Camps of Refuge.

It is essential that the United Nations and neutrals repeat publicly from time to time their readiness to receive such refugees as may succeed in escaping. Such statements have appreciable practical and psychological effects. As far as the United States and Great Britain are concerned, they should be combined with the warnings mentioned under point I, 1.

The statements should not remain platonic. The procedure now prevailing in the United States administration with regard to the existing immigration laws should be adjusted so that the present quotas may be used in full. The complicated procedure which was introduced in 1941 should be modified. It should not be forgotten that more than half of the total visas issued since 1935 were never used, evidently because they arrived too late.

Refugee camps should be provided for the temporary accommodation, pending resettlement, of refugees collected from neutral or enemy occupied countries in places easily accessible under Allied control. It is urgent, in this connection, to provide for the outflow from Spain. The Spanish Government has shown consideration toward the refugees, and measures of internment and confinement have been relaxed. But it is necessary to see to it that the outflow be as important as the inflow. As Sir Herbert Emerson states in his report, on the solution of this problem "may depend the maintenance of the lifeline through Spain, which is now the only channel of escape out of Western Europe."

The immigration restrictions laid down in the White Paper on Palestine of May 1939, should be cancelled and the country declared open to any Jew who can escape or be removed from Axis occupied or dominated Europe.

#### b) Rescue of children.

In his statement of November 26, 1941, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, Mr. Breckenridge Long mentioned two programs for sheltering children in neutral countries; one, concerning a haven of refuge for Jewish children, a second, concerning a temporary asylum for children in general.

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With regard to the first program, the Assistant Secretary of State evidently referred to the initiative taken by the World Jewish Congress, a representative of which induced Sweden to ask the German government to let her take out of Germany into her own territory 20,000 Jewish children and take care of them there. Mr. Long added: "The neutral Government was unable to get any favorable response from the German Government. The original inquiry is still being conducted. The German government, the request having been made some time ago, has not indicated that it will accept; nevertheless, we are trying to get the neutral Government to continue its activities."

It may be pointed out that the negotiations started in the Spring of 1943. It will soon be a year since the Swedish Government gave its agreement in principle to take up this matter with the German Government. It is submitted that the War Refugee Board investigate without delay whether this scheme has any prospect of realization.

The uncertainty in this matter is particularly heart-breaking because of the desperate situation of the Jewish children in France, who are being hunted by special G-stapo squads. Those who are still left, face the constant danger of deportation to Poland, due to the extension of the new block system to the previously unoccupied part of France.

This new system subjects the children to the permanent control of the Gestapo, forbidding them to leave their places of residence without special permits. Less than three weeks after the introduction of the scheme in Paris, 800 children were thrown into cattle vans, 60 into each, without any straw to lie on, without water, and deported to Poland.

With regard to the other project, Mr. Long spoke as follows: "There is the support of the plan for removing children temporarily from Axis-held territory to neutral countries in varying numbers up to a maximum of 100,000 for rehabilitation in those countries where they could get food and where we would put the food, where the children could be nourished and brought back to something like a normal state of physical well being and, after they had been there for two or three months and had gotten strong, they would go back home and some other children would come in."

It would appear that this plan has received some beginning of execution, not in favor of Jewish children, but of German children. The "New York Times" of September 15, 1943, reported the arrival of 500 German children in Switzerland for a long free vacation.

#### c) Transportation and Transit Facilities:

Many rescue possibilities from the Balkan countries have been lost because of inadequate transportation facilities.

For Jews from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria, Turkey is the transit country to lands of refuge. However, the Turkish railway facilities are not available for the transportation of refugees (Turkey allows only one railway carriage per week for this traffic), so that the use of ships as ferry boats between ports in Rumania and Turkey on the one hand, and ports under Allied control on the other, is indispensable.

The tragic failure of the efforts to get out of Bulgaria 4000 children and 200 adults for whom Palestine certificates had been obtained, is known. One of the chief causes of this failure was that the ships, which were considered in this connection, did not meet the conditions governing the grant of the insigna of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of its protection. Moreover, the approval of the British authorities was required before boats of the Turkish Steamship Company could be leased, and such approval could not be obtained for reasons which have not been satisfactorily explained to date.

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In another case the Bulgarian Government had guaranteed exit visas to a thousand Jews on condition that they would leave within a certain period of time. A ship was secured, but the British authorities on the spot had to get the consent of London before acting. This took seven weeks, by which time the Bulgarian Government announced that the limit it had set had expired and the permission to leave was no longer valid.

The exodus to Palestine of refugees who were stranded in Spain and in Portugal was also hampered for months, because the negotiations for the chartering of the "Nyassa" were dragged out endlessly.

It seems that the best solution would be to provide the International Red Cross with a number of boats for the transportation of refugees and the sending of food supplies to internment camps. The International Red Cross has recently acquired its 7th prisoner of war relief ship, when it received the P.H.Damm, a former Danish cargo vessel, bought some time ago by the American Red Cross to speed the delivery of parcels to Allied men in German prison camps. It would be an admirable gesture if the Government of this country would augment the number of Red Cross vessels with ships which, flying the flag of Switzerland and under the charter of the International Red Cross, would be devoted to the rescue of the Jews and other persecuted minorities in occupied Europe.

In addition, Portuguese, Swedish and Turkish ships could be leased for the same purpose. It is well known that Portuguese and Spanish liners, running between Europe and this Hemisphere, have ample unoccupied accommodations.

Finally, ships which have brought troops and supplies to Allied ports, or food to Greece, could, on their homeward trips, be used to transport refugees to places of safety.

No less important than transportation opportunities is the removal of legal obstacles to transit, and in this connection Turkey's attitude is of paramount importance, since Turkey, as already mentioned, is the transit country for the Jews coming from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. It is further indispensable to secure the right to enter Turkey if advantage is to be taken of the immigration certificates for Palestine since the certificates can be delivered to such Jews only in Turkey.

Without a visa it is impossible to cross the frontier between Bulgaria and Turkey. The terrible fate that befell a Jewish family which took the risk of such a venture has been described by the Bulgarian writer Mihail Padev in a book recently published in London. Moreover, the Turkish consuls in Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia are permitted to grant individual visas at a rate of no more than nine families per week in each country, (approximately 400 persons per month). Transit under this scheme began in September, 1943. During the first two months 215 emigrants succeeded in arriving in Istanbul. On December 18th, 1020 transit visa cases were still pending at the Foreign Office in Ankara.

On January 3, 1944, Dr. Mayer Ebner, former leader of Bucovina Jews now in Tel Aviv, cabled to the World Jewish Congress the the departure of hundreds of Palestine certificate holders from Transnistria was impossible because of the Turkish transit visa procedure.

It is submitted that the Turkish Government be requested:

1. to issue instructions to its frontier guards to the effect that the crossing of borders be facilitated for all refugees persecuted because of race or religion;

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2. to instruct its consuls to grant transit visas, without limitation as to numbers and duration of validity to all those for whom immigration certificates for Palestine are being held by the representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Istanbul.

d) Exchange Possibilities/

Many Jews under Axis control could be saved by exchanging them for certain categories of Axis nationals now in the territories of the United Nations.

The two main possibilities are at present:

1) Exchange of Dutch and Belgian Jews, as well as of Jews interned in the camps of Vittel and Pitmoning, for German internees on the Isle of Man, in various American countries, in South Africa, etc.

The plight of approximately 1000 Dutch Jews who are in possession of emigration certificates for Palestine and who are kept in reserve by Germany in a special camp in Southern Germany, deserves special consideration. There is every reason to feel that if the exchange of these Jews will not be put under way in a very short time, they will meet the same fate that has befallen the immense majority of the Jewish community in Holland: deportation and death. There are a number of German nationals under the jurisdiction of the Dutch Government: 150 Germans are in Dutch Guiana, 150 in Bonnaire (Netherlands West Indies), and several hundred who were previously interned in the Netherlands East Indies are now under British guard in Colombo.

The Dutch Government should be urged to make these Germans available for exchange without further delay.

The availability of exchange material should be thoroughly investigated.

It appears that some hundreds of Germans are still interned in French Africa. There is further a considerable number of Italian Fascists interned in Tunisia. There must be exchange material in the former Italian colonies, in Corsica, Belgian Congo, South Africa, Peru. (On January 15, 1944, the Peruvian Government announced that a number of conspirators, including Germans and Japanese, plotting a New Year's pro-Nazi-Coup, had been detained and would be deported.) A pool should be made of all those who would be of no help from a military point of view if returned to their country.

Meanwhile, the Jewish exchange material should be protected. There are about 1200 people in Poland, the Protectorate, etc. for whom the Jewish Agency has obtained entry permits into Palestine. Negotiations are being conducted between the British and German Governments, through the Swiss Federal Government as the protecting power, to exchange them for German nationals living on British territory. M. Arlas, representative of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Istanbul, has requested Col. H. Bon, a Director of the International Red Cross, to undertake the necessary steps to insure the protection of these unfortunate. It should be possible to have the concentration camps where they are kept considered as camps for civilian internees, falling within the scope of Red Cross activities, until the materialization of the exchange scheme.

Attention is also drawn to the strong moral claim of American citizens, many of whom are in the armed forces, to have special measures taken by rescue, by means of exchange, their Jewish wives or children who are in enemy hands and are consequently in danger of death.

2) Exchange of Shanghai Jewish refugees for disloyal Japanese.

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The terrible situation of the twenty thousand Austrian and German Jews living in Shanghai has been confirmed by one of the "Gripsholm" passengers, Mr. Arthur Huston Allen. They "have been banished" he said, "to a ghetto and are suffering unusual hardships at the hands of the Japanese." (New York Post, December 2, 1943.)

We understand that the repatriation of a number of disloyal Japanese is contemplated. Of course, the Americans who are still in Japanese detention will be the first to benefit by any exchange agreement. It seems, however, that there will be a surplus of thousands of Japanese, which should be used in the interest of the starving Shanghai Jewish refugees.

On February 22, 1944, the population of the Tule Lake Center for Disloyal Persons of Japanese Ancestry was upward of 15,500. At that time 1400 more were expected from Manzanar and several hundred from other relocation camps in the Far West.

e) Food, Medical Supplies, Clothing.

The deliberate withholding of food and medical supplies constitutes an important element in the policy of extermination. In this respect, the Jewish population is in a far worse situation than the other subjugated populations. Supplies sent to the ghettos, concentration and labor camps would be an effective means of retarding the process of annihilation.

Food parcels are now being sent to Terezin (Theresienstadt) and to Transnistria.

With regard to Terezin, two one-pound food parcels a month are being sent to 6000 internees, whose names are known, by the Lisbon agencies of the Joint Distribution Committee and the Czechoslovak Government - but there are fifty to sixty thousand Jews in Terezin. The remainder depends on the collective food shipments, which the Red Cross is willing to make.

In this connection we would urge reconsideration of the formalistic attitude adopted by the American and British authorities.

The International Red Cross Headquarters have complained that they have no parcels available for concentration camps, as British and American Red Cross standard parcels are, in terms of the directions given by the Blockade authorities, reserved exclusively for recognized prisoners of war and civilian internees.

The Red Cross delegate in London has contacted the Foreign Office and Ministry of Economic Warfare, who have stated that they were not in a position to grant permission for such standard food parcels to be sent to concentration camps.

It appears that, while the Germans refuse to recognize the Jews who survived their brutalities as civilian internees, they sometimes permit food parcels to be delivered to them in a number of camps. Thus we recently were informed by Mr. Ernest Frischer, member of the Czechoslovak State Council in London, that he had been requested by telegram from Geneva to procure navicerts from the British or American authorities for consignments of cocoa for children in internment camps. It was stressed that these consignments could go by ships of the International Red Cross, and that confirmation had been received in Slovakia of delivery of parcels sent to Birkenau in Silesia.

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In his report to the League of Nations of August, 1943, Sir Herbert Emerson confirms that "food parcels dispatched from Portugal are said still to reach their destination in Polish ghettos and, where the exact address was known, money remittances and shipments of medications from Switzerland have also reached the beneficiaries."

It is submitted that the American authorities should be prepared to take full advantage of the de facto situation tolerated by the Germans. Red Cross standard parcels should be allocated for the Jews confined in ghettos, concentration and labor camps. Medical supplies which cannot be purchased in Europe should be made available, especially, since a number of supplies requested are not on army priority lists.

f. Periodic inspection by Red Cross Delegates.

While this activity would depend chiefly on the eventual recognition of segregated and interned Jews as civilian internees, it is submitted that full advantage be taken of existing possibilities.

Since the belligerent powers have generally extended to the civilian internees the application (by analogy) of the Geneva Convention regarding prisoners of war, the International Red Cross has incorporated within its program the service of aiding civilian internees. Its delegates visit almost all internment camps the world over. However, with the exception of some visits to internment camps in occupied France in 1941 and of a recent visit to Transnistria, the Red Cross delegates have not visited any ghetto, internment or labor camp for Jews in any other region of occupied Europe. As indicated above, such visits would be of great importance.

It should be stressed that the first visit of the International Red Cross delegate to Transnistria resulted immediately in a number of improvements.

g. Funds for Red Cross Activities.

On September 8, 1943, the World Jewish Congress headquarters received a cable from their London office to the effect that continuous reports were arriving there, which disclosed that the condition of the Jews in Europe was steadily deteriorating and that there existed a grave state of distress due to the lack of food, clothing, medical supplies and other relief commodities; that relief action on a large scale was necessary but obviously beyond the capacity of the private resources of any Jewish or other voluntary organization; that the only organization capable of reaching the surviving Jews and of bringing them relief was the International Red Cross.

On September 16, 1943, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress, called the attention of Mr. Breckenridge Long to the inability of the Red Cross to send food, tonics, medicine, and clothing to the surviving Jews, because of the lack of financial means, and suggested that the Governments of the United States and Great Britain grant the International Red Cross an adequate sum of money to enable it to conduct its relief work whenever and wherever an opportunity would present itself.

On December 8, 1943, we were informed that this matter had been referred to the American Embassy in London on September 29th, to be presented to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees; that the director of this Committee had communicated with the International Red Cross and that it was expected that a reply would be received shortly.

This information was rather disappointing, as Mr. Breckenridge Long's statement before the Committee on Foreign

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Affairs of the House of Representatives on November 26, 1943, had aroused the hope that the project was well under way, and that the United States and Great Britain were only waiting for the approval by the Intergovernmental Committee of the International Red Cross blueprints and approval which could be shortly expected for each government to contribute \$4,000,000 to finance the project.

It should also be mentioned that a cable from Dr. Gerard Riegner, World Jewish Congress representative in Geneva, of December 2nd, reported that the International Red Cross had already answered positively the inquiries of the American Legation and of Sir Herbert Emerson, and that there were considerable possibilities of assistance from Switzerland.

Unfortunately, nearly three months have passed since December 8th, and it does not seem that much progress has been made in this most important matter, a matter of life and death.

The International Red Cross complains that it does not command sufficient funds to send to the Transnistria deportees more than a limited quantity of food; that it is unable, because of lack of funds, to secure the pharmaceutical products needed for the camps in Slovakia; that the lack of appropriate shipping, necessary to take our people from the Balkans is also, if not chiefly, a question of lack of funds; that if it had money, it could send food parcels to the 1200 Jews the remnants of Yugoslav Jewry who are still interned in concentration camps on the territory of Pavelic's Croatia."

#### h. Removal from Liberated but Unsafe Areas.

Under this heading, plans should be worked out for the immediate removal of Jews from areas of military operations where, in case of reoccupation by the Nazis and their allies, they are likely to be exterminated.

As has been proven in a number of cases, the liberation of formerly occupied regions is not always final. Experience at Kosse, Leros and other places has shown that the enemy may be able to retake certain islands, towns and hamlets, with the result, for the population, of all kind of oppression and vengeance, especially if it has taken an active part in driving the enemy out. It has been reported that 230 Jews were massacred in Spalato, which had been freed by Yugoslav guerillas, and reoccupied by German and Croat troops. The Adriatic island of Arbe (Rab) has passed through a series of occupations and liberations. Each turn of Axis troops brought in its wake new suffering for the Jews.

It is submitted that special emergency squads be attached to the military headquarters, whose exclusive concern it should be to evacuate as soon as possible to safer regions Jewish and other oppressed populations who are considered to be in danger.

It should be said in this connection that the necessity of such kind of action was stressed not only by the World Jewish Congress, but by the neutral press in Europe as well. On August 2nd, the "Aftontidningen" (Stockholm), published an article entitled "Jews in the Balkans in mortal danger in case of Italian capitulation." It stressed the fact that if the Italian troops should evacuate the regions garrisoned by them, such Jews as were still alive would be abandoned to an all too certain fate. "The Allied leaders, headed by Roosevelt, have repeatedly declared that they have thoroughly discussed by what means the remainder of the Jews in the occupied countries can be saved from extermination. Now a chance arises for saving several thousands Jewish men, women and children still alive, from abandonment to their desperate mortal enemies."

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What actually happened to the Jews in Italian occupied Greece after the capitulation of the Badoglio Government is only too well known.

#### 1. Relaxation of Censorship

The rescue work has often been jeopardized because of the rigid enforcement of censorship regulations. Letters from relatives in the occupied countries to their relatives in the United States, which give in veiled terms indispensable information as to their present situation, the possibilities of relief and salvation, are often delayed for months or entirely withheld.

Residents of this country are forbidden to ask for and prevented from getting any information as to the present whereabouts of people in occupied countries. Every investigation must be made through the exclusive facilities of the International Red Cross, which resorts to a procedure so slow, that its findings, when finally produced, have lost every usefulness because they have in the meantime become obsolete.

Censorship rules are so severe that cables from refugees who have arrived in Switzerland are not delivered to their relatives here, so that the latter continue to exert themselves in efforts to save people already saved, instead of concentrating on those who are still in distress.

There is an urgent need for a revision of these regulations.

#### 2. Underground Methods.

##### a) Hiding

It is impossible to estimate the number of Jews in various European countries, who, in order to escape persecution, deportation and execution "dived under". The estimates concerning the number of hidden Jews vary so widely as being, with regard to Belgium, for instance, between fifteen hundred and thirty thousand. Former Greek Minister George Exintaris reports that three thousand Salonika Jews have been provided with identity cards, bearing non Jewish names, and smuggled out to various towns throughout Greece. The same method was employed later with respect to thousands of Athens Jews.

The Jews are not the only ones who live this life of perpetual tension. According to Arvid Fredborg, more than 150,000 persons have "gone underground" in Germany itself and are living as outlaws. Some of them are Jews, but the majority are anti-Nazi Germans. All of them belong to an underground Europe which has developed its own rules and its own way of life.

Of the various underground rescue measures, hiding is the simplest, the speediest, the least expensive; yet it imposes upon the hidden a continuous strain and exposes them to constant danger of betrayal. To make full use of this possibility the following prerequisites are necessary:

1) The friendly attitude of the population, which must be encouraged by frequent appeals through radio and leaflets dropped from airplanes, and by warnings that informers will be ruthlessly punished.

2) Financial support to the hidden Jews so that they may be able to compensate their hosts and to purchase food in the black market if they have no "Aryan" ration cards. Since these Jews have been for years now excluded from any gainful activity, most of them have no savings left; and many a place of hiding is quite expensive. It appears from a report by a delegate of the Polish Government to the underground in Poland that, to induce Polish peasants to shelter Jews, the compensation offered must be considerable; if caught, not only the lives of the hosts but those of their families are at stake.

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3) The hidden Jews must be provided with "Aryan" documents (birth certificates, identity cards, ration cards) so that, if reported or discovered, they could put up some "legal" defense and move from place to place.

All this, of course, requires close contacts and cooperation with the various underground movements and guerilla units.

b) Smuggling.

Jews are being smuggled out from Holland, Belgium, France to Spain and Switzerland, from Poland to Slovakia and Hungary, from Slovakia to Hungary.

We have no accurate figures concerning the results achieved through this contraband in human beings. Reports from Istanbul and Geneva tell of hundreds of grownups and children from Slovakia, Croatia and Prague, and thousands from Poland who have crossed into Hungary and have been saved. A letter from Istanbul states: "If we could dispose of larger amounts, we could succeed in saving hundreds and thousands." A representative of the World Jewish Congress succeeded in smuggling out of France 400 children to Switzerland in a relatively short period of time.

The smuggling out of Jews has been left entirely to the initiative and endeavours of Jewish organizations and individuals. To our knowledge no government in exile is occupied with it; no underground movement gives it any particular consideration. In too many instances this work is done by individual contrabandists, and only such people as still retain some part of their fortune are in a position to pay the expensive passage toll.

Throughout Europe smuggling is an important part of the activities of the resistance movements: but they do not sufficiently take into account the mortal danger in which Jews constantly find themselves as Jews. Their attention is devoted nearly exclusively to persons who are jeopardized because of their political past, their present activities, or their usefulness for the prosecution of the war.

In this respect some figures are disturbing. According to a statement, made by Luis Garcia Guijarro, commercial counselor at the Spanish Embassy in Washington on January 20th, refugees from Nazi occupied countries are making their way to Allied territory in Morocco through Malaga, Spain, at the rate of nearly 6000 every fifteen days. Even if the most moderate figure be accepted of 2000 passages a week, given by other sources, the small percentage of Jews among these refugees cannot but be very striking, as the figure of Jews who escape through Spain is but a small fraction of that mentioned above.

It is consequently submitted that contacts be made with the various underground movements and guerilla units in order that the smuggling out of Jews, especially of children, become part of their activities. Special sections of these movements, provided with financial means of documents of identity, should be entrusted with this task.

Although heroism is involved even in these "civilian" smuggling operations, situations may arise when real commando raids or guerilla operations may be necessary to remove Jewish groups in danger of extermination. There is no doubt that Jewish volunteers can be found who will be glad to form rescue squads to remove Jewish refugees from the Adriatic islands which have been retaken by the Axis troops or from other places where they are in jeopardy.

c) "Documents."

Number of Jews of various nationalities who were

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provided even after Pearl Harbor with genuine passports of certain Latin American countries (Paraguay, Peru, etc.) have been interned by the Germans in two camps in Bavaria and France (Titmoning and Vittel) for exchange purposes. At one moment they were in danger, because the Paraguay Government indicated its intention to withdraw the citizenship granted through these passports. After many an intervention and many assurances given, it would appear that the matter has straightened out.

Our representatives in Switzerland insist time and again that the various countries of the eastern Hemisphere be approached and requested to authorize their diplomatic agents in Bern to deliver emergency passports to Jews of other nationalities. "It is," writes one of our representatives, "absolutely indispensable to obtain authorization that a few thousand passports be granted for rescue purposes... (entry) visas (for neutral countries) are of no avail because no exit permit from occupied territory can be obtained."

The Governments concerned should of course be given the assurance that the passports would be restored to them after the war, and the Jews in question returned to their countries of origin, or of former settled residence, or resettled elsewhere.

d) Funds for Underground Activities.

These activities require important financial means. They should be dispatched through underground channels and earmarked for the rescue of Jews.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the World Jewish Congress has been informed time and again by its Geneva offices that definite possibilities exist of bribing Gestapo officials and of inducing them to halt deportations and extend their protection to already deported or interned Jews.

In a letter from the Palestine Labor Delegation in Istanbul, dated July 25, 1943, it is said expressly about the situation in Slovakia: "Three times, the expulsion of the entire community was postponed with the help of money." Concerning Rumania the same letter states: "With the help of money you could always arrange things in this country. Nowadays without it you cannot do a thing." With regard to the smuggling of Jews out of Hungary the letter says: "If we could dispose of larger amounts, we could succeed in saving hundreds and thousands."

The proper implication should be drawn from this information and Jewish organizations provided with licenses for the transmission of the necessary funds.

Funds are also needed for the purchase of means of defense. Properly speaking, this is no method of direct rescue, as most of the Jews who offered resistance did not escape alive. Psychologically however, it is of the utmost importance that the Nazi torturers know that there is a risk involved in the accomplishment of their gruesome task. It is also important that as many as possible of the executioners be destroyed.

Contact should be sought, consequently, with Jewish youth leader in ghettos, concentration and labor camps. They should be provided with weapons so as to be in a position to defend themselves if the worst comes to the worst.

March 3, 1944.

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INSTITUTE OF JEWISH AFFAIRS  
1834 Broadway  
New York

November 27, 1944

CIRCULAR NO. 3

TO THE DELEGATES TO THE WAR EMERGENCY  
CONFERENCE

Dear Delegate,

The deliberations of the Conference, and especially of the Commissions, will be devoted, if not exclusively, at least primarily, to the European scene. Our judgment must be based on a proper evaluation of the facts underlying the situation. Not all the facts can now be submitted to you in written form, but at least the basic statistical data can. We have, therefore, prepared for your guidance the two statistical tables you will find attached hereto.

These tables are certainly not the result of enumeration, nor of any other exact, scientific investigation. They do however, represent the results of a very careful study of the information reaching us from various sources. This information was checked and rechecked, and we believe that the result represents a reasonably reliable approximation of the real situation.

Table I states, by country, the number of Jews present, having emigrated, slain, or deported, by mid-November, 1944.

Table II summarizes the position with regard to Jewish refugees and deportees by the Fall of 1944.

Respectfully,

*Jacob Robinson*  
Jacob Robinson  
Director

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Institute of Jewish Affairs

TABLE I

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	NUMBER OF JEWS PRESENT, EMIGRATED, SLAIN, AND DEPORTED <sup>a)</sup>					
COUNTRY	ORIGINAL NUMBER <sup>b)</sup>	YEAR	PRESENT IN THEIR HOMELAND <sup>c)</sup>	SLAIN <sup>d)</sup>	EMIGRATED	DEPORTED <sup>e)</sup>
Romania	850,000	1939	290,000	470,000	70,000 <sup>f)</sup>	--
Bulgaria	50,000	1940	35-45,000	Unknown	Unknown	--
Yugoslavia	75,000	1940	Unknown	50,000	8,000	12,000
Italy	47,000	1938	25,000	Unknown	5,000	Unknown
Greece	75,000	1940	7-12,000	55,000	3-4,000	Unknown
France	260,000	1940	100-120,000 <sup>g)</sup>	50,000	30-35,000	55,000
Belgium	75,000	1940	10,000 <sup>h)</sup>	25,000	25,000	15,000 <sup>i)</sup>
Holland	115,000	1940	10,000	60,000 <sup>j)</sup>	25,000	20,000
Luxembourg	3,000	1940	70	500	1,500-2,000	500
Norway	2,000	1940	Unknown	Unknown	600	Unknown
Denmark	6,000	1940	--	--	5,000	1,000
Germany	525,000	1933	5,000	110,000	285,000	75-100,000
Austria	170,000	1938	2,000	25,000	100,000	10-20,000
Protectorate	80,000	1939	2-3,000	50,000	10,000	15,000
Slovakia	100,000	1940	5,000	70,000	10,000	15,000
Hungary	540,000 <sup>k)</sup>	1940	Unknown	200,000	10,000	335,000 <sup>l)</sup>
Poland	3,300,000	1939	250,000 <sup>m)</sup>	2,600,000	400,000 <sup>n)</sup>	--
Estonia	5,000	1940	A few hundred	3,000	2,000 <sup>n)</sup>	--
Latvia	95,000	1940	A few hundred	80,000	15,000 <sup>n)</sup>	--
Lithuania	145,000	1940	A few hundred	135,000	10,000 <sup>n)</sup>	--

a) The total of columns 4-7 does not necessarily amount to the figure given in column 2 because of the decrease as a result of natural causes (increased number of deaths and decreased number of births).

b) Without refugees.

c) Without refugees and internees.

d) The vast majority had previously been deported. m) Including 50,000 in the liberated areas.

e) A part of the deportees must be presumed to be dead.

f) Including evacuees to Soviet Russia from Bessarabia, Bucovina, and Transnistria.

g) The total number of Jews present in France is estimated at 150,000 - 200,000.

h) The total number of Jews present in Belgium is estimated at 18,000 - 20,000.

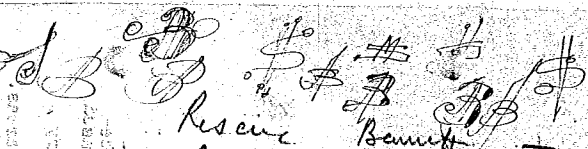
i) The total number of Jews deported from Belgium is estimated at 27,000.

j) The total number of Jews deported from Holland is estimated at 120,000.

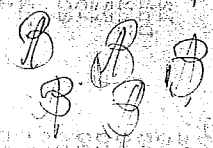
n) Including evacuees to Soviet Russia.

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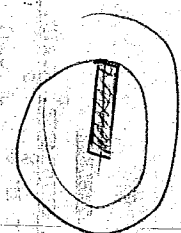
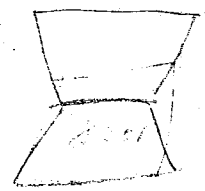
Assimilation



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Institute of Jewish Affairs

TABLE II  
JEWISH REFUGEES AND DEPORTEES IN 1944

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	REFUGEES	DEPORTEES FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER PROBABLY ALIVE	DEPORTEES WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE SAME COUNTRY
Poland	400,000# #	-	250,000
Germany	285,000	75,000-100,000	5,000
Austria	100,000	10,000- 20,000	2,000
France	30-35,000#	50,000	-
Protectorate	10,000	15,000	2,000-3,000
Slovakia	10,000#	15,000	5,000
Hungary	10,000	Unknown	335,000
Rumania	70,000# #	-	-
Italy	5,000#	Unknown	-
Belgium	25,000#	15,000	-
Holland	25,000	20,000	-
Yugoslavia	8,000#	12,000	-
Greece	3-4,000#	10,000	-
Luxembourg	1,500-2,000#	500	-
Denmark	5,000	1,000	-

# Including evacuees to Russia

# Excluding displaced within the liberated areas

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Institute of Jewish Affairs

TABLE II  
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Protectorate	10,000	15,000	2,000-3,000
Slovakia	10,000# #	15,000	5,000
Hungary	10,000	Unknown	335,000
Rumania	70,000# #	-	-
Italy	5,000# #	Unknown	-
Belgium	25,000# #	15,000	-
Holland	25,000	20,000	-
Yugoslavia	8,000# #	12,000	-
Greece	3-4,000# #	10,000	-
Luxembourg	1,500-2,000# #	500	-
Denmark	5,000	1,000	-

# Including evacuees to Russia

# Excluding displaced within the liberated areas

#

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P R O G R A M  
AN EMERGENCY CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS  
November 26-30, 1944, Hotel St. Charles, Atlantic City, New Jersey

First Session

Sunday, Nov. 26, 2-5 P.M.

Opening Address- - - - -Dr. Stephen S. Wise

Memorial for the Jewish victims of war and  
extermination- - - - -Dr. Isaac Alcalay

The World Jewish Scene - - - - -Dr. Nahum Goldmann  
Greetings by Representative of American Jewish Conference  
Election of Praesidium and Credentials Committee

Second Session

Sunday evening, Nov. 26, 7.30-11 P.M.

Problems of Rescue - - - - -Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki

The World Jewish Congress- - - - -Dr. Maurice L. Perlzweig

Problems of Relief and Rehabilitation- - -Dr. Arish Tartakower  
Resolution on Palestine

Third Session

Monday morning, Nov. 27, 10-1 P.M.

Report of Credentials Committee and Committee on Committees

General Debate (including statements by representatives of delegations)

Fourth Session

Monday, Nov. 27, 3-6 P.M.

General Debate continued

Fifth Session

Monday evening, Nov. 27, 8-12 P.M.

General Debate continued

Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Sessions

Tuesday, Nov. 28, 10-1 P.M., 3-6 P.M., 8-12 P.M.

Wednesday Nov. 29, 10-1 P.M.

Meetings of Commissions

- a) Organization
- b) Finance and Budget
- c) Rescue
- d) Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
- e) Political Commission (Restoration and Guarantee of Jewish Rights; Anti-Semitism)
- f) War Crimes
- g) Restitution of Property

Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Sessions

Wednesday, Nov. 29, 3-6 P.M., 8-11 P.M.

Thursday, Nov. 30, 10-1 P.M.

Reports of Commissions and Discussion

Adoption of Resolutions

Thirteenth Session

Thursday, Nov. 30-3-8 P.M.

Conference Declaration

Closing statement by Heads of Delegations

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26-30, 1944  
St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## RESOLUTION ON PALESTINE

The War Emergency Conference of the World Jewish Congress associates itself with the programme of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and its claim that in the new democratic era assuring peace, freedom and equality among nations there must be a definitive and permanent termination of the homelessness of the Jewish people by the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth.

The Conference urges the British Government to abrogate the policy promulgated in the White Paper of 1939 and to open Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization.

The Conference appeals to the United Nations to ensure that the general scheme of postwar reconstruction shall include the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth and that appropriate financial and other resources be provided for that purpose, including the speedy transfer to Palestine of Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution.

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Résumé du discours prononcé  
par le Dr. Nahum Goldmann  
à la War Emergency Conference du  
Congrès Juif Mondial  
à Atlantic City, le 26 Novembre 1944

Parlant aujourd'hui devant la première Conférence internationale juive réunie depuis le début des hostilités, l'objet de mon exposé sera, hélas, non plus une catastrophe imminente, comme c'était le cas à Genève en 1932, à la première Conférence Juive Mondiale, mais un désastre qui s'est déjà produit... Il est peut-être prématuré de donner les chiffres exacts de ses victimes. D'après une évaluation optimiste, les pays dont la population juive se chiffrait par millions, n'en conservent que quelques centaines de mille; des pays dont les communautés juives étaient florissantes, sont pratiquement "Judenrein", cent mille de plus ou de moins ne changera point la réalité affreuse mais certaine, à savoir que la vaste majorité des Juifs d'Europe a été massacrée. Il reste non seulement le fait incroyable que des millions de Juifs ont cessé de vivre, mais encore ont disparu avec eux les communautés, les centres qu'ils avaient créés, les traditions qu'ils maintenaient, les valeurs culturelles qui y étaient attachées - et ceci est peut-être encore plus grave du point de vue historique.

Il est facile de dire que Hitler et le Nazisme sont les auteurs responsables de cette tragédie, mais le problème ne s'en trouve pas résolu. Lorsque vous êtes mordu par un chien enragé, vous ne le poursuivez pas en justice; vous le tuez, mais vous poursuivez son propriétaire responsable. Le vrai responsable de la tragédie actuelle est notre génération tout entière: avec plus de courage moral et un plus grand esprit de solidarité entre les nations, la catastrophe de la dernière décade, qui a abouti à la guerre, aurait pu être évitée.

Le Nazisme n'a pas inauguré sa politique anti-juive en tuant les Juifs: il a fallu à Hitler et à sa bande des années de préparation pour passer de la propagande antisémite et des lois de Nuremberg aux camps de mort de Maidanek et de Treblinka. Les démocraties ne peuvent pas prétendre qu'elles n'ont pas été averties. Depuis 1933, quelques-uns parmi nous, réunis ici aujourd'hui, n'ont cessé de prévenir les chefs des grandes démocraties et de les implorer, soit de mettre fin à la persécution des Juifs par Hitler, soit tout au moins de fournir aux Juifs le moyen de s'échapper à temps. Nos demandes, et celles d'autres organisations juives, ont été rejetées, et nous n'avons obtenu comme réponse que des mesures routinières, inspirées par la bureaucratie. Je ne veux pas dire que les chefs des grandes démocraties ont manqué de bonne volonté; mais la force de cette volonté n'était pas suffisante pour parer à la tragédie. Si je puis me permettre une comparaison, ce serait comme si les Anglais après Dunkerque auraient eu à demander des autorisations de quatre ou cinq ministères pour envoyer des bateaux au secours de leurs soldats. Les Juifs ont été pendant toutes ces années dans la position des Anglais à Dunkerque. Mais jamais n'a-t-on écarté pour eux les obstacles créés par la routine et la bureaucratie, jamais n'a-t-on pris des mesures courageuses, envisagé une action rapide. C'est pourquoi, parlant à la tribune de la première Conférence Juive Internationale réunie depuis le début de la tragédie, nous disons que nos reproches s'adressent non point à l'Allemagne Nazie, pour laquelle tout principe moral a cessé d'exister, mais aux démocraties qui en portent la responsabilité devant l'histoire et qui ont le devoir de réparer ce qui est encore réparable, afin d'éviter qu'une catastrophe semblable se répète.

Par quoi cela se traduit-il en pratique? Les droits des Juifs doivent être rétablis partout où ils ont été abrogés. Autant que possible, les biens des Juifs doivent être restitués. Ce serait ajouter à la tragédie une sinistre plaisanterie que de faire hériter des biens juifs des individus, des communautés et des gouvernements non-juifs, alors que ces biens appartiennent - moralement, sinon juridiquement - à la communauté juive et doivent servir à la reconstruction

de la vie juive. La solution donnée à ce problème sera la pierre de touche de la bonne volonté des démocraties, de leur désir de réparer, ne serait-ce qu'en partie, les injustices qu'elles ont laissées commettre, et de les décharger ainsi de la responsabilité encourue.

Par ailleurs, la reconstruction de la vie juive ne peut être, à l'avenir, laissée à la seule charge des Juifs eux-mêmes. Après la catastrophe, lorsque toute la population survivante des Juifs d'Europe aura été réduite à l'état de mendicité, il sera économiquement impossible et moralement injustifiable d'imposer à la communauté juive la lourde tâche de la restauration économique et sociale des Juifs européens. La UNRRA, qui dispose d'un budget de centaines de millions n'aurait jamais été créée s'il n'avait été définitivement reconnu que les pays d'Europe, dévastés par la guerre, ne sont pas en état de pourvoir par leurs propres moyens à leur reconstruction. Nous avons droit à l'aide internationale dans la même mesure au moins que les autres peuples d'Europe. Tous les secours fournis par les Juifs - et loin de moi la pensée que les Juifs sont libérés de leur devoir à cet égard - constitueront une aide supplémentaire. L'ampleur et la complexité du problème dépassent les possibilités des secours juifs privés; c'est aux agences gouvernementales qui viendront en aide à l'Europe et à l'Asie après la guerre qu'il appartiendra de le résoudre.

Le châtimement des coupables de crimes commis contre les Juifs constitue une autre de nos demandes. Il ne s'agit pas de vengeance. Mais il faut apprendre au monde que des crimes, tels que ceux qui ont été commis par les Nazis et leur alliés, ne peuvent pas demeurer impunis... C'est là une condition nécessaire pour le rétablissement de l'équilibre moral dans le monde de demain. Nous devons noter avec satisfaction que les chefs des Nations Unies ont à maintes reprises proclamé ce principe et affirmé leur décision de l'appliquer.

Ces demandes sont simples; elles découlent toutes d'une même idée, à savoir que l'on doit faire pour nous autant que pour les autres peuples. Nous ne voulons rien de plus, mais rien de moins.

Mais le vrai problème existait avant Hitler. Et s'il s'est jamais trouvé un moment dans l'histoire juive quand le peuple Juif avait le droit d'insister une fois pour toutes sur une solution du problème de nature à écarter à tout jamais ses causes profondes et à créer pour notre peuple des conditions de vie qui empêcheraient la répétition de la tragédie actuelle... ce moment est venu. C'est pourquoi aucun tableau des demandes juives ne peut avoir de signification historique s'il n'aboutit pas à la demande d'établissement de l'Etat Juif (Jewish Commonwealth) en Palestine.

Nous ne demandons pas l'émigration forcée. Les Juifs qui désirent rester dans leurs pays d'origine ont ce droit et doivent être rétablis dans leur statut antérieur. Mais qui se reconnaîtra le droit moral de forcer des hommes et des femmes à recommencer leur vie sur les tombes de leurs parents assassinés? La demande d'un Etat Juif a débordé les limites du parti Sioniste - l'énorme majorité des Juifs du monde entier insiste pour que telle soit la solution donnée au problème Juif; une réparation réelle nous est due par le monde démocratique, réparation pour la tragédie de la dernière décennie; elle ne peut consister que dans l'établissement de l'Etat Juif, où chaque Juif, venant d'Europe ou d'ailleurs, celui qui désire y aller comme celui qui y est forcé, sera reçu et trouvera refuge.

Notre demande de représentation juive dans les conseils des Etats est nécessaire pour l'aboutissement de nos demandes. Des questions de vie ou de mort pour notre peuple sont à l'ordre du jour de toutes les Conférences internationales, présentes et futures. Devons-nous à tout jamais nous fier au bon vouloir d'amis pour y plaider notre cause? Le fait que l'Etat Juif n'existe pas encore n'est pas une raison suffisante pour nous exclure de ces conseils. Il y a des précédents en nombre suffisant, cas d'admission de membres ne représentant aucun Gouvernement, mais siégeant, ne serait-ce qu'en qualité de conseil. Il existe des moyens simples, démocratiques, de faire droit aux demandes de la majorité de notre peuple et de reconnaître le droit d'hommes d'Etat habilités à le représenter. De quel droit nous imposerait-on une condition qui n'est exigée d'aucun autre peuple - je veux dire l'unanimité? Son défaut est un bon prétexte pour refuser le droit de représentation - mais ce n'est pas une raison suffisante pour ne pas l'accorder. Parce que nous n'avons ni Gouvernement, ni Parlement, ni tribunaux, ni police pour sanctionner la volonté de la majorité, devons-nous être punis encore davantage en n'étant pas admis à participer dans les débats dont dépendra notre avenir? Le premier pas vers un régime d'égalité serait de nous reconnaître en tant que peuple et de nous accorder un droit de représentation dans toutes les Conférences et tous les organismes dont c'est le

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rôle d'étudier les questions ayant pour nous une importance vitale.

Une nation est aussi puissante dans sa politique étrangère que sa politique intérieure est forte; aucune analyse de nos problèmes actuels ne serait complète si elle ne tenait compte des questions qui se posent dans notre vie juive intérieure. Le Congrès Juif Mondial a toujours soutenu que le problème juif est, dans son essence, un problème international. Ou bien nous serons partout des citoyens libres et égaux, ou bien notre peuple ne sera en sécurité nulle part. Et s'il est généralement admis aujourd'hui que l'isolationisme a vécu dans tous les Etats, il est certainement une impossibilité pour aucune des portions du peuple juif. Tous les problèmes que je viens d'indiquer ne peuvent être résolus que par une entente et une coopération internationale entre les diverses communautés juives. Une approche approfondie de ces problèmes exige l'expansion des activités du Congrès Juif Mondial - elle exige une action quotidienne et la présence d'un personnel d'experts compétents et expérimentés dans toutes les capitales du monde. Il faudra des années pour que les problèmes qui se posent dans le monde d'après-guerre soient résolus; aucun de ces problèmes ne nous est étranger. On pouvait peut-être produire des arguments contre une telle coopération dans les jours passés, lorsque l'isolationisme florissait en Amérique et ailleurs. Aujourd'hui, ces arguments sont sans valeur. La majorité des Juifs est prête à coopérer; à cet égard, je note avec satisfaction le contact étroit établi par le Congrès Juif Mondial avec la "American Jewish Conference" aux Etats-Unis, avec le "Board of Deputies" en Grande-Bretagne et, évidemment, avec la "Jewish Agency for Palestine". Sous ce rapport, je dois signaler la nécessité de renouer et de raffermir les liens entre les Juifs du monde entier et la communauté juive de l'U.S.S.R.. Ce sera long et difficile, mais, plus la Russie prend à sa charge de responsabilités internationales, plus le mur qui sépare les Soviétiques du reste du monde s'effrite. Une de nos tâches intérieures essentielles consistera à ramener la communauté juive russe dans l'orbite de la vie juive et à faire appel à ses grandes ressources et à sa compétence pour la reconstruction de la vie juive.

Je l'ai déjà dit, il n'y a d'unanimité chez aucun peuple. Exiger des décisions unanimes serait donner une prime à chaque minorité, si insignifiante soit-elle, qui ne serait pas assez disciplinée pour s'incliner devant les vœux de la majorité. Nous n'avons ni le temps, ni les moyens d'obtenir cette unanimité. Je suis convaincu que l'immense majorité des Juifs est aujourd'hui unie; les demandes essentielles du peuple juif dans le monde d'après-guerre sont les mêmes, tant en ce qui concerne la Palestine que les problèmes de la "diaspora". Si la grande majorité est d'accord, comme c'est le cas, cela suffit pour qu'il y ait action commune; les minorités qui refuseront de s'incliner n'auront qu'à rester en dehors.

Depuis plusieurs générations du peuple juif, aucune n'a eu à porter de responsabilités aussi lourdes que la nôtre. La vraie victoire d'Hitler consisterait à faire perdre aux Juifs survivants leur foi dans l'humanité et dans leur propre avenir. Je ne suis pas de ceux qui essaient de voir la réalité meilleure qu'elle ne l'est. Mais je crois sincèrement que si les survivants parmi le peuple d'Israël ne perdent ni leur foi ni leur courage, alors - malgré toutes les souffrances vécues - notre avenir n'est pas sérieusement menacé.

Mais, sans une Palestine juive, notre avenir en tant que peuple sera plus que sérieusement menacé. Avec elle - et je parle encore sous l'impression toute fraîche de mon séjour en Palestine - nous ne devons pas avoir de craintes. Dans l'immense lutte entre notre peuple et le Nazisme, nous serons finalement les vainqueurs, bien qu'ayant eu à payer cette victoire par les vies d'un tiers ou d'un quart du peuple juif. Nous devons compenser cette perte par un plus grand dévouement et par la charge de responsabilités plus lourdes. Les communautés juives de l'Hémisphère Occidental, qui ont jusqu'ici occupé des places de second rang, devront en sortir et venir se mettre en avant. L'avenir de notre peuple dépendra dans une large mesure d'une coopération étroite et complète des Juifs des deux Amériques.

Une responsabilité immense incombe à notre génération. Il dépendra de nous que, dans les années à venir, des fondations soient posées d'un grand et nouvel avenir pour le peuple juif; sinon, la tragédie vécue par les Juifs d'Europe marquera le début d'une période de déclin et de désintégration de notre peuple. Les deux éventualités sont réelles, mais la décision finale, le choix dépendent de nous. Notre génération, la plus tragique entre toutes, peut encore être bénie, si elle accepte de jouer le rôle que l'histoire du peuple juif lui destine et si elle assume la responsabilité de montrer le chemin, d'un passé tragique, à travers un présent incertain, vers un avenir nouveau.

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WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE  
WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
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St. Charles Hotel

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REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

of the

RELIEF AND REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Headed by DR. ARIEH TARTAKOWER

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INTRODUCTION  
TO REPORT ON ACTIVITIES  
OF THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS OF THE  
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

PREFACE

The following report, submitted to the Emergency Conference, called by the World Jewish Congress, is sub-divided into several parts, the first being an historical survey of the development of our activities up to the end of 1942. The further portions are devoted to the various aspects of the World Jewish Congress relief activities, as they have developed in the course of the last two years; the immigration aid activities and individual service; relief activities for displaced persons; relief activities for Jewish refugee groups in various countries; our activities in connection with the UNRRA and other intergovernmental relief bodies; activities around the establishment of the Standing Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation; our special activities for Polish Jewry; preparations for the registration of Jewish communal property, etc.

Each of these reports was prepared by the person in direct charge of the respective work. Together they form a composite picture of what was done or attempted by the World Jewish Congress in the vast field called Relief and Rehabilitation, the importance of which, tremendous though it was in the last few years, may still grow in the years to come.

The portion on our activities for Polish Jewry was incorporated in its entirety in the present report despite the fact that it also contains parts devoted to the political work and to publications issued by the Polish Department of the World Jewish Congress. The line of demarcation between the political and rehabilitation work of the Congress, vague as it may be in certain respects, is still less clear in the special work done for the Polish-Jewish martyr population.

A few remarks may be added as to the common denominator binding all these reports, various though their contents might be. The fact that all of them may be regarded as falling under the headline of Relief and Rehabilitation, is not the only justification for their joint publication. The specific character of the Relief and Rehabilitation work done by the World Jewish Congress is explained to a considerable degree in the historic part of the report. Our relief work is, from this point of view, part and parcel of the activities of the Congress, which subdivided as they are into different sections, are based on the fundamental idea that whatever is done for the Jewish people, must be done by the people itself and must be the expression of the will of broad sections of the Jewish population; that the unity and solidarity of the Jewish people throughout the world, regardless of geographic boundaries must not only be proclaimed, but also realized in everyday life; that there exists a strong contact and interdependence between the different fields of the Congress activities; and that the anomaly of the situation of the Jewish people, which has found its most terrible expression in the past few years, requires specific methods of work, and cannot possibly fit into the routine work, as it is to be found--and perhaps rightly so--in the relief machinery of other nations. Out of those fundamental assumptions grew the close contact which we have tried to keep with Jewish public opinion and with representatives of the Jewish population, in fixing the details of the work to be done as well as in the process of its realization.

A Relief Committee was established by us as early as 1940, consisting of representatives of American Jewry and of various European Jewish communities who were frequently invited to hear reports on the current work and discuss plans as to the work still to be done. Our friends in the different countries have received the minutes of the meetings of this Committee and, in this

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way, have been able to follow the details of the work and transmit their views to us. The work for Polish Jewry was done in close cooperation with the organizations concerned and especially with the Representation of Polish Jewry and the American Federation for Polish Jews; efforts were also made to establish contact with the Federations of Polish Jews in other countries. At present we are trying to enlarge this cooperation by inviting representatives of other Polish-Jewish organizations to participate in our work. The Standing Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation, from the very beginning, recruited the best possible experts in the different fields of its activities; in this way, among other policies, the one to be followed in our relations with the UNRRA could be agreed upon with experts who also represent different Jewish communities; efforts are being made to have the Sub-Committee for Displaced Persons within the Standing Committee enlarged by the cooption of new members, who will be directly delegated by our European representative committees. In the same way, the registration of Jewish communal property was started, in cooperation with the Committee composed of representatives of the Polish-Jewish community, since Polish-Jewish communal property will be registered first.

As said before, also the practical relief work in the different countries and especially the relief work for refugee groups was, wherever possible done through representatives of such groups, limiting the direct intervention on the part of the World Jewish Congress to a minimum.

Not less clear was the special character of the Relief and Rehabilitation work arising out of the consciousness of the unique situation and the specific problems of the Jewish people. Pure and simple relief separated from political activities, which may be the rule among other nations, is not tenable for us. Whenever necessary, our relief work has taken advantage of the political machinery of the Congress. This found its strongest expression in the field of rescue, that is, as long as the rescue activities were combined with those in the field of relief and rehabilitation. At present, the political moments are especially distinct in our relations with the Intergovernmental relief bodies and with different governments and military authorities; however, they may easily be found also in other fields of our activities. We accept them without hesitation, if convinced that this is of importance to the continuation and the effectiveness of our work.

The pioneer character of the work done by us may be another outgrowth of this consciousness. Quick decisions and immediate action have always seemed to us more important than long investigations and a hesitating attitude which can prove ruinous to the work of relief. This principle was adopted by us with the outbreak of the war in Poland, it was then followed in France and its last example has been the relief work for refugees in Russia. Ways and means were found which served as models for other organizations. Of course, great difficulties had to be overcome. The risk of funds and energy was involved in many steps of this kind, but we never hesitated to take these chances.

In connection with the specific character of our relief activities, the help to Jewish populations in occupied Europe deserves to be mentioned. Not only have we done our best within the limits of our financial possibilities to support Underground relief activities, but we never recognized the validity of the erroneous conception that feeding the Jewish population in occupied Europe means hampering the war effort of the United Nations. For years we continued our efforts to convince the Allied Governments, and especially the governments of the United States and Great Britain, that not only should they not hamper relief activities for the starving Jewish population in occupied Europe, but on the contrary, they should regard it as their duty to cooperate and invest their own funds in this most important work. We continued to press this point and, in the end, can say that a certain measure of success was achieved. The decision of the United States and the British Government at the end of 1943, according to which subsidies were to be granted to the International Red Cross to enable it to enlarge its relief work in the occupied territories of Europe, and also the decision of the United States Government in the middle of 1944 to transmit a certain number of food parcels for the Jewish population in the internment and labor camps may be quoted as the most important accomplishments. There can scarcely be any better proof both of the

combination of political and relief activities and of the breaking down of barriers in the way of relief, which a few years ago might have seemed insurmountable.

This fundamental policy was also followed in our relations with other organizations. Our relations with the Joint Ort-Ose Committee were unfortunately mainly limited to financial problems arising out of their participation in the proceeds of our fund-raising campaigns in the countries of South America; efforts to enlarge this cooperation by a mutual exchange of information and by discussing our plans in a Joint Committee, on a more permanent basis, were not very successful, mainly because the great burden of our work did not allow us to devote the necessary attention to this rather important problem; for the same reason the idea of cooperation between us and the HIAS in the field of transportation of refugees could not be materialized. However, representatives, especially of Ose, have participated, in their personal capacity, in our various committees and their cooperation has been most valuable. The establishment of the Standing Committee on Relief and Rehabilitation may give us an opportunity of securing the cooperation as experts of prominent representatives of many other organizations and of strengthening, in this way, the relations between them and the World Jewish Congress.

Within the limits of our modest financial possibilities, we have, at the same time, tried to help organizations whose relief activities seemed deserving. Subsidies were granted in one form or another to various relief institutions of orthodox Jewry, to the Association of Polish Jewish Refugees, to the Association of Lithuanian Jews, to our Austrian friends, towards the relief work for Alsatian Jewry, and a few others. Limited as the granted amounts were, they encouraged the respective organizations or committees to continue and enlarge their work and they strengthened our cooperation with them. Also in this field we followed our fundamental principle of not interfering with the activities of the organizations supported by us. However, it may be mentioned that there have been cases, especially with the associations of the Polish Jewish refugees and the Lithuanian Jews, where the actual relief work was done through the machinery of our organization.

There was a rather clear trend in the development of the activities of the World Jewish Congress from relief in the strict sense of the word to the work of rehabilitation. It may even, within the limits of this report, have found its expression in the special reports devoted to the Standing Committee on Relief and Rehabilitation, to our relations with the intergovernmental bodies and to registration of Jewish property. This line of development was primarily dictated by the consciousness of the fact that the tremendous task of saving the remnants of European Jewry from the danger of destruction by hunger and cold and building a new life for them requires, on the one hand, a great and responsible concentration around the plans to be prepared and the concrete work to be done in the future and, on the other, makes it clear that such tasks can never be achieved through the effort of the Jewish people alone or even mainly through Jewish means. The means which we have had at our disposal for our relief activities were unfortunately very limited; but even had they been considerably larger in the past, and even if they are destined to increase in the future, the main work to be done still lies in the field of rehabilitation, where, due to the position of the Congress, with its political and organizational possibilities and the different contacts established with many official and private bodies, great and, perhaps, even decisive achievements may be expected.

Problems arising out of this situation will be taken up in my address at our Emergency Conference. It may therefore be sufficient to mention them merely within the limits of this preface. It remains to be stressed that this new rehabilitation work of the World Jewish Congress has not affected our relief activities in the strict sense of the word, but, as will appear from the various sections of this report, on the contrary, these activities have been continued and even enlarged; the final fate of this field of our work remains to be decided by the Conference. On the other hand, the rather important new positions which were created in the course of the last year, especially in the field of our relations with the UNRRA and in the Standing Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation, and which may be enlarged in the very near future by the establishment

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of our courses for social work and of the Council of International Voluntary Relief Agencies are based on the same fundamental ideology which is characteristic of our relief work. Never in our negotiations with the UNRRA or with other Intergovernmental bodies have we tried to conceal any of the principles mentioned at the beginning of this preface; on the contrary, whenever necessary, we stress and underline those principles, time and again. The same refers to our Standing Committee whose different sections, though they may comprise persons with diverse and from time to time even contradictory opinions, and though no efforts are made or even planned by us to influence them, are based on the fundamental idea of the unity of the Jewish people and of the democratic character of whatever is done on behalf of its vital interests. Our courses will be conducted in the same spirit, as will any institution in the field of rehabilitation which may still be created in the months and years to come, in accordance with the future structure of the Relief and Rehabilitation work of the World Jewish Congress. This may serve as a guarantee of our share in the effort to help, in the unspeakable darkness of the present war, to find for the Jewish people a way toward a better and more dignified future.

Arish Tartakower

November 1944

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
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## THE RELIEF ACTIVITY OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

by A. Alperin

The problem of relief work was taken up at the very inception of the World Jewish Congress. The World Jewish Congress adopted the principle that Jewish relief activities should be centralized and conducted in accordance with the needs and spirit of the Jewish masses, with particular attention being given to permanent results rather than palliative measures. Moreover, it was the view of the World Jewish Congress that relief activities are not an isolated function but are intimately tied up with political work.

A political effort can often counteract the effect of material losses to such an extent that demands for relief will be greatly reduced. This assumption has been proven true in a number of political rescue campaigns conducted by the World Jewish Congress even before the war. A case in point is that of the 5,000 Jews in the Saar area, whose security was threatened when that region was incorporated in Hitler Germany. Thanks to a vigorous political effort by the World Jewish Congress, opportunities were provided for the emigration of the Saar Jews, who were also allowed to transfer their property. Thus what would have been a serious relief problem was avoided. To some extent, also, similar results were obtained by the political efforts of the World Jewish Congress before the War, on behalf of Jews in Rumania and Danzig.

Relief questions were discussed at the first World Jewish Congress in August, 1936 in Geneva. At that session the former-General Secretary of the Executive of the Jewish World Relief Conference, Israel Jetroikin, delivered an Address concerning the need to reorganize Jewish relief activity in order to centralize it and particularly to make it conform with the needs and spirit of the Jewish masses. A number of resolutions were adopted by the World Jewish Congress in line with these recommendations.

In its early years, because of its arduous and intensive political activities, the World Jewish Congress was unable to make concrete progress in organizing relief activity in accordance with its principles. In preparation for this task however, the World Jewish Congress carried out, over the last three years before the War, an earnest and profound investigation of the economic situation of the Jews in Europe and the underlying causes of Jewish economic destitution in most of those countries. A special department of the World Jewish Congress, organized for this purpose and directed by the late lamented economist, Professor Georg Bernhard, former editor-in-chief of the Vossische Zeitung, published a report shortly before the outbreak of the War containing much valuable material about the Jewish economic situation in Europe.

The great Jewish catastrophe which began in Eastern Europe shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939, caused leading figures in the World Jewish Congress to undertake immediate relief and rescue work without further preparation. Dr. Nachum Goldman, Chairman of the Congress Administrative Committee, proposed a central agency for world-wide Jewish relief work in view of the urgent necessity and great value of such a body for the purpose of rationalizing this activity. As early as September, 1939, Dr. Goldman had begun negotiations with the Parisian offices of Jewish relief organizations. The first impression derived from these negotiations were that ICA ("Jewish Colonization Association," a foundation financed by Baron Maurice de Hirsch) and the Emigrants Aid Society HIAS--ICA (Hicem) would have joined such a union of relief organizations. It is certain that Jewish relief organizations in Great Britain would also have joined. But in their negotiations with

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the directors of the European Main Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Paris, Dr. Goldman encountered difficulties and eventually opposition to the projected union. Because of this attitude on the part of the Joint, Dr. Goldman's efforts failed to achieve the desired result, and the urgently needed project for centralizing Jewish relief activities could not be carried out.

The World Jewish Congress then undertook its own relief and rescue program on behalf of Jewish war victims. A special "Relief Committee for Jewish War Victims" organized for that purpose by the World Jewish Congress at Geneva, was at first headed by a directorate composed of Dr. Nachum Goldman, Professor Paul Guggenheim, (head of the Legal Department of the World Jewish Congress), and Dr. Abraham Silberschein, member of the World Jewish Congress Administrative Committee and a former Deputy of the Polish Parliament. It appeared later that it would be more efficient to have a single person responsible for relief work, and in April, 1940, Dr. Abraham Silberschein took over the direction of the committee.

The work of the committee was confronted with extraordinary difficulties from the very beginning. The collapse of Polish Jewry came so quickly and assumed such dreadful forms that there was great confusion of spirit in the early weeks of the War, making it all the more difficult to organize relief projects. The World Jewish Congress was the first to try to master the chaotic situation. Being cut off from occupied Poland in the very first weeks of the War, the World Jewish Congress quickly organized projects for assistance to Polish Jewish refugees in neighboring countries through its committees and contacts in those countries, all of which had participated in the current activities of the Congress ever since 1936. Special Committees of Assistance were established immediately in Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, Lithuania, and Latvia, to which countries a continuous stream of refugees was flowing. Mr. Reiss was sent to Rumania, where in the first period the largest numbers of Polish Jewish refugees was concentrated, as a special delegate of the World Jewish Congress to conduct relief work.

To organize immediate relief, determine the real number of refugees, establish connections between them and the outer world, particularly with relatives in the United States -- these were the most urgent tasks which the committees of the World Jewish Congress undertook at once. The Geneva Office established contact with all countries bordering on Poland, and gave Congress representatives the assignment of registering the refugees and distributing immediate aid.

After a short time the main office of the Committees of Assistance in Geneva received its first lists of refugees in Rumania and Hungary. These lists were distributed to branches and representatives of the World Jewish Congress in all countries and to the Jewish press in Europe and the Americas, establishing the first contacts between Polish refugees and their relatives and friends the world over. Simultaneously the Committee of Assistance in Geneva transmitted letters from the refugees to their relatives in other countries, particularly in America, thus building bridges over which the refugees could find their way to a new adjustment.

In the first six months of the War, over 10,000 such letters passed through the Committee in Geneva. This in the atmosphere of shocked helplessness which prevailed among Jewish social work agencies was an achievement of extraordinary significance. It was a lifeline for thousands of destitute, uprooted Jews, and it brought the first consolation to their relatives anxiously awaiting news all over the world. Soon the refugees began to receive cables, letters, transmissions of money from their relatives. This contact was maintained and expanded with the assistance of representatives and committees of the World Jewish Congress in the various countries. In 1942, a special department for seeking out relatives was established in the Congress Office in New York.

Even more important were the efforts to discover the new addresses of disrupted Jewish families in occupied Poland itself and to establish contact with their relatives abroad, at the first opportunity. After the Hitler Blitz attack upon Poland, Jews fled in panic from city to city, and eventually found themselves in a wide variety of new places. Through the direct connection between the World Jewish Congress Committee of Assistance in Geneva and the Head Office of the International Red Cross, also in Geneva special inquiries were instituted at that time to discover new addresses in Poland. In consequence letters began to arrive from Jews in Poland through the Red Cross and were transmitted to relatives abroad, particularly in the United States. The significance of this contact cannot be underestimated and it brought considerable assistance, as long as it was possible to transmit the letters. In this activity too, many, many thousands of Jewish families in Poland were assisted by being brought into contact with relatives abroad through the Committees of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress.



As to the refugees, not only were they brought into communication with their relatives but everything possible was done to ease their lot in the countries to which they had been admitted. Their reception on the part of government officials was often far from good. For the most part they were given only temporary permission to remain, and serious difficulties had to be overcome in obtaining extensions. The Jewish population of receiving countries showed great sympathy and eagerness to aid the refugees, but the limited resources of local Jews were far from sufficient, and, moreover, it was necessary to organize relief activities and to avoid the chaos of uncoordinated effort.

This task was assumed by the Committees of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress in each country and first of all in Rumania, Hungary, and Lithuania. These committees gained the support both of leading figures in the Jewish community and of representatives in almost all local Jewish organizations. At the beginning they received their immediate cash requirements from the Main Office at Geneva, both for relief work and legal aid to refugees.

The constant threat that refugees would have to move on raised the problem of permanent immigration for them. In this respect too, the World Jewish Congress Committees of Assistance did outstanding work. The chief problem arose, in the beginning, in Rumania. A small number of refugees who had obtained visas for the United States and South American countries were sent to those countries with the assistance of the Immigrants Aid Society, Hicem. The majority however could be helped only by immigration to Palestine. The World Jewish Congress Committee of Assistance took this project as its own, in close cooperation with the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. The special delegate of the World Jewish Congress in Rumania, Mr. Anselm Reiss (former Chairman of the Palestine Bureau in Warsaw) took charge of this work together with the permanent representative of the World Jewish Congress in Rumania, Dr. Kramer, and the Special Committee of Assistance, including representatives of the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities in Rumania and of the World Jewish Congress. In negotiations with the Rumanian government at that time, the right was secured for refugees to transfer to Palestine everything that they had brought with them from Poland. They were also granted permission to stay in the country until it became possible for them to leave for Palestine.

A special problem arose subsequently when the border between Rumania and occupied Poland was closed and many refugees nevertheless tried to cross it. Most of them were arrested on the Rumanian side, and their needs had to be attended to while they were in prison and efforts had to be made for their release and immigration to Palestine. Most of the cases concerned Polish halutzim. The representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Rumania undertook this work also. They succeeded in obtaining a certain amount of help from the Polish consulates in the country. In this way, the intensive efforts of the Committees of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress resulted, in the first months after the outbreak of the War, in substantially liquidating the refugee problem in Rumania as well as in Hungary at that time. (Subsequently the new and severe problem of Jewish refugees in Rumania and Hungary arose, to which we shall refer in a later part of the report.)

Similar activity on a large scale was conducted by the representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Vilna, which region was incorporated in Lithuania and whither, in the first few months after the War broke out, many thousands of Polish refugees gathered. Aid was given chiefly to needy refugees, many of them halutzim or children. Rabbinical academies which transferred to that city from occupied Poland were also assisted. A special home was established for seventy child-refugees, where they were fed and cared for under pedagogical supervision. In Vilna, too, the Committees of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress enabled many refugees to immigrate to Palestine. Travelling expenses which were particularly great in view of the very round-about and difficult communications with Palestine had to be provided. Of a special interest is the shipment to Palestine of a group of 35 child-refugees who had been interned in Zbonszyn, Poland ever since their expulsion from Germany in 1938, and who fled to Vilna at the outbreak of the War. The World Jewish Congress concerned itself with their fate and transferred them to Palestine.

A considerable group of internees in Zbonszyn were deported by the Nazis, after the outbreak of the War, to Slovakia. Representatives of the World Jewish Congress took up their case and enabled most of them to immigrate to Palestine and South American countries. A large number of Polish Jewish refugees also found their way at that time to Italy, hoping to reach Palestine. The Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress also cared for their interests and helped them financially in arriving in Palestine.

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Thus even at the time, at the very beginning of the War, the World Jewish Congress concerned itself with the problems of Jewish refugees everywhere and gave them support. This rescue campaign was considerably expanded later when additional Jewish refugees poured out of every country occupied by the Nazis. But another question arose in the first few months of the War which became even more difficult and complicated thereafter: how to bring effective assistance to the wretched, starving, and tormented Jews in occupied Poland itself. In this difficult task too, the Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress succeeded in accomplishing much.

Additional difficulties arose in the very provision of funds for the ramified relief activities of the World Jewish Congress. The World Jewish Congress was not in the position of having collected large sums of money for relief only to have to wonder what to do with them. Because of the suddenness of the catastrophe which had befallen Polish Jewry, it was necessary at one and the same time to organize assistance and to provide the requisite funds for this work. In Europe there was hardly any money to be obtained at that time, funds could be exported from England and France. The Jewish communities in small European countries, already weighed down with grave wartime concerns, could give no substantial resources for Jewish relief activity in foreign countries. Very soon the problems arose in those countries themselves of providing relief for Jewish refugees who came there. No substantial sums could be expected, either, from the Western European countries who were still not at war. In the United States no campaign could be undertaken because of previous agreements providing for the distribution of collected sums among other Jewish organizations. Thus there remained only the countries of South America where it was necessary before proclaiming a fund-raising campaign to conduct extensive work for organizing affiliates of the World Jewish Congress.

This difficult assignment was undertaken by the special delegate of the World Jewish Congress, and member of its Administrative Committee, Dr. Jacob Hellman. In the first year of the War, Dr. Hellman went to Argentina and after a period of preparation opened an office of the World Jewish Congress in Buenos Aires for the whole of South America. In the early days of his mission Dr. Hellman visited several South American countries in addition to Argentina, and succeeded in each case in gaining the support of an imposing array of Jewish groups for the activities of the World Jewish Congress. Thanks to his work the Jewish communities of these countries virtually all affiliated with the World Jewish Congress. The committees of the World Jewish Congress established in those countries began to conduct fund collections for the Congress' relief activities. In several cases these were conducted in common with campaigns for Palestine reconstruction funds.

It was these funds with which the Committee of Assistance in Geneva was able to carry on and expand its work.

The chief concern apart from the campaign for the rescue of refugees in the first winter of the War was how to bring aid to occupied Poland itself.

Even at that time there was dire need among the Jews. The Nazis had established the first ghettos, the earliest one being in Lodz. Appeals for aid came from Warsaw which had suffered so much during the siege. But in order to undertake a relief project from Geneva on behalf of Jewish war victims in the German-occupied zone of Poland it was necessary to make sure that the trans-missions would really be distributed to Jews by the Nazis and that nothing would be done that would break or weaken the blockade. To obtain guarantees to this effect the leaders of the World Jewish Congress entered into protracted negotiations with the representatives of the International and American Red Cross -- Mr. James G. Nicholson, Mr. Malcolm Davis, Mr. Dodd(?) and Miss Odier. After obtaining the requisite assurances the relief campaign for occupied Poland began, taking the form chiefly of transmitting packages of food and medical supplies. With the assistance of two large Swiss firms who delivered their products partly at reduced prices and partly gratis to the Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress, 14 large shipments of medical supplies were sent from Geneva to the Jewish community in Warsaw, and food packages were sent to individual addressees. These shipments were extremely useful in view of the epidemics which were already spreading.

By the first winter of the war, the Committee of Assistance in Geneva had provided a large number of such food packages to starving Jews in occupied Poland. Subsequently this project was expanded under the direction of the Main Office of the World Jewish Congress, which was transferred, after the

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French collapse, from Paris to New York. A total of over 50,000 food packages was sent in this way to Poland through the Committee of Assistance in Geneva, a large part of them upon the order of persons in America for their relatives. Many packages however were also sent out of the resources of the World Jewish Congress to persons on lists of especially needy Jews in Poland submitted by various Polish Jewish groups. About 12,000 packages were paid for by the Congress at an expense of more than \$60,000.

In the early period it was also possible to send considerable sums of cash to occupied Poland, without lending any support to the treasury of Nazi Germany. The Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress succeeded in transmitting money for the relief of the Jewish population in Polish areas governed by Soviet Russia up to the amount of one million Polish Zlotys. Occasional opportunities arose to support the Chalutzim in those regions.

The World Jewish Congress also began at once to send considerable sums of money to the Special Relief Committee in Palestine, organized in order to assist Jewish Refugees from Poland who began to arrive there.

The Committee of Assistance in Geneva, for a considerable time after the outbreak of the war, supported several hundred Jewish children in Czechoslovakia whose parents had been deported to the Jewish reservation in Lublin by the Nazis.

A very important rescue project was carried out by the Committee in Geneva in the beginning of the war on behalf of internees in concentration camps in Poland. With extreme effort 531 internees in camps were given the possibility of emigrating and thereby literally rescued from death.

The devoted labor of the leaders of the World Jewish Congress Committees of Assistance in Geneva led to noteworthy results in the early period. The address of the Committee became widely known among refugees all over the world, as well as among tormented Jews in occupied Poland, as a rescue office which did not fail to answer whenever its aid was sought. The relief activity in Geneva was conducted by understanding and sympathetic persons ready for any sacrifice in order to aid or rescue.

Their devotion was soon called upon by a new catastrophe which befell many thousands of Jewish refugees and the well established Jewish community of France.

Only a small part of the Jews in Norway, Denmark and Holland were able to escape before the Nazis seized those countries. But in the terrible May days of 1940 a great stream of Jewish refugees flowed from Belgium to France. The panic-stricken and disorganized mass was soon seen in Paris and then in Southern France also. The refugee masses on the roads of France were swollen by the Blitz advance of Germany into Northern France and soon into Paris itself. Together with a large mass of non-Jewish population, scores of thousands of Jews fled from the French capital towards the South.

The number of Jewish refugees assembled in the summer of 1940 in the unoccupied zone of Southern France was estimated at about 100,000. A large concentration were assembled in the city of Toulouse and its vicinity. More than half of the refugees were utterly destitute and had to be supplied with the most elementary necessities. Jewish social agencies were overwhelmed by the speed and extent of the disaster and the refugees remained uncared for. Local French authorities began to give assistance to the refugees on register, but accepting such help soon involved the danger of being sent back to a concentration camp (as actually happened later to many refugees who were registered for government relief). Hampered by lack of means, the Jewish communities in many places undertook a modest relief activity, but in the final analysis, the situation of scores of thousands of Jewish refugees in the unoccupied zones was extremely severe and in many cases desperate.

The World Jewish Congress office which transferred from Paris to unoccupied zones immediately proceeded to organize relief work. By the end of June, 1940, the first major Committee of Assistance was established in Toulouse. Soon also, the World Jewish Congress Committee of Assistance in Geneva sent the first sums of money with which it was possible to undertake a more comprehensive relief activity. Representatives of the Toulouse Committee visited the refugee centers, large and small, acquainted themselves

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with the situation and needs of the refugees, and brought them their first assistance. Upon the return of these emissaries it was possible to work out concrete plans for a considerable relief activity on behalf of the vast refugee masses. The Central Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress for Refugees in France was then established in Lyons.

Almost simultaneously the Main Office of the World Jewish Congress, having been transferred, from France was opened in New York. Dr. Aryeh Tartakower, the General Secretary, took over the direction of the Special Committee set up by the World Jewish Congress in New York under the chairmanship of Dr. Nachum Goldman. Together with the Geneva office, the main office in New York became the center of relief work of the World Jewish Congress.

The intensive relief work undertaken by the World Jewish Congress in New York extended to the then unoccupied zone of France. At first, the great assemblage of refugees in France claimed the greatest attention. Regular assistance for thousands of destitute refugees, including many intellectuals, was provided. Legal aid was also organized, for the refugees soon found themselves involved in a number of legal questions concerning their right to stay in places to which they had fled. The slightest formal inaccuracy was sufficient at that time to cause one to be sent to a concentration camp. In addition not only cash support, but also clothing, food, and medical supplies were distributed. Nor was any opportunity lost to reach a permanent solution of individual problems, despite the confused situation. Such solutions were in fact the main purpose of the relief work of the World Jewish Congress at all times. The directors of relief work in Geneva and New York welcomed the plan to establish farms for young Jewish refugees in unoccupied France, and earmarked considerable sums for this purpose. Two such farms were established very early, one near Toulouse in Viaroz and the second in Chary near Moissac. Those farms gradually developed and expanded absorbing additional young refugees, who were thus not only able to find a livelihood but were morally fortified by finding decent work and a free, comradely milieu. Moreover these young refugees, while working on the farms, no longer needed to fear being sent to concentration camps to which all unemployed persons seized in raids in the larger cities were consigned.

The problem of aiding internees in French camps, which had occupied the attention of the World Jewish Congress even before the collapse, grew increasingly severe. Scores of thousands of refugees were interned in camps in the unoccupied zone, the greater part of them consisting of German and Austrian refugees. The directress of the Committee of Assistance of the World Jewish Congress obtained permission to visit the camps and acquaint herself with the needs of the internees. Efforts were undertaken in order to liberate the old and sick from the camps, and assistance was provided as far as possible.

Later, when reports began to arrive from all sides of the horrible conditions in French concentration camps, the leaders of the World Jewish Congress in New York interceded in Washington to influence the Vichy government to alter the inhuman conditions under which internees were held. If the treatment was improved in certain of the French camps thereafter, it was largely owing to this political intercession of the World Jewish Congress.

The relief work on behalf of refugees in France also involved the question of aiding refugees who crossed the border from France to neighboring countries, especially Portugal, with the intention of emigrating from there to overseas countries. The stream of Jewish refugees from France to Portugal began as early as June, 1940. Soon after the collapse of France, there were about 15,000 refugees in Portugal, a large part of whom applied for immigration to countries across the ocean. The remainder had to be supported and efforts were required to find them places to immigrate. Here too, the problem of permission to reside in the country, until such opportunities for immigration were found, arose. A Committee of Assistance was established in Portugal, with the financial support of the World Jewish Congress, in order to extend material and legal aid to these refugees.

Another group of refugees from France arrived in North Africa (in French and Spanish Morocco) and concentrated chiefly in Casablanca and Tangiers. In both cities, Committees of Assistance were established to aid the refugees who were suffering under very severe difficulties. The refugees themselves began to organize, and created a special group of intellectuals in Casablanca. The Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress in New York sends regular financial assistance to both places. Throughout the trials of the refugees in France, Portugal, and North Africa, the World Jewish Congress constantly strove to find places to which they might immigrate; and thus a large number were actually removed to new homes.

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The World Jewish Congress also carried out a substantial relief project in Rumania when, in the early months of 1941, anti-Jewish excesses occurred there and thousands of Jewish families had to leave their homes and property in flight. During the second outbreak a special fund was collected in Argentina on behalf of program victims in Rumania. The World Jewish Congress conducted its relief work with this fund.

In the summer of 1940, Japan and the Far East became a destination for refugees who found their way there through Russia, hoping eventually to reach the United States, Palestine, or Australia. In the port of Kobe there were about 5,000 refugees at that time. The small Jewish community of the city established a Model Committee of Assistance. About two-thirds of the refugees were enabled to migrate farther. Visas for support had to be obtained for about 1,500 of them before they could leave. In the course of time the greater part of those refugees were transferred to Shanghai. The World Jewish Congress had a special representative in the Far East who conducted relief activity. In Kobe and later in Shanghai, the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress in New York carried out significant work of support for the refugees and endeavored at the same time to enable them to emigrate. In Shanghai, the World Jewish Congress worked in collaboration with the local Committee of Assistance for Eastern Jewish Refugees for which it set aside a monthly subsidy as long as this was possible, that is, until Pearl Harbor.

In the second half of 1941, the World Jewish Congress undertook a relief project for Jews in Croatia, where the Jewish population had been overwhelmed by a catastrophic situation. Jews who were sent to forced labor camps had to be supported and maintained alive.

During the early years of the War, the World Jewish Congress extended its relief activity to every place where refugees were found. For a long time a few hundred families of refugees were supported in Istanbul, where they were detained on their way to Palestine. Similarly, a small group of Jewish refugees from France, who were in the French Sudan, were supported by the World Jewish Congress, and a financial guarantee was given for the immigration of 60 refugee families to Australia. While it was still possible, a substantial shipment of clothing was sent for Jewish refugees interned upon the Island of Rhodes. Until Pearl Harbor, support was sent from New York for the rabbinical academies of Poland which had been transferred to the Far East. In India, the local representatives of the World Jewish Congress extended relief to about 200 Polish Jews who had come there on their way to Palestine.

An important project was carried out in the winter of 1941-42 in the unoccupied zone of France, where the representatives of the World Jewish Congress, after protracted efforts, were able to obtain the release of a considerable number of interned Jews from camps and to establish special refugee homes for them. At the same time, the relief work in the camps themselves was augmented. Food packages, clothing, and medical supplies were sent to the internees. The World Jewish Congress also extended the scope of its assistance to destitute refugees in unoccupied France, into all the small towns and villages where the refugees were dispersed.

In 1942, the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress office in New York, together with the American committee of "Ose" sent a shipment of 3,000 units of serum for injections against spotted typhus to the ghettos of Poland. This transport was sent directly to the ghettos, thanks to the efforts of the Polish government, which obtained a special permit for this purpose.

A special branch of the relief work of the World Jewish Congress offered assistance to individual communal leaders who, for one reason or another connected with the War, had fallen into difficulties. A special fund was raised in order to give such individuals necessary loans or support. This fund was administered either directly by the World Jewish Congress representatives, or by prominent individuals in various countries who were entrusted with certain sums for such purposes. Assistance of this sort was granted in a confidential and discreet manner. In many cases, the persons aided were leading figures whose legal status in certain countries was insecure and who had been arrested or interned. A few hundred such persons were rescued from France, Lithuania, and other Nazi-occupied countries by being enabled to immigrate to the United States.

The Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress office in New York together with the Committee of Assistance in Geneva not only helped individuals who were endangered, but also such institutions as the Hachalutz movement, which

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continued its work in Soviet Polish territory in Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia. Similarly assistance was extended to evacuated rabbinical academies, as mentioned above.

In many cases the Relief Department had to share part of the extremely costly expenses of immigration when refugees had that opportunity. Such was the case for the thousands of refugees from Rumania, Lithuania, and other countries who went to the United States - particularly when halutzim or children were involved. The same was true in the already mentioned case when the Geneva office succeeded in liberating hundreds of internees from German concentration camps by enabling them to emigrate, and also when endangered communal leaders were brought from Europe to America. Often, especially with regard to those rescued from Vilna, the sums of money were very large because the trip had to be made across the whole of European Russia, through Siberia to Vladivostok, and from there via Japan and the Pacific to San Francisco. A series of conferences between representatives of the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress and representatives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Immigrants' Aid Society, Hicem, established a modus for the participation of all three organizations in this project. The World Jewish Congress together with Zionist parties assumed the main burden of expenses for all Zionist leaders who had to be rescued. A special subsidy of the American Jewish Congress facilitated the accomplishment of this great task.

The World Jewish Congress carried out a very important project in 1941 on behalf of a group of 86 Jewish refugees on the ship Cabo de Hornos, who were not permitted to land anywhere along the Atlantic coast. There was danger that the refugees would be sent back to Europe, and the World Jewish Congress made extensive efforts to save the refugees. The Main Office in New York and the British Section in London communicated with the British government, the Netherlands government, and the governments of a series of South American countries concerning asylum for the hapless fugitives. Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador in Washington, was very helpful to the World Jewish Congress in these endeavors. The Chairman of the British Section of the World Jewish Congress, Dr. M. L. Perlszweig (at present in the United States) was in constant contact with him during this period. Eventually the World Jewish Congress was able to get admission for the refugee passengers on the Cabo de Hornos into the Netherlands colony of Curacao, with a large American Jewish relief organization providing the financial guarantee. This was a very important achievement which the World Jewish Congress was able to effect thanks to its intimate political connections with all Allied countries -- a factor which has more than once showed itself to be highly important in relief and rescue work.

The Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress utilized the very first opportunity which presented itself to send aid through Palestine to thousands of Jewish refugees on the border of the Soviet Union and Iran, a large number of whom were Polish halutzim. It immediately sent a substantial sum by its representatives in Palestine. The money was used in Palestine to purchase several large shipments of food and clothing for the refugees, to be distributed among the many who were in dire need. Representatives of the Polish government were very helpful in this project.

In the summer of 1942, the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress undertook an important project on behalf of Jewish refugees in the Soviet Union, as well as in Teheran where a large number of them were then concentrated. The project included:

1. a search for relatives of these refugees residing in American countries in order to unite the disrupted families; and
2. the transmission of food, clothing, medical and other aid to the refugees. A part of the refugees were enabled to emigrate. A special department of the World Jewish Congress was established for this work. The report of that department will be found in a separate section.

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
~~NOVEMBER 12-17, 1944~~

St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DIVISION FOR DISPLACED PERSONS

by  
Chaim Finkelstein

Immediately after the outbreak of the war in the fall of 1939, the World Jewish Congress embarked upon the work of locating relatives and reuniting families broken up because of the war. However, the course of the war, the occupation of almost all of Europe by the Germans as well as the transfer of the World Jewish Congress headquarters to the United States for a time disrupted this work, which had already been begun in Geneva.

The World Jewish Congress Division for Displaced Persons was created in the latter half of 1942. By that time, the picture of almost total destruction of Jewish life in Europe, had begun to emerge in all its brutal clarity. Due to the planned cruelty of the Germans, never before in the history of mankind have so tremendous a number of husbands been separated from wives and children from parents as in the present war. The longer the hostilities lasted, the more apparent it became that the number of these disrupted families far exceeds even the most pessimistic figures. And, as a result of Nazi persecutions, new interpretations have been attached to the old concept of "refugee" and the number of displaced persons has been enlarged by new categories, known as "deportees", "persons confined in ghettos" or those sent to "battalions of forced labor".

Thus, the task of helping members of disrupted families to find one another is now on a vastly greater scale than was presented during the last World War. Then, it was merely a question of thousands - now it concerns million. Whereas during the last war entire families were deported together as entities and the question of reestablishing contact among refugees involved rather distant relatives, now fathers and mothers have been separated from their children and wives from their husbands. In addition, there are scores of thousands of children hidden from the German murderers in obscure places or wandering about homeless and needing assistance to find their families.

### ROSTER OF DISPLACED JEWS

Since the autumn of 1942, when the Division for Displaced Persons began its work of locating refugees and reuniting families, we have succeeded in amassing in our files the names of over 82,000 refugees. In addition to their names and present addresses, we have also collected the following data: their ages, parentage, previous addresses and various other pertinent details.

As of October 15th, 1944, the roster of displaced Jews compiled in the files of the World Jewish Congress consisted of:

#### 1. REFUGEES FROM POLAND

In the U.S.S.R.	45,271
In Teheran, Iran	1,000
Arrived through U.S.S.R. & Teheran to Palestine	3,140

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Arrived from Italy to Palestine	90	
Arrived from Teheran to E. Africa	130	
Arrived from Teheran to N. Africa	10	
Arrived from Teheran to Mexico	26	
Arrived from Italy to the free Port Fort Ontario in Oswego, N.Y.	140	
Arrived in Naples, Italy	51	
Joined Polish Army in Middle East	330	50,188
2. <u>REFUGEES FROM THE BALTIC STATES</u>		
In the U.S.S.R.	2,000	2,000
3. <u>REFUGEES FROM BESSARABIA</u>		
In the U.S.S.R.	800	800
4. <u>REFUGEES FROM RUMANIA</u>		
In Palestine	1,259	
In Aleppo, Italy on their way to Palestine	307	1,566
5. <u>REFUGEES FROM YUGOSLAVIA</u>		
In Switzerland	460	
In Bari (Italy)	177	
In other Italian Provinces	470	
In Suez	59	
In Spain	49	
Arrived from Rab Island in Italy	160	
Arrived from Italy to Palestine	80	1,445
Arrived from Italy to Oswego	300	
Arrived from Italy to Naples (Italy)	17	317
6. <u>REFUGEES FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA</u>		
In Bari (Italy)	440	
Arrived from Italy to Palestine	203	
Arrived from Italy to Oswego	40	683
7. <u>REFUGEES FROM BELGIUM AND FRANCE IN SWITZERLAND</u>		
	7,455	7,455
8. <u>REFUGEES FROM GERMANY AND AUSTRIA</u>		
Arrived from Italy to Palestine	70	
Arrived from Italy to Oswego	405	
Arrived from Italy to Naples	67	542
9. <u>REFUGEES FROM HUNGARY IN SWITZERLAND</u>		
	320	320
10. <u>REFUGEES FROM ITALY</u>		
In Switzerland	350	350
11. <u>REFUGEES IN MAURITIUS</u>		
	300	300
12. <u>DEPORTED TO THERESIENSTADT</u> (from Germany, Austria, Holland, Denmark & France)		
	12,483	12,483
13. <u>DEPORTED TO BIRKENAU (UPPER SILESIA)</u>		
	1,600	1,600
14. <u>CONFINED IN THE CAMP OF FORCED LABOR AT CRACOW</u>		
	600	600
15. <u>DEPORTED FROM CAMP VITTEL TO GERMANY</u>		
	224	224
16. <u>MESSAGES FROM REFUGEES IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAN MENTIONED ABOVE</u>		
	500	500

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17. <u>MURDERED LEADERS OF JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND</u>	266	266
18. <u>MURDERED LEADERS OF JEWISH LIFE IN LATVIA</u>	654	654
GRAND TOTAL	82,293	

As can be seen from the above table, of the over 80,000 displaced Jews who are registered with the World Jewish Congress, the majority (over 50,000) are citizens of Poland, of whom over 45,000 are now in the territories of the U.S.S.R., over 3,000 have arrived in Palestine, over 330 joined the Polish Army in the Middle East, 140 arrived in Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York and 600 are confined at the camp of Cracow. The remainder are scattered in East Africa, North Africa, Mexico, etc.

The second largest unit in our roster embraces the deportees to Theresienstadt. Of the over 30,000 Jews confined there, almost 12,000 are registered in our files--former residents of Germany, Austria, Holland, Denmark, France and Czechoslovakia. Our files also contain almost 7,500 names of refugees from Belgium and France who are now in Switzerland; over 2,000 refugees from the Baltic States now in the U.S.S.R. and over 1,800 refugees from Yugoslavia who are at present in: Switzerland (460), Italy (over 600), Oswego (300).

Refugees from Rumania in our lists number 1,566 persons. Of these, 1,259 are at present in Palestine. Refugees from Bessarabia, now in the U.S.S.R., number 800. Refugees from Czechoslovakia number 683 (203 in Palestine).

Only recently we received the names of 600 Jews who are confined in a camp near Cracow.

Listed in our files are refugees from all walks of life, famous scientists, physicians, teachers, lawyers, engineers, as well as former bankers, industrialists, merchants well known all over the world who, overnight, were evicted from their homes and forced, only too often, to change their domiciles.

The age-groups of these refugees range from babies of 1 and 2 to old people of 80. The most gruesome feature of this roster is that, all too often, small children are alone in the world without their parents and are all too frequently ignorant of their parentage and birthplaces.

We are constantly receiving new lists of refugees and before long, we believe that our files will contain the names of over 100,000 displaced Jews--a figure which cannot be paralleled by any other organization engaged in a similar task.

#### INQUIRY SERVICE

The main purpose of our work on behalf of Jewish refugees and deportees is to help them get in touch with their close relatives and friends and to reunite them with their families. To achieve this end we employ a two-fold policy:

- A. We send to the Yiddish press, in the United States, England, Argentina, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and other South American countries, long lists of individuals seeking their relatives. These lists are regularly published and often cover a whole page of the newspaper. All Yiddish newspapers in the United States, as well as in Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and England are on our mailing list.

Besides, our releases concerning the refugee service are mailed regularly to over 120 periodicals all over the United States. The English press in New York has a rather friendly attitude towards the activities of this Division. Also the foreign language press is most sympathetic.

We also enjoy the friendly service of 18 Yiddish, English and foreign language radio announcers who broadcast information about the activities of this Division from about twenty stations.

- B. Every one of our refugee lists is stenciled, and mimeographed copies are

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mailed to the divisions of the American Jewish Congress as well as to branches and other affiliates of the World Jewish Congress all over the globe.

The following organizations are on our mailing list:

a) Divisions and affiliates of the American Jewish Congress in: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, St. Louis.

b) Branches and affiliates of the World Jewish Congress in: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, England, Guatemala, Mexico, Dutch West Indies, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Scores of people visit our New York office daily, searching our lists for the names of their beloved ones. Since we have endeavored, in our lists, to incorporate as many details as possible about each individual, this is of the greatest help to relatives and friends in recognizing and ascertaining the identity of suspected relatives among the refugees.

At the same time, we receive, daily, scores of letters from people outside of New York and abroad--in fact, from all four corners of the earth--containing anxious inquiries about relatives and friends.

It has been the established policy of this Division to do all work on behalf of the refugees in record time; lists containing many hundreds of names are corrected, recorded, filed and stenciled in a few days. Often, even on the very day of their arrival, lists are sent out to the newspapers, and mimeographed copies mailed to the organizations which cooperate with the World Jewish Congress.

It goes without saying that our refugee lists are anxiously awaited by our affiliates. The importance of these lists can be gauged by the fact that the Argentine, Cuban and Mexican offices of the World Jewish Congress have published special brochures of the refugee-lists. These organizations, as well as a number of other affiliates and divisions of the American Jewish Congress in this country, have mailing lists of their respective affiliates, to whom they send out copies of our refugee lists.

We maintain a regular correspondence with the organizations to whom we send the lists. We advise them of the most efficient means of informing relatives and friends about the refugees and how to contact them. Our lists are usually posted in the offices and social clubs of our affiliates in order to reach the largest possible number of members of the local Jewish communities.

A particularly difficult and responsible task is that of receiving people who come to inquire about their relatives. Most of them have not heard from their families since the outbreak of the war in 1939, and are desperately anxious to learn about brothers, sisters, parents, and, only too often, wives, husbands or children.

Not a day passes without some tragic scenes taking place in the office of this Division. Grown men and women weep--some for joy at finding their families and some from despair at not finding their beloved ones in our lists. After our day's work, we, in this Division, are often left broken and exhausted. However there is no attempt to lighten the burden or to shirk it. The clients who come to the office of the World Jewish Congress show trust in and thankfulness for our work, and this in turn compels us to render them conscientious service. This is doubly true in cases where there are tragic messages to be delivered, or when in answer to inquiries, we receive negative or disheartening replies. Bad news is never transmitted by mail, but during personal interviews, at which we make a point of urging our clients not to give up hope but to continue their search. We are morally repaid for our toil by the gratitude of the persons who leave the office of the World Jewish Congress, knowing that they have been among sympathetic friends who are anxious to help them.

It is worthy of note that, as a result of conscientious work, we succeed in finding approximately 20% of the relatives and friends of the refugees trying to contact their families through our facilities. This is a most satisfactory percentage.

Our activities have called forth the response not only of individuals

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who are personally interested as relatives or friends of the objects of our search, but also of numerous organizations not connected with the World Jewish Congress. We shall mention here only the American Red Cross-- the New York Chapter as well as the National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. During the past several months, we have been asked by the American Red Cross to locate 272 persons for whom they hold messages, which due to incorrect addresses they were unable to deliver. We have succeeded in locating 53 of these persons.

Incidentally, let it be said that we have numerous Gentiles among our clients. Our service is known to be non-sectarian.

#### TRACING OF REFUGEES

##### A. In the U.S.S.R.

Simultaneously with our work of informing relatives in the United States and in other free countries about the whereabouts of their families stranded all over the world, who are already registered in our files, we have started the project of tracing refugees in the U.S.S.R. and of helping them to establish contact with their relatives abroad. However, in this important and most urgent problem facing us today, we have to overcome a great geographical difficulty, since it is practically impossible to locate refugees in the far-flung corners of Russia to which they have fled. On the other hand, the refugees themselves cannot contact their relatives abroad because they have no addresses or, even when they have, the letters travel for a long time and are frequently lost.

It is not unusual in the communication with the U.S.S.R. for an exchange of letters to take more than one year. Telegraphic communications are not much better. Cables are either not answered, or else replies take many months. Since any sort of relief work, individual or organizational, now or after the war, must be based on the geographical whereabouts of the refugees, the service of locating them in the U.S.S.R. is of special importance.

Therefore, in the Spring of 1943 we contacted the Jewish Community in Moscow and suggested that they cooperate with us in locating refugees. As soon as we received their agreement to our proposal, we began to transmit inquiries.

This activity is conducted exclusively by cable and has met with great success. A total of about 2000 cable inquiries referring to 3384 cases have been sent to Moscow so far, namely:

1943 - 1394 inquiries -	2091 cases -	number of cabled words	14738
1944 - 504 " "	1293 " "	" " " "	11867
TOTAL 1898 Inquiries - 3384 Cases -			Number of cabled words 26605

On the other hand, we have received in turn from Mr. Chobrutsky:

1943 - 126 inquiries -	168 cases -	number of cabled words	2210
1944 - 385 " "	342 " "	" " " "	4347
TOTAL 411 Inquiries - 510 Cases -			Number of cabled words 6557

More and more answers to our cable inquiries have been arriving from the Moscow Jewish Community, and they, in turn, have appealed to us with increasing frequency for information requested by persons in Russia who are trying to trace their families here.

##### B. In Western Europe

Up till now, the work of this Division has been limited mainly to the locating of refugees and the reuniting of families in Eastern Europe. However, since the victorious Allied Armies have started their liberation march in Western Europe, new prospects and situations have developed which may make it possible to extend a similar service to refugees and disrupted families in the liberated countries of Western Europe. In fact, we have started a registration of Jews in Europe, by their relatives in this country. Several thousand families have already been registered

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with us; and no sooner had Mr. Marc Jarblum arrived in Paris, than we began to send him inquiries about Jews in France on behalf of relatives here. Similar dispatches are now being prepared for transmission to Belgium, Holland and other countries, as soon as they will be liberated. We have been informed by our office in Sydney that, pending the ultimate solution of the Soviet-Polish negotiations, the Australian government will grant no new landing permits.

#### REUNITING FAMILIES

In October 1943, the Teheran office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine informed us that a new evacuation of the Polish citizens in the U.S.S.R. was feasible, similar to the evacuation of the year 1941. We were advised to start immediately a registration of refugees in the U.S.S.R. whose close relatives were anxious to join them. Within a short time, we have succeeded in registering over 2000 refugee families and have mailed copies of the registration forms to the Teheran office of the Jewish Agency as well as to Dr. I. Schwarzbart, member of the National Polish Council in London. Duplicates of the forms have been submitted to the Polish Minister of Labor and Social Work through his delegate in New York. Our registration was mostly confined to husbands, wives and children in the U.S.S.R. seeking to rejoin their immediate families who had succeeded in escaping from the Nazis to other countries. It seems, however, that at present there are no prospects of a further evacuation for the refugees from the U.S.S.R.

Sometime in the Spring of 1944, a small number of refugees arrived in Teheran from the U.S.S.R. It appeared that five or six of them were able to leave Russia because they held Palestine certificates. The remaining 21 had Australian landing-permits. All hope to join their families from whom they have been separated since the war began.

We immediately undertook steps to arrange for more refugees to emigrate from the U.S.S.R. At first the prospects for success were promising, especially with regard to obtaining a larger number of landing-permits for Australia. We contacted our office in Australia, and it was decided by our Office Committee that the World Jewish Congress would undertake the maintenance of refugees of the U.S.S.R. during their stay in Australia.

Unfortunately, like the proposed registration for an evacuation of the refugees from the U.S.S.R., this project, too, proved unsuccessful.

#### FOOD PARCEL SERVICE

##### A) For the Ghettoes

From the very beginning of its activities in the United States, the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress has tried to dispatch food parcels to the ghettoes. This project was planned and later carried out in collaboration with a number of other Jewish organizations in this country and abroad. It was the task of this Division to prepare technically and secure practically the realization of this work, which we all regarded as our sacred duty. The parcels were addressed individually to addressees in the Ghettoes in Poland and Lithuania and it was a particularly difficult task to collect a sufficient number of addresses of persons to whom the parcels could be shipped. That with the constant expulsions of Jews, transportations from one Ghetto to another, deportation and drafting for forced labor, this was really difficult. At last, in 1943, a sufficient number of such addresses was compiled and the parcel shipments began.

However, to our great sorrow and despair, we soon learned that the continuation of this service was futile. It soon appeared that of the 12,995 parcels sent in a comparatively short time to the Jews in the Ghettoes, about 4,000 had been arbitrarily confiscated by the Germans; 7,000 parcels were returned marked "undeliverable" because of: a) the death of the addressee; b) the addressee's absence; c) the deportation of the addressee; d) addressee unknown; e) the liquidation of the residence or business.

Five hundred parcels were returned to the Post Office in Lisbon without any explanation. Only 925 parcels of the 12,995 shipped had been delivered to the addressees. However, according to the receipts of the Post Office at Lisbon, of the number of parcels delivered, only 70 receipts bore the signatures of the addressees themselves. The receipts for the remaining

855 parcels were not signed by the addressees personally but by strange and unknown persons. Under these circumstances, this project was stopped and since that time, no more parcels could be sent to the Jews in the Ghettos.

B) For Refugees in the U.S.S.R.

The basic policy of our parcel service for refugees in the U.S.S.R. has been and still is to prod relatives here to speed aid to the refugees. We try to give the relatives of the refugees the most accurate and current information about their present rather difficult situation as well as to convince them that it is their task and duty to support their unfortunate and suffering kin.

We conduct this service in cooperation with the Jewish Agency for Palestine which, through its offices in Teheran, purchases commodities and ships them to the refugees. At the present moment, there is great scarcity of merchandise in Iran. Hence, the prices are fantastically high and, in addition, there is very little on the Iranian market for export purposes. Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. charges heavy import duties for merchandise sent to individuals, even though it is for relief purposes. During the visit of Messrs. Michaels and Pfeffer in this country, we tried to remove this great obstacle in the shipment of parcels to the refugees, however, to no avail.

Furthermore, due to war conditions, communication facilities and the railroad and mail services for civilians are often interrupted or curtailed; besides, the refugees in the U.S.S.R. often change their domiciles, not leaving any forwarding addresses. We are, therefore, very careful to explain to each prospective parcel-sender that there is no guarantee of delivery for the parcels. However, we know from experience that, for the most part, parcels reach the addressees; yet it takes from 5 to 6 months between the dates of ordering and delivery of a parcel.

Up till now, we have accepted over 3000 parcel orders from relatives here. These orders amount to about \$100,000. Of this sum, about 20% has been covered by the World Jewish Congress for refugees who have no relatives here or whose relatives are not in a position to help them.

The aggregate contents of the parcels shipped are: 14,000 lbs. of tea, 3,000 lbs. of soap, 1600 pairs of shoes, 1600 suits of men's underwear, 800 cotton blankets, 800 medicine kits, 3,200 gross of pearl buttons and various miscellaneous commodities.

It is difficult to describe the gratitude of the refugees who receive the parcels. Frequently, the articles sent to them serve as exchange-commodities for items more needed by them. Thus, they are able to live two or three months from the proceeds of one parcel. Only recently we have been informed that in exchange for two parcels sent through our office, a woman was able to secure a sewing machine. In her own words, written to a relative in this country, she was able to make a modest living thanks to this "lucky event".

Over 3,200 parcels have been dispatched by us to refugees in the U.S.S.R. Thus, over 3,200 families were able to somewhat ameliorate their situation and gather strength to survive their present hardships and to hope for the day when they will be able to return to their homes, rejoin their families and resume a normal life.

Unfortunately, we are still not allowed to dispatch cables to the Jewish Community in Moscow on behalf of individuals who are residents of or who are believed to reside at present in territories recently liberated. This limitation concerns the parts of Western Europe, liberated by the American or British armies, as well as the Eastern European territories, liberated by the Soviet armies.

This is also the reason why no relief work can be done at the present moment for the recently liberated territories. In particular, we have tried to dispatch food and clothing parcels to the liberated areas of Poland, the Baltic countries and Bessarabia; however, our efforts in this respect have not succeeded so far. We are making great efforts to overcome this obstacle in our work and there is hope that soon we will be able to accept cable-tracers and parcels addressed to people residing

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in the localities which up till now have not been accessible.

PALESTINE CERTIFICATES FOR HUNGARIAN JEWS

In April 1944, as soon as the Nazi government took over in Hungary, the World Jewish Congress started the project of furnishing Hungarian Jews with Palestine certificates in order to enable them to emigrate to Palestine. All the work of registering the names, addresses and essential data about the prospective emigrants, as well as the dispatching of the cable-inquiries and later the preparing of the collective lists has been done by this Division. It has been a difficult and trying piece of work. The number of applications submitted personally by relatives who were eager to take advantage of this project, and those received by mail from all parts of the United States, Canada and Mexico so far number 1162, and concern 2500 families, representing 10,312 individuals. Three hundred cables have been sent to the Jewish Agency for Palestine on behalf of 2459 persons. Twenty-two lists were dispatched on behalf of 7,853 individuals. This work was assigned to our Division by our Rescue Department and is conducted in the closest cooperation with the Hungarian Representative Committee of the World Jewish Congress.

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From the very start, it has been the policy of this Division to handle each case individually. People who call at our office are in the greatest despair, tired physically, and mentally broken. They are desperate about the fate of their families in Europe and look to us for comfort and hope. They expect to receive consolation and pour out their troubles into sympathetic ears. We in turn give them the best advice and information possible and try to solve their confused and complicated problems.

It can be said that our clients appreciate our attitude. No bureaucracy, no formality, no red tape is known in this Division. People are promptly attended to and patience and warmth is shown to one and all calling at our office. The members of our office staff know several languages, so that we are able to speak to each client in his own tongue.

All the activities of this Division are considered by us merely as a public service and are given freely and willingly. Only in cases where cables are involved are our clients charged for the expenses incurred; in cases where clients explain their inability to pay for cables, expenses are covered by the World Jewish Congress.

The nearer the hour of peace approaches, the more countries are liberated, the greater grows the scope of our task. It will be one of the most important projects of the World Jewish Congress to enlarge the activities of this Division. Naturally, the cooperation of our affiliates in this work is essential. We would welcome any help or suggestions the delegates to the War Emergency Conference may be able to give.

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
~~NOVEMBER 12-17, 1944~~

St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## REPORT

### ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IMMIGRATION AND INDIVIDUAL SERVICE DIVISION OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

by  
ELLEN HILB

#### I. IMMIGRATION

a - d

The following is an outline of the activities of the Immigration and Individual Service Division of the World Jewish Congress. It is the function of this division to give assistance and advice with regard to special visa matters and constructive help to individuals who approach us with various problems.

Although, originally the World Jewish Congress had no intention of dealing with any matters pertaining to immigration, the general situation and the plight of our refugee friends in Europe and other parts of the world made it necessary for us to undertake this work.

Accordingly, it was decided to establish the Immigration Division and use its facilities not only for refugees in or from Europe but also for persons residing in the Western Hemisphere. We assist them whenever they have their own or friends' special visa problems. During the last few years, we have been instrumental in obtaining favorable decisions from the Visa Division of the United States Department of State in the majority of cases submitted by us. Regular visits to Washington enable us to keep up with the various developments in the technique of handling visa cases. This is especially important since, due to political changes in various countries in the past few years, the Visa Division has been forced to adopt different policies.

It might be interesting for the delegates to learn that just now the procedure on visa applications for emigrants from the Western Hemisphere has been changed. Applications have to be submitted to the Visa Division in Washington, as before, but financial documentation has to be sent directly to the American Consul issuing the visa. An important part of the procedure for visa applications is the hearing before a special committee of the Visa Division in Washington. At least one of the sponsors must appear at this hearing. However, it frequently happens that the sponsors do not know the applicant personally and therefore ask us to proxy for them. In such instances, the World Jewish Congress' representative in Washington presents the cases before the Visa Review Committee, using the material furnished by our office to support his requests.

The World Jewish Congress succeeded in winning for its work in Washington, Mr. Louis E. Spiegler, formerly Counsel for the HIAS office in Washington. Mr. Spiegler who is a lawyer, is a man of wide experience in visa and legal matters and his association with the World Jewish Congress has proven to be a great asset for our work. One of his manifold duties is to take care of the hearings before the Visa Committee at the Department of State in behalf of the World Jewish Congress.

In the following portion of this report, we shall enumerate the possibilities for emigration from those countries in Europe which are already liberated or on the verge of being liberated. In general, the policy of the Department of State is to accept and act only on visa applications for persons residing in countries where United States Consular Service has been re-established. It may therefore,

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be assumed that it will not be long before visa applications for emigrants from France, Italy, Belgium, and etc. will be accepted. It might interest the delegates to know that the visa procedure for people in liberated countries to whom visas had already been granted, is very much simplified. In such cases, no new applications are needed, but the sponsors have only to apply for the renewal of the visa, which request will then be forwarded from Washington to the Consul in France, Italy, etc.

A difficult situation arose in the case of those refugees who resided in or fled to Switzerland and who wanted to immigrate to the United States. There was no way for them to emigrate because Switzerland was surrounded by Nazi-occupied countries and there was, therefore, no possibility of transportation. However, a record was kept of all people in Switzerland who, through the intervention of this office, had received approvals for United States visas before Switzerland was cut off from the rest of the world. Now that France is liberated and Portugal is accessible from Switzerland, the Visa Division of the Department of State has been approached with regard to the renewal of the once valid visas.

It is one of the primary duties of this division to keep itself informed of current events, since very often only by so doing can it strike while the iron is hot. A case in point is that of the refugees in Tangier, whose cases had been shelved by the Visa Division on the grounds that no transportation was available. Many of the refugees appealed to this office for aid regarding their emigration matters, but nothing could be done until the Department of State realized that there were possibilities to leave Tangier for the United States (via Lisbon). We immediately appealed to the Visa Division to cable to the Consulate in Tangier; after receiving the confirmation of possible transportation, the Division informed us that the visa cases would again be taken into consideration.

Another example is that of the visas for refugees in Spain and Portugal who had fled there from France. Immediately after their arrival, their names were submitted to the Visa Division of the Department of State and these cases, which had previously been refused on various grounds, were given renewed consideration and nearly all approved.

With regard to Spain, we were not only faced with the problem of emigration, but also that of facilitating the release of refugees from internment camps. As is known, people--especially young men of military age--who fled from France, were immediately interned by the Spanish authorities upon entering the country. Whenever individual cases were brought to our notice, we contacted our representative in Lisbon, giving him the necessary details and asking him to be helpful with regard to release, emigration and financial aid.

In addition, the World Jewish Congress has undertaken as a protective measure in behalf of the people interned in Terceira - instructing their relatives in the United States to file Petition for Issuance of Immigration Visa (Form 633) and Application for Verification of Last Entry of an Alien for Use in Connection with the Issuance of Immigration Visas to Relatives (Form 575). The purpose of this action is to furnish internees in Terceira with an assurance that a United States visa would be granted them, should they be able to reach a neutral country. We hope by this means, to save these people from further deportation and death. Form 633 refers only to United States citizens whose parents, husbands, wives or minor children are interned; form 575 refers to alien residents in the United States whose husbands, wives or minor children are interned.

It is significant that whereas our cases were confined to people in only three or four countries, the Immigration Division's clients are now scattered all over the world. Requests reaching this office come from the Latin American countries, from Martinique, Jamaica, Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, England, Tangier, Morocco, Mauritius, and India.

The World Jewish Congress not only helps to bring people to the United States, but also assists in such matters as obtaining exit permits, applying for the change of status (from visitor to immigrant) of refugees in this country and taking care of the visa matters of those of its executives who travel outside of the United States.

## II. INDIVIDUAL SERVICE

### a) Rescue of Interned Refugees

The Rescue Department of the World Jewish Congress has reported separately on its activities to rescue of our people who live under Nazi domination. The report of the Individual Service Division confines itself only to those special actions undertaken for individuals whose names were brought to our attention by relatives here or through our branches or affiliates abroad. There were two

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different ways in which we could help: (1) by obtaining special documents, (2) by securing Palestine certificates.

(1) When it was learned that the possession of Latin American documents served as a measure of protection against possible deportation of internees in Nazi camps, the World Jewish Congress did everything possible to obtain the assurance of the various governments involved that they would support the validity of these passports. Many of those who hold such documents have been saved from deportation and have, instead, been sent by the German authorities to the "camps for foreigners" in Germany and France, to be held there for eventual exchange. There is no doubt that these documents have served as distinct measures of protection against deportation and death. (See report of the Rescue Department)

(2) Beginning with September 1943, cables were sent to the Jewish Agency for Palestine asking for Palestine certificates for approximately one hundred families, in the various camps in Holland, whose relatives had requested our assistance. Many among those who recently arrived in Palestine from camp Bergen-Belsen are people for whom we secured certificates. The same procedure was later followed in the cases of several thousand Jews in Hungary. (See details in report of Rescue Department)

b) Contact with our Lisbon and Geneva Offices Regarding Individual Cases

In connection with our work, it is essential to maintain a steady contact with our Switzerland and Portugal offices. The tremendous volume of correspondence developed in the course of bringing to the attention of our representative in Geneva and Lisbon the many hundreds of special cases in which we are interested, can well be imagined.

We provide our offices abroad with important details regarding people in various countries to which our representatives alone have access and refer them to persons in their own country who can amplify our information.

STATISTICS

Inquiries sent to Geneva (by letter)	
from January 1941 to December 1941	662
from January 1942 to July 1943	258
from July 1943 to date	458
Messages received from Geneva and handled by us, from 1941 to date	834
Cables sent to Geneva, from 1941 to date	246
Cables received from Geneva, from 1941 to date	225

c) Contact With and Relief to Refugees in Various Countries

A great part of our work is devoted to contacts with refugees scattered all over the world, (in places like Mauritius, Jamaica, Tangier, Tanganyika, etc) who approach us with various problems, among them that of immigration to this country.

1) Mauritius

The tragic situation in which these people have been caught is well known. In November 1940, the "Atlanta" brought to Palestine refugees from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc., who had lived in Rumania. As they had no Palestine certificates, they were not permitted to land; as they were being transshipped on the "Patria" for deportation, the boat exploded. The survivors now hoped to be admitted to Palestine, but instead, on December 9, 1940, about 1500 persons were taken to Camp Beau-Bassin, Mauritius where they remain to this day. Their situation is deplorable. They cannot become adjusted to the malarial climate; they suffer from undernourishment and a dearth of medications. Their sole hope for the future is release and transfer to Palestine, England, or the United States.

Those who hope to go to Palestine, must wait till after the war for the realization of their dreams. The others who wish to emigrate from Mauritius to countries other than Palestine must obtain an official release by the British Government. We have taken an active part in making interventions in this connection. A few weeks ago, we received from Dr. Zwergbaum of the Zionist Association in Mauritius, the names of approximately 350 people with close relatives in the United States, who want to come to this country. An unfortunate stalemate has arisen from the fact that before considering the immigration cases of the Mauritius internees, the United States requires official releases by the British

Government and the British Government on the other hand, refuses to grant such releases unless proof is shown that the internees are in possession of valid visas for another country. Dr. Tartakow, on his recent visit to London, took up this problem with Sir Herbert Emerson, Director of the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees, who showed a keen appreciation of this impasse and promised to look into the matter.

Due to urgent appeals sent to the British Authorities, the Foreign Office in London has agreed to consider the release of some families in Mauritius. Unfortunately, their number is pitifully small in comparison with the number of detainees. We have urged the British Section of the World Jewish Congress again to bring this particular matter to the attention of the British authorities and request a modification in the official attitude toward this problem.

Our contact with Mauritius was not limited solely to interventions for emigration; we have also been sending relief to the people detained there. Upon the appeal of Dr. Zwerghbaum, we sent 600 pounds of clothing to Mauritius for distribution among the refugees. In addition, we contacted the spokesman for the Austrian Jews detained in Mauritius and transmitted \$1,000 to him; we also initiated a drive among Austrian Jews in the United States which yielded \$3,000 to be used for food and medicines for Mauritius. This drive was instituted by the Joint Mauritius Committee of the Austrian Jewish Representative Committee and the organizations of Austrian Jews, under our auspices. This same group called a meeting under our sponsorship to establish contact with the relatives in New York City of the detainees in Mauritius. More than 200 people participated and a resolution was adopted to maintain close contact with and help to make life more tolerable for the detainees in Mauritius.

## 2) Tangier

We were approached by the head of the Relief Committee in Tangier, Mr. Moise Weizmann, with regard to the same problems as mentioned above, namely, emigration and relief. We were able to be of service by helping quite a number of refugees in Tangier to immigrate to the United States, Canada, etc. We established contact with their relatives and friends here and also put a considerable monthly contribution at the disposal of the above named committee.

## 3) Jamaica

We were also contacted by approximately 80 interned families at Camp Gibraltar in Jamaica and it is due to our continued representations that the Visa Division of the Department of State, formerly reluctant to issue visas to internees in Jamaica, took a more lenient stand with regard to consideration of such cases.

## d) Clothing for Refugees

In July 1943, the World Jewish Congress, together with the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress, decided to launch a clothing drive throughout the United States. The purpose of this drive was to collect clothing and send it abroad for distribution among the needy Jewish populations in the various European and North African countries.

A special workroom was established at 260 West 68th Street, New York, and became the center of activity for this clothing drive. Hundreds of parcels came in from all parts of the United States; in the first three days of November 1943, 800 bundles arrived. Up to the present date the quantity of clothing put at the disposal of the World Jewish Congress and the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress has reached approximately 200,000 pounds.

An agreement was made with several leading organizations, enabling us to dispatch clothing abroad. Such an arrangement was reached with the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia, through whom we sent about 30,000 pounds of clothing to Switzerland. In order to facilitate the distribution of this clothing among the Jewish refugees in Switzerland, we took care that a label, stamped "Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress", was attached to each piece of clothing.

The following is an enumeration of the parcels sent by us to date:

United States War Production Board (for the National War Relief Clothing Drive)	20,000 lbs.
Russian War Relief	42,000
United Yugoslav Relief Fund of America	3,000
To the Detainees in Mauritius	600

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To the Refugee Camp in Tanganyika, East Africa 600

American Service Committee  
(for distribution in Switzerland)

30,000

TOTAL.....96,200 lbs.

At the present moment, we hold in reserve about 100,000 pounds of clothing for shipment to North Africa and Europe.

In association with the American Relief for Italy, Inc. and the Relief Committee of the Italian Jewish Representative Committee, we are now planning to make similar shipments to Italy. Within the next few weeks shipments of clothing will be sent to the Jewish populations of Morocco, Tripoli and Lybia. In addition, through Russian War Relief we hope soon to make a large shipment of clothing to the Jewish population in Lublin, Poland in cooperation with the Committee for the Liberation of Poland in Lublin. We have applied and hope soon to receive permission from the American authorities to send a large quantity of clothing to the concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen, Germany, in collaboration with the American Red Cross. We also plan to send clothing to Bulgaria and Greece in the near future. Contact has been established with the Friends of Belgium, an agency of the Belgian War Relief Society, regarding shipments of clothing to Belgium. It is also planned to put clothing at the disposal of the Luxembourg Government.

In view of the growing importance of the clothing drive, and the increasing demands we receive, it was decided to enlarge the facilities for this relief work. A larger work and storage room has been established at 243 West 55th Street, New York.

This report would be incomplete without a word about the devoted work of the Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress. This Division, with branches throughout the United States, was instrumental in making the clothing drive an outstanding success. It is due to its leading officers' excellent approach to the various donors and especially to the devoted and tireless activities of Mrs. Sonia Shatz, National Chairman, European Jewish Relief Committee, Women's Division of the American Jewish Congress, that the quantity of clothing received by us has increased daily. Furthermore, a great number of volunteers, members of the various chapters of the Women's Division within the New York area, have given of the time unstintingly for the daily work of sorting, mending, and packing the clothing preparatory to shipment abroad.

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY

NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
~~NOVEMBER 12-17, 1944~~

St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE POLISH DEPARTMENT OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

by Moshe Polakiewicz

In 1941, after the arrival in the United States of leading members of Polish Jewish political organizations, the Representation of Polish Jewry was founded as an American branch of the same body in Palestine. It consists of representatives of the following political parties and organizations in Poland: General Zionists, Groups A and B; Mizrachi, and Dat v'Avoda (religious Zionist labor youth group); Agudat Israel, and the Agudat Israel Workers; the Poale Zion Union, (right); the Left Poale Zion; and the Women's Zionist Organization (WIZO).

The new body undertook the task of representing Polish Jewry in America with regard to all its problems, political, economic, relief, and rescue, and it maintained a continuous liaison with all Jewish and non-Jewish bodies concerned with these questions. The Representation maintained close and continual contact with the Representation of Polish Jewry in Palestine, consulting with them in all its plans and activities. The Polish Department of the World Jewish Congress was closely connected with the Representation of Polish Jewry from the very beginning. The General Secretary of the Representation is also Director of the World Jewish Congress' Polish Department. The Representation maintained close contact with Dr. Ignacy Schwarzbart, member of the National Council of the Polish Government in London, who framed all his acts in accordance with the policy determined by the Representation. Dr. Ignacy Schwarzbart was selected and recognized as a representative of Polish Jewry in the National Council of the Polish government in London, upon the proposal of the Representation of Polish Jewry in Palestine and America.

From its inception, the Representation of Polish Jewry maintained close contact with the Polish Government in London, and Polish diplomatic and consular circles in the United States. It held conferences with leading members of the Polish Government visiting in the United States, and with the Polish Ambassador in Washington and the Polish Consuls in New York and Chicago, at which current questions affecting Polish Jews and post-war plans for Polish Jewry were discussed. In these conferences the Representation has always demanded the abrogation of all anti-Jewish laws in force in pre-war Poland and an official declaration by the Polish Government, that Jews will have full civil, political, cultural, religious, and economic rights in the Poland of the future. The Representation of Polish Jewry has consistently emphasized that its attitude to the Polish Government depends upon its treatment of Polish Jews with regard to political questions, as well as in the work of rescue and relief of Polish Jewry during the War. The Representation has repeatedly demanded that the Polish Government not only publish declarations about the future political status of Polish Jewry from time to time, but, and primarily, that even during the War it should put these declarations into practical effect. The Representation has demanded that in accordance with the principle of equality of all Polish citizens, the Polish Government appoint to its world-wide administrative, diplomatic, and consular staff Polish Jews recommended by the Representation of Polish Jewry. The Representation has also demanded that its nominees be placed upon all planning committees created by the Polish Government so that the requirements and proposals of Polish Jewry shall be adequately considered in all such plans and activities. The Representation of Polish Jewry has constantly emphasized the categorical necessity of Jews being represented and included in all delegations of the Polish Government at international conferences and in international bodies.

Together with the demand to abrogate pre-war anti-Jewish laws, the Representation emphasized in all its memoranda and conferences with representatives of the Polish Government the necessity of a declaration by the Polish Government, during the War, that all anti-Jewish laws enacted in Poland by the Germans are null and void. In Washington on July 3, 1944 the Representation submitted to the Polish

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Prime Minister a detailed memorandum for a draft of a new inheritance law, taking into consideration the unparalleled economic plight of Polish Jewry. In this draft the Representation demanded the establishment of a special "Fund of Polish Jewry" as a public law corporation to administer the property of Polish Jews who died without leaving any heirs. The said "Fund of Polish Jewry" was to dispose of such Jewish property for the reconstruction of Jewish life in Poland. The Representation of Polish Jewry proceeded upon the assumption that the demands of justice as well as political and economic considerations require that Jewish property, the heirs to which "according to present legal prescriptions" had been destroyed by the massacres, be utilized chiefly for the reconstruction of Polish Jewry. The Representation demanded the prompt creation of a special department in the Polish Ministry of Justice which would draft the necessary decrees and ordinances for this purpose.

The Representation repeatedly called attention to anti-Semitic tendencies in the Polish Army and in refugee shelters to which there was inadequate reaction in army circles. The Representation noted that it is categorically necessary to eradicate anti-Semitism by all possible means wherever it should appear if the Poland of the future is to enjoy a healthy atmosphere, and satisfactory conditions are to be established for mutual respect. The Representation demanded that the Polish Government enact a law declaring anti-Semitism a crime and that it bring all those guilty of disseminating anti-Semitism to trial. With respect to anti-Semitism in the Polish Army, the Representation demanded the appointment of Jewish officials in the Ministry of National Defense for the purpose of eradicating anti-Semitism in the army. The Representation also demanded that in order to eliminate anti-Semitism in government bureaus and refugee shelters, the Polish government carry out an extensive educational campaign through the medium of brochures, books, and leaflets against anti-Semitism, and that for this purpose the Polish Government establish a special Department in the Ministry of Propaganda; and further that the Polish Government promptly begin to prepare new school text books which would aid in bringing home to Polish youth the principle of equality for all Polish citizens.

The Representation of Polish Jewry has concerned itself persistently with the political and civil right of Polish Jews. It requested the Polish Government to provide new documents for refugees in various countries who had lost or been deprived of their passports because of wartime conditions. The Representation also interceded in a number of cases for the restoration of Polish citizenship to Jews who were deprived of it on the basis of the law of 1938. Through its representative in the Polish National Council, the Representation of Polish Jewry repeatedly gave expression to the demands and needs of Polish Jewry, insisting on political and civil equality in Poland after the war, and also firmly demanding concrete, immediate, and active measures for the rescue and relief of Polish Jews. Unfortunately such Jewish demands were not always adequately taken into consideration by the Polish Government. The Representation of Polish Jewry has made its views known in the appropriate manner with respect to the attitude of the Polish Government.

#### JEWISH UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT:

Ever since Jewish life in Poland was driven into underground channels, the Representation of Polish Jewry had endeavored to establish contact with the Jewish underground movement. By various ways and means, through Polish underground channels and through the representatives of the World Jewish Congress in neutral countries, the Representation constantly consulted with the Jewish underground organizations in Poland. It has maintained a continual contact with the Jewish National Committee in Poland, consisting of the same parties and organizations of which the Representation of Polish Jewry is composed, and with the Jewish Military Organization, consisting chiefly of those bodies and of halutz organizations. The Jewish National Committee in Poland continually sends detailed reports of the situation and of its own ramified activities, as well as proposals and plans for rescue and relief on behalf of Polish Jewry. The Representation has sent in return, through the channels of the Polish Government and in other ways, letters, reports, information, and, from time to time, sums of money. Our contact with the Jewish National Committee became closer from month to month, especially since 1942, at which time the Jewish National Committee perfected its organization and established itself as the leadership of Polish Jewry. Dr. A. Tartakower, Dr. Ignaz Schwarzbart, and Mr. Anselm Reiss (a member of the Presidium of the Representation of Polish Jewry in America, Great Britain, and Palestine), were in close contact by cable and letter with the Jewish National Committee.

Thanks to this system of contacts, the Representation of Polish Jewry was the only organization in the world supplied with the authentic and detailed reports of the Jewish National Committee, which provided Jewish and non-Jewish public opinion with a picture of the gruesome plight of the Polish Jews. Because of these reports and letters, the Representation was able to undertake various efforts, directed towards Jewish organizations in America and among non-Jewish circles, also to inform them concerning the situation of Polish Jewry and demand large-scale and concrete assistance. The Representation has sent to all interested Jewish organizations, in accordance with the desire of the Jewish National Committee, the last

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report of that body and of the Jewish Military Organization of Poland which was dispatched through underground channels on May 24, 1944 and arrived in America in September and October. Thanks to this underground connection, both the Jewish and non-Jewish public were informed of the inferno in Poland and enabled to take certain measures for saving the remainder of Polish Jewry. The Representation of Polish Jewry, on its part, could consult with Jewish figures in Poland concerning their demands and opinions, which were reflected in corresponding action.

The work of the Jewish National Committee in Poland was conducted under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, very often at the risk of death. The Jewish Military Organization played an historic role in the dreadful saga of Polish Jewry. The records of the Jewish National Committee and of the Jewish Military Organization, organized by the bodies comprised in the Jewish National Committee played an historic role in the dreadful saga of Polish Jewry. The records of the Jewish National Committee and of the Jewish Military Organization are in the custody of the Representation of Polish Jewry. A part of this material has been published but a substantial part will only be published after the war, for reasons of security.

#### PROBLEMS OF RELIEF:

The Polish Department and the Representation of Polish Jewry of the World Jewish Congress have given constant attention to the assistance of Polish Jews in Poland and of Polish Jewish refugees in various parts of the world. Throughout its existence, the Representation consulted important Jewish relief organizations in the United States, and proposed concrete plans for assistance for Polish Jewry. The Representation was connected with almost every Jewish relief organization and informed them of the needs of Polish Jews and demanded substantial and speedy aid for Polish Jewry. Such assistance as was sent to Polish Jewry through legal as well as irregular channels, and the increase and speeding up of that aid to some extent during the last 15 months, are owing to a significant degree to the efforts of the Representation, which interceded in every possible quarter. From 1939 to 1942, the Polish Department of the World Jewish Congress together with the Representation of Polish Jewry regularly supplied food packages to Poland by way of Portugal and Switzerland. Tens of thousand of such packages were sent, and receipts were returned through the medium of the Congress Office in Switzerland. The contents included medical supplies, drugs, vitamin and other preparations, and bandages. The transmissions were directed both to the ghettos and the labor and concentration camps of Poland. At first, while there was a Jewish mutual aid organization for relief purposes, all these supplies went to that organization, which distributed them to the various localities. Later, when the Germans had destroyed that organization aid had to be sent through various legal and irregular channels to other institutions set up by the Germans. The Congress Office in Geneva, to the very last moment, has sent medical aid to the remaining labor camps and Jewish settlements.

The World Jewish Congress in the course of a few years has sent substantial sums of money to the Jewish National Committee of Poland. In its last report of May 24, 1944, the National Committee acknowledges the receipt of the most recent sum of \$20,000 sent by the World Jewish Congress. With the aid of the representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey, and with the close cooperation of the representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Polish Department, using various ways and means which cannot now be discussed, rescued a certain number of Jews in Poland, who were interned in the various camps for foreigners. Thanks to the devoted work of representatives of the Congress in Switzerland and Portugal and self-sacrifice of the Jewish underground movement in France, the Polish Department rescued Polish Jews and particularly Jewish children in France, who were brought to Spain and Portugal. The Polish Department also enabled Polish Jews in various camps for foreigners in Europe to receive Palestine immigration certificates. It is difficult to estimate the number of Jews rescued, but the Polish Department applied itself to the problems of rescue in every way possible.

The Department devoted special attention to the situation of 400,000 Polish Jews in Russia. As a result of the Polish Department's and the Representation of Polish Jewry's intercession with the Polish Government, thousands of Jews both among the civil and military evacuees, were evacuated from Russia under the Russo-Polish Agreement of 1941. Thanks to the initiative of the Polish Department a card catalogue of Polish Jews in Russia was set up. The addresses of such Jews were sent to the Congress by the Representation of Polish Jews in Palestine and the Office of the Jewish Agency in Teheran. Today this catalogue contains about 50,000 names and addresses of Polish Jews in Russia. The Polish Department also organized the transmission of food and clothing packages to Polish Jews in Russia. Among those benefited by this aid are well known Jewish public figures and outstanding intellectuals. Packages were supplied for 3,000 Polish Jewish families in Russia. The Polish Department took steps to obtain a certain number of visas for Palestine, Australia, and the United States on behalf

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of Polish Jews in Russia; and this work is in full swing.

The Polish Department maintains a constant connection with Polish Jewish groups in Mauritius, Tangiers, Tanganyika, Rhodesia, Jamaica, and Mexico. From the very arrival of Polish Jewish refugees in Tangiers, Tanganyika, and Rhodesia, the representatives of the World Jewish Congress in those places distributed assistance to them and aided them in finding homes, provided medical aid for the sick and the weak, organized language classes, set up small libraries, established synagogue services, and took care of all formalities in securing the necessary official documents.

Representatives of the Congress are active in trying to organize the refugees in the larger centres also and attempt to provide them with work as well as to obtain visas for Palestine and the American countries for them. The above groups of Polish Jewish refugees are being constantly supplied with aid by the World Jewish Congress.

The Polish Department maintains contact with over 200 Polish Jews deported to the Island of Mauritius. The Committee of Polish Jews in Mauritius, through the good offices of the Polish Department, furnished packages of clothing, medical supplies, and books from America. The Polish Department has initiated steps to obtain Polish passports for all the Polish Jews in Mauritius. The Polish Department as well as the Relief Department has been sending assistance to the refugees in Jamaica and has provided foreign visas for a part of them. The group of Polish Jews in Santa Rosa in Mexico are being aided by the Central Jewish Committee in Mexico, thanks to the efforts of the Polish Department. Because of the intercession of Mexican Jewish organizations associated with the Polish Department and the Representation of Polish Jews, relations between Jews and Poles in that camp have been improved. The Polish Department is in correspondence with every group of Polish Jewish refugees in the world and undertakes activities on their behalf wherever necessary.

Upon the establishment of UNRRA, the Polish Department and the Representation approached the Polish Government and made the demand that the Polish delegation to UNRRA conferences should include Jewish members. Our position was that delegates of the Representation would appropriately care for the needs and demands of Polish Jewry; but unfortunately, the Polish Government, for reasons which are difficult to understand, did not give our demands adequate consideration.

The Representation of Polish Jewry approached the Polish War Relief Fund and demanded that, as an agency serving all Polish citizens, their budget should include items for relief work on behalf of Polish Jews. In our memorandum to the Fund, we proposed that its budget for 1944 include a sum of \$500,000 for the rescue of Polish Jews in Poland, and for assistance to Polish refugees in Russia and other places, as well as for the cultural and religious needs of Polish Jewish refugees in America. Regrettably, the Polish War Relief Fund has not yet included such items in its budget. The Fund argues that it distributes aid to all Polish citizens without distinction of faith, but the actual practice of the Fund does not bear out this claim and our information is that the activities of the Fund do not extend to Jews who are Polish citizens in Poland. A special campaign is now being undertaken to induce the Polish War Relief Fund to give Polish Jews the aid which it should be giving.

Upon the liberation of certain parts of Poland by the Red Army and in connection with the establishment of a Jewish Relief Committee in Lublin under the direction of Dr. Emil Sommerstein, the Polish Department and the Representation began to elaborate detailed plans for aid to liberated Jews. The problem is a colossal one and not always can all requirements be fully satisfied. Far greater sums than hitherto available are necessary to alleviate the need of Polish Jews.

#### PRESS, RADIO, PUBLICATIONS

All reports, documents, and letters received by the Representation from the Jewish National Committee and the Jewish Military Organization in Poland, have been given wide circulation in America, Great Britain, Palestine and other countries, primarily through the medium of the Yiddish press in America. Special radio time has been obtained on various radio stations for speeches by members of the Representation concerning the situation of Jews in Poland. Excerpts from underground documents and reports from Poland have been read on these occasions. Upon the first of September of each year, the anniversary of the outbreak of the War, and upon the anniversary of the death of Adam Cherniakov, Mayor of the Warsaw Ghetto, as well as on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto battle, Jewish press and radio stations have had special features based upon material supplied by the Secretary of the Representation.

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Since July 1943, the Representation in America has published fourteen issues of its information bulletin in the English language. This publication has reprinted reports and documents and letters from Underground Poland, as well as other information concerning the situation of Polish Jews the world over, and concerning the current activities of the Representation. The Representation in Palestine and in Great Britain issues various bulletins in Hebrew and Yiddish, Polish and English. The Representation publishes an English section of the newspaper Unser Tribune containing articles about current problems and information about Polish Jews. The Polish periodical Nasza Tribuna, the only Polish Jewish paper in America, is subsidized by the World Jewish Congress.

Together with the World Jewish Congress, the Representation published in English: The Extermination of Polish Jewry, and The Massacre of the Warsaw Ghetto. The Black Book of Polish Jewry, and The Armed Uprising of Jews in Poland. English publications which were issued by the American Federation of Polish Jews in America in 1943 and 1944, were prepared and edited by members of the Representation of Polish Jewry. The Representation is now working on a new book, together with the World Jewish Congress, to be published in English and in Yiddish concerning the inhuman sufferings and heroic resistances of Jews in Polish ghettos and concentration camps. This book will be based upon the most recent material received from the Jewish National Committee and the Jewish Military Organization in Poland.

Other important documents are now in the archives of the World Jewish Congress but the time has not yet come to publish them.

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 1, 1944  
NOVEMBER 12-17, 1944

St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

### RELIEF AND REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNRRA AND THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES, SUBMITTED TO THE

WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE - NOVEMBER 1944

-by Sophie V. Grinberg

The World Jewish Congress has followed studiously all the international and intergovernmental activities in the field of relief and rehabilitation. It has endeavored to establish close and continuous contacts with bodies such as the UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees in order to present to the leading officials of these organizations the Jewish aspect of the problems of relief and rehabilitation and to make concrete suggestions with respect to assistance to be given to Jews in post-war Europe.

#### 1. UNRRA

On November 11, 1943 the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress submitted to the Council of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, at its first session in Atlantic City, an extensive printed memorandum on Post-War Relief and Rehabilitation of European Jewry.

After stressing the fundamental aspects of Jewish relief and rehabilitation, such as the degree of privations, the age and sex distribution of the survivors, the larger percentage of disabled victims of inhuman slave labor and the particular difficulty of the economic and spiritual recovery, the Memorandum enumerated the fields of relief activities with respect to the special needs of the European Jews.

With respect to the problems of rehabilitation, the Memorandum discussed repatriation and resettlement, occupational readjustment and the communal rehabilitation of the Jews of Europe.

Finally, the Memorandum emphasized the importance of the questions of organization and of Jewish representation in the UNRRA.

The delegates of the World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City, Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki and Dr. Arish Tartakower, did not limit their activities to the presentation of the printed Memorandum. They established contact with a number of delegates of the various member-governments, as well as with the high officials of the Administration itself, and discussed with them the following problems:

#### 1. Nationality of persons to be assisted by the UNRRA

The original draft of the Constitution of the UNRRA provided for the repatriation and return of citizens of allied nations only; the fate of the persecuted and deported Jews, enemy nationals and

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and stateless persons was completely overlooked. The representatives of the World Jewish Congress tried to obtain the insertion of the provision according to which the assistance of the UNRRA would be extended to all victims of persecution, regardless of their nationality. They succeeded in having the pertinent provision amended so as to extend the assistance of the UNRRA to persons included in the scope of the activities of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (par 10 of the Report of Committee IV, sub-committee 4).

2. Assistance to persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated.

In the original text, repatriation was compulsory. The delegates of the World Jewish Congress made a point of explaining to the officials in Atlantic City that refugees or deported persons should be left free to go to countries other than those where they had come from. As a result, it was decided that the relief organs of the UNRRA would have the responsibility "to assist for a reasonable period in the care of such of these refugees as cannot or do not wish to be repatriated, until the Intergovernmental Committee is prepared to remove them to new places of settlement."

3. Principle of favorable discrimination

This principle, according to which persons who (as is the case with the Jews) suffered much more than others, will need and must be given more help, proportionate to their needs - was inserted in point 2 of Resolution #2.

4. Jewish representation in the UNRRA

The original text of the proposed constitution of the UNRRA provided only governments or intergovernmental organizations be represented. This text was amended, so that observers could be invited to the sessions of the Council and of the Central Committee of the UNRRA, as well as to the meetings of the Technical Standing Committees (Rules of Procedure of the Council, art. 7. Rules of the Standing Committee of the Council, Annex 1, art. 2, point 3). This provision does not necessarily mean that the World Jewish Congress would be authorized to be represented at these meetings, but it leaves open the possibility of future discussions on the subject.

5. Contact with member governments

The representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City, endeavored to secure the cooperation of individual governments, members of the Council of the UNRRA. They succeeded in winning over several government representatives to their views.

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These contacts were renewed and reinforced during the visit in London (January and February 1944) of Dr. Arish Tartakower, who discussed the problems of the UNRRA with high officials of the Administration, as well as with the representatives of individual governments.

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Upon his return from England, Dr. Tartakower had several conferences in Washington with representatives of the UNRRA Administration Division for Displaced Persons and discussed with them the fundamental questions of assistance to refugees of enemy or ex-enemy nationality, help to Jews after the war in enemy or ex-enemy territories and the jurisdiction of the UNRRA regarding the resettlement of persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated. On May 25, 1944 the World Jewish Congress submitted to the UNRRA an informal memorandum containing concrete suggestions as to amendments in regard to these three problems to be introduced in the constitution of the UNRRA. This memorandum met with the approval of the leading officials of the UNRRA in the Division for Displaced Persons.

The question of the Jewish representation and participation in the organs and in the machinery of the UNRRA was also discussed at those conferences. Several applications of Jewish candidates were submitted to the UNRRA by the World Jewish Congress; some of the candidates

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have already been invited to join the staff and decisions on the others are still pending.

The second session of the Council of the UNRRA, originally scheduled for June 1944, was postponed until September.

In preparation for this session, the Institute of Jewish Affairs - in August 1944 - published a comprehensive study by Zorach Warhaftig entitled "Relief and Rehabilitation; Implications of the UNRRA problem for Jewish Needs", analyzing the activities of the UNRRA against the background of the Jewish situation in the European scene, as well as the special needs of the Jewish population resulting from the specific treatment meted out to them by the Nazis and their satellites. The book contains both factual material and legal analysis and concludes with a number of suggestions for amendments of the existing UNRRA program.

This pamphlet was sent to all the delegates to the Conference of the UNRRA, meeting in Montreal in September 1944, together with a memorandum prepared by the Relief and Rehabilitation Department of the World Jewish Congress. In this memorandum, after presenting the distinctive character of Jewish post-war relief and rehabilitation problems, the World Jewish Congress suggested that, in order to insure the application of the principle of non-discrimination "in the field", the power of supervision of the Director General of the UNRRA over the relief activities of the recipient countries be strengthened.

The authors of the memorandum stressed the necessity of giving assistance to victims of racial, religious or political persecution; regardless of their nationality, even though they reside in enemy or ex-enemy territories. As to the victims of persecution who cannot or who do not wish to be repatriated, assistance should be given them by the UNRRA for their resettlement in countries other than those of their origin.

Finally, the memorandum stressed the need for the participation of representatives of the Jewish people as observers in the Council of the UNRRA, the Committees on Europe, on Displaced Persons, on Health and Welfare, as well as the addition of experienced Jewish social workers to the staff of the UNRRA for relief and rehabilitation work in the Jewish communities of Europe.

The delegation of the World Jewish Congress, composed of Dr. Arish Tartakower, Dr. Zorach Warhaftig and Mrs. Sophie V. Grinberg, attended the Conference of the UNRRA in Montreal. The representatives of the Congress had to cope with the constraint and hesitation on the part of most of the delegates who, in view of the rather limited past achievements of the UNRRA, were reluctant to charge it with new financial responsibilities. The representatives of the World Jewish Congress in Montreal conferred with the delegations of a very considerable number of governments - among them, the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and almost all countries of Europe. Most of them were brought to understand the Jewish aspect of the problems. The delegations of the United States and Great Britain submitted to the Ad Hoc Committee on Policy, two important motions: the motion of the American delegations adopted by the Committee on Policy, included in the scope of the activities of the UNRRA, the care and repatriation or return of persons displaced in enemy or ex-enemy areas because of race, religion or activities in favor of the United Nations. In this way, both the principle of relief to victims of Nazi oppression, regardless of their nationality, and the principle of assistance to these victims in enemy or ex-enemy territories, were affirmed. The motion of the British delegation extended the same principle to embrace liberated areas where persons of other than the United Nations nationalities and stateless persons would also receive the assistance of the UNRRA. These resolutions were accented unanimously by the Committee and by the Council.

The above resolutions covered almost entirely the first two demands of the World Jewish Congress, except for the comparatively

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insignificant number of Jewish persons in enemy or ex-enemy territories who cannot be regarded as displaced persons, and the displaced persons of enemy or ex-enemy nationality, residing in neutral countries. There was little chance for the World Jewish Congress' suggestion concerning the participation of the UNRRA in the resettlement of persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated, to be adopted by the Council at its session in Montreal. The main reason for this was that such an extension of the scope of activities of the UNRRA would involve large financial responsibilities which the administration was not prepared to shoulder. Furthermore, a certain agreement had apparently been reached before the session between the UNRRA and the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, according to which the said Committee would be responsible for the transportation and resettlement of displaced persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated.

The problem of Jewish representation in the Council of the UNRRA was the object of discussion with several delegations, many of which were finally won over to an appreciation of the importance of this problem; the real difficulty lay in convincing the administration of the UNRRA. The representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Conference submitted a joint application for admission as observers, to the Director General of the UNRRA and to the chairman of the Special Committee on Observers. We were promised that this application would be recommended to the administration for further investigation; a final decision will be reached at the next session of the Council.

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Aside from the World Jewish Congress, several other organizations were represented at the Conference of the UNRRA in Montreal. In order to insure a certain degree of cooperation between these organizations, for the sake of the Jewish dignity and to strengthen the chances of the adoption of our demands by the UNRRA, a joint meeting was called of the representatives of the Jewish organizations in Montreal. At that meeting in which, aside from the World Jewish Congress representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Committee, the Agudas Israel, the American Jewish Conference and the Canadian Jewish Congress participated, a joint statement, containing the demands formulated by the World Jewish Congress, was adopted. This statement was submitted to a joint Committee composed of members of the Committees on Welfare, Health and Displaced Persons of the UNRRA, by Mr. Saul Hayes, Executive Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress, who was invited to appear as the representative of the Canadian Council of Voluntary Relief Agencies.

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Following the conference of the UNRRA in Montreal, the World Jewish Congress decided to continue its work in this field by keeping in constant touch with the officials of the administration in order to insure the practical application of the resolutions adopted in Montreal.

Our efforts to assure the admission of Jewish observers to the Council of the different Committees of the UNRRA will be continued, especially with regard to the Committees meeting in London. We shall also endeavor to increase the number of Jewish officials in the UNRRA, particularly those to be sent to Europe.

In addition to this, a contact is being established with the military authorities in the United States and Great Britain, that we may keep informed about the plans concerning the displaced persons in liberated territories under military administration. The World Jewish Congress will endeavor to influence the policy of these authorities with respect to the particular needs of the Jewish populations involved.

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Negotiations will also be started and maintained with different governments, with a view to securing Jewish participation in the relief mission sent by them to the liberated areas of their respective countries, establishing Jewish units within the limits of the national relief machineries and having Jewish candidates recommended by them for positions in the UNRRA.

## II. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES

Dr. Tartakower, during his visit to London in February and March of 1944, had several conferences with Sir Herbert Emerson, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees and with other high officials of the Committee concerning rescue problems. The Intergovernmental Committee, promised its cooperation in most of the problems discussed. The question of Jewish representation in the Intergovernmental Committee was also the subject of discussion, but Sir Emerson seemed to feel that it was preferable not to grant special positions to private organizations within the machinery of the Committee but rather to communicate directly with all organizations concerned.

The important question of the departure of certain categories of Jewish refugees, at present in the territory of the Soviet Union, was also submitted to the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee who promised to discuss the matter with the Russian representatives in the committee. Finally, the situation of the refugees in Mauritius, detained there for more than three years, was discussed, and Sir Emerson promised to find a satisfactory solution to this problem. (See further details in the report of the Jewish Immigration-Division).

The Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees was represented in Montreal by Mr. Patrick Malin and Miss Martha Biehle. During a conference between them and the representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Conference, problems concerning assistance to be granted by the Intergovernmental Committee in the resettlement of persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated, were discussed and certain suggestions were formulated by both sides. The contact with the Intergovernmental Committee is being maintained and may be strengthened further in the future, in connection with the results of the last session of the UNRRA Conference in Montreal.

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## REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE

### STANDING COMMITTEE FOR

### RELIEF AND REHABILITATION by Dr. H.H. Landsberger

The STANDING COMMITTEE FOR RELIEF AND REHABILITATION was established during the months of June to September 1944, as part of the Advisory Council on European Affairs, affiliated with the World Jewish Congress. At present this COMMITTEE is divided into 4 SUB-COMMITTEES, namely:

- 1) SUB-COMMITTEE FOR DISPLACED PERSONS.
- 2) SUB-COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH AND CHILD CARE.
- 3) SUB-COMMITTEE FOR LEGAL AND POLITICAL REHABILITATION.
- 4) SUB-COMMITTEES FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

A fifth sub-committee for economic reconstruction is in the process of formation.

The COMMITTEE is composed of qualified experts, among whom are Americans of European descent and representatives of European countries with a background of scientific, communal, or social work.

The idea of the STANDING COMMITTEE was conceived after the first conference of UNRRA in Atlantic City, where it became evident that:

- a) The World Jewish Congress has no rival as to knowledge of the Jewish situation and comprehension of the issues at stake;
- b) The various authorities and administrations are eager to take cognizance of memoranda based on facts and to consider suggestions of real weight.

Fortunately enough, leaders of a great many Jewish charitable institutions and organizations from European countries are active within our representative committees; but until then, the presence in New York of these Jewish leaders in exile was utilized by the World Jewish Congress only for the purpose of establishing a Political Advisory Council.

In order to be prepared for participating in the Post-War Relief and Rehabilitation work, the World Jewish Congress had to create a new advisory body capable of studying problems pertaining to UNRRA and other relief administrations and of preparing concrete plans for the rehabilitation of the Jewish people.

The idea first took shape in the suggestion of forming a "UNION OF EUROPEAN JEWISH RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS", composed of refugee leaders of such bodies. This Union would have had unchallenged authority to negotiate with the governments and the various organizations concerned. It would have been able to reestablish, while still abroad,

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many of the former European institutions, to prepare plans and to establish general principle of Jewish relief in Europe.

After consulting some of the leaders of Jewish charitable institutions, we found that although they accepted our idea in principle, they objected that, being now refugees, they were not authorized to participate in the planned union as representatives of their former organizations. But they all agreed to participate, for the time being, as experts on the questions with which they had previously been concerned. The body so constituted would have to be considered as a precursor of the proposed union, and should be called a Council on Relief and Rehabilitation. Thus the "Standing Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation" was created.

This Standing Committee will work towards two objectives:

a) It will convoke a Jewish Conference devoted entirely to relief and rehabilitation, at which the important problems of this field will be brought to the attention of the public opinion. The general public is only slightly acquainted with the disaster that has befallen the Jewish people. It is our duty to enlighten them. The Conference will demonstrate and dramatize the necessity of special Relief and Rehabilitation measures for the Jewish people.

This Conference is now in preparation and will be held in the very near future.

b) The practical work of the Standing Committee will be handled by its sub-committees and will consist of the preparation of a draft program of post-war Relief and Rehabilitation for the Jewish people. The sub-committees will have to synchronize the plans for various countries, and work out the relationship with the activities of the respective Governments. They will have to work out the proper ways of bringing these plans before the authorities concerned and carefully observe their implementation, using for this purpose all the channels which the World Jewish Congress has established in its contacts with governments and inter-governmental bodies.

Problems of the reconstruction of Jewish life must be very concretely considered, in direct relation with military developments. Both governmental and intergovernmental institutions set up to deal with problems of relief and rehabilitation are now going into action.

Therefore, the meetings of the World Jewish Congress with UNRRA, as well as other governmental and intergovernmental bodies must be guided by memoranda explaining and emphasizing the Jewish aspect of relief problems. We must see to it that the Jews will be given at least the same treatment as the other needy populations in the various European countries. Moreover we must insist upon priorities and especial consideration for the Jews. The reasons for such exceptional treatment have to be presented in a convincing way, and have to be made intelligible to the organizations concerned as well as to the military occupation authorities. This can only be done through specialized and detailed work, based on the results of practical experience as well as of scientific research.

Up to now, three sub-committees have already met:

The SUB-COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION, the SUB-COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH AND CHILD CARE, and the SUB-COMMITTEE FOR DISPLACED PERSONS.

It was only natural that the main question discussed in all three COMMITTEES, was our demand for special treatment of Jews in the field of Relief and Rehabilitation. The three main speakers in the respective SUB-COMMITTEES,

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Dr. Tartakower (DISPLACED PERSONS), Dr. Gruenewald (CULTURE AND EDUCATION), and Dr. Wulman (HEALTH AND CHILD CARE) all formulated and explained this same demand.

This problem is the more important in that one of the fundamental principles of UNRRA's work is that it be conducted on a non-sectarian basis, and without discrimination on grounds of religion, race or nationality. Questions thus arise as to the advisability of asking for special measures of Jewish aid, and whether such demands would not indicate a lack of confidence in UNRRA and introduce an element of separatism into a problem of general character. This main question demands clarification as it can easily mislead even people who may have the best intentions and who are liberal-minded and advanced in their views of the forms and character of aid to be given in liberated countries.

In a summary way, we could have easily disposed of this question by merely stating that the unprecedented and extraordinary Jewish sufferings are in themselves a sufficient basis for the special treatment of Jews after the war. But this summary answer will not be sufficient to convince non-Jews. Therefore all SUB-COMMITTEES agreed upon the necessity of a detailed compilation of all the weighty reasons of medical, religious, cultural, and psychological nature on which the demand of special treatment for Jews can be based. Only then can one raise a second question: "HOW is special aid for Jews to be provided?" In the following, a brief report of the items under discussion in the three SUB-COMMITTEES will be given:

#### 1. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION.

Members: Rabbi Simon Langer, Prof. Jacques Hademard (now on his way to France), Mr. Andre Spire, Prof. Andre Meyer, Rabbi Samuel Brot, Mr. S. Aptroot, Dr. Robert Serebrenik, Rabbi Isaac Alcalay, Dr. Max Gruenewald, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, Dr. Kurt Herz, Prof. Aron Treiman, Dr. Adolf Leschnitzer, Dr. Max Osborn, Rabbi M. Schulman, Dr. Max Weinreich, Dr. B. Weinreb, Dr. W. Blatberg, Rabbi B. W. Hendles, Rabbi Dr. I. Levin, Prof. A. Weiss, Prof. Guido Kisch, Prof. Hugo Perutz, Mr. J. W. Stoppelman, Rabbi J. Cerdozo, Prof. Arturo Castiglioni, Prof. Roberto Lopez, Prof. Bruno Rossi, Rabbi J.S. Fischer, Dr. Richard Beer-Hofman, Dr. Rudolf Glanz, Mr. Jack Pinto, Prof. S. Herman.

The purpose of this COMMITTEE, as was outlined in the opening address delivered by Dr. Gruenewald, is to advise the World Jewish Congress on religious, educational, and cultural matters and to enable the Congress to negotiate with the international organizations and governments concerned, and with the Jewish Agency or other bodies interested in Jewish Education (i.e. the Board of Jewish Education, IVC, Histadruth Ivrit). Some of these, such as the Jewish Council on Public Relations, the Rabbinical Seminaries and Yeshivot, have already begun work in this field.

The SUB-COMMITTEE has to bring about unity in program and action with the other Jewish international educational organizations. Besides the national governments, the main bodies involved in reconstruction work in the field of culture and education are:

- 1) The "United Nations Organization for Education and Cultural Reconstruction" formed by a conference of Allied Ministers of Education and Religion in May, 1944. This educational UNRRA, whose constituting assembly in London was headed by the leader of the American delegation, J. William Fullbright, will have the following tasks, as described in a statement released by the State Department:
  - a) Restoration of educational facilities.
  - b) Restocking of libraries.
  - c) Training of carefully selected students
  - d) assistance in recovery and restoration to the rightful owners of educational material looted by the Axis.

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The statement refrained from expressing any policy on post-war education of Axis and satellite countries. According to Fulbright, the program envisages the exchange of 10,000 teachers and students, and a plan to bring 1500 student-specialists from Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Norway to the United States.

2) The private agency, World Education Service Council, headed by Dr. Reinhold Schnitzer of New York University and sponsored by the United States Committee on Educational Reconstruction, whose immediate program provides for recreation hostels to be set up in Switzerland and Sweden for 2,000 teachers of liberated countries, contributions to four-five thousand schools, establishment of children's recreation centers, kits for students, chests for work-shops, etc.

In contacting these organizations, our Committee has to be prepared to show what we owned, what was destroyed, and what we need. The World Jewish Congress has begun the registration of Jewish property, including Jewish cultural property, in occupied countries, but there will be enormous difficulties in completing this work, and certainly there will be a great divergence between the programs contemplated by these international organizations and the scope of Jewish needs. The State Department's statement mentions the restoration of property to its rightful owners. A question arises as to who the rightful owner is in cases where a community was wiped out without leaving legal Jewish successors, especially in Central and Eastern Europe where such problems will become pressing. We shall have a severe struggle to obtain a satisfactory decision from the various governments on this matter. Another serious contention may arise in connection with Jewish children rescued by and now in the custody of the Catholic Church.

Still another important problem/arises regarding those Jews who will not be able to return to their original countries or who will have to live in a temporary residence until their final resettlement. To restore and maintain the morale of these groups, textbooks describing the heroic role of Jewish youth in underground armies, in the Palestinian Units, and the story of Youth Aliyah will have to be published. This would restore the self-respect of the youth and would be one way of counter-acting the missionary activities of the churches.

One of the main topics to be considered by the Sub-Committee will be the grave problem of providing sufficient Jewish teachers. There is a vast field for the Committee's activities in the reconstruction of Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe. The question of Russia will also have to be carefully studied and discussed. A no less important problem is constituted by the various Jewish settlements, of permanent or temporary character, throughout the world--in Shanghai, in certain countries of South America, and in scattered settlements of Africa.

In order to accomplish the task described this Sub-Committee should work towards the establishment of:

- a) A Jewish trusteeship, consisting of leading religious and educational representatives and organizations, for which recognition through the main powers of the United Nations should be obtained.
- b) An educational union composed of Jewish educational organizations as a counterpart of the non-Jewish educational and international organizations.

Among the many problems discussed by the Committee were the questions of Soviet Russia and our contacts with the Jewish communities of that country, of the reconstruction of cultural institutions in Europe--with due consideration to the differences in culture between Eastern and Western Europe, and of the specific situation of the German Jews. In his final resumé Dr. Tartkower recommended the sub-division of the work of the Committee into four sections:

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- 1) For negotiations between the World Jewish Congress and UNRRA.
- 2) For the preparation of a program for our negotiations with governments.
- 3) For problems connected with publicity, since Jewish and general public opinion is not informed as to the real situation.
- 4) For further scientific studies in this field.

## 2. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

Members: Prof. Siegfried Altmann, Prof. Herbert Elias, Dr. J. Gudeman, Prof. T. Anigstein, Dr. Gustav Bychowski, Dr. S. Gottlieb, Prof. A. Lejwa, Sen. R. Szereshowski, Dr. I. Wulman, Dr. Paul Friedman, Prof. Isidor Held, Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, Prof. Israel Wechsler, Dr. Lazar Rosental, Mrs. Jenny Fink, Dr. Joseph Proujanski, Mr. Mendel Haber, Dr. Samuel de Lange, Prof. Roberto Funaro, Prof. Mario Volterra, Dr. Felix Rezek, Mr. Pierre Dreyfus, Dr. J. Jacobson, Dr. Rudolf Loevenstein, Prof. Maurice Wolf, Dr. Frederick Aron, Dr. Margarete Fehrend, Dr. W. Eliasberg, Prof. Bruno Kisch, Dr. Erich Seligman, Dr. Mendel Sudarski, Prof. Dr. Otto Loewl, Mrs. Caroline Wijzenbeck, Dr. S. Malowist, Dr. Nathan Weigl.

Dr. L. Wulman, former head of Toz, Poland, Director of OSE in New York, outlined in his opening address the principal reasons why the Jewish people need special attention in the distribution of post-war relief. He classified these reasons into four main groups.

- 1) Extraordinary persecution practiced against Jews.
- 2) Medical reasons.
- 3) Religious and cultural reasons.
- 4) Psychological reasons.

In the first group he included the following: a) Ghettos, where only Jews were confined and treated in a manner leading to death. b) Deportation, on a scale far greater than any people in Europe. c) Starvation - the German food policy with regard to Jews was deliberately designed to undermine the Jewish population physically and hasten their destruction. d) Martyrdom of Jewish children -- "Jewish children need not grow up" became the Nazi slogan all over Europe. The Germans set themselves the task of destroying the younger Jewish generation.

Among medical reasons for special treatment Dr. Wulman mentioned: a) The reverse of positive vital phenomena among Jews. b) The profound physio-chemical disequilibrium among starving Jews. c) Mental disturbances. d) Special nervous and psychotic syndromes among Jewish children. e) The liquidation of the entire Jewish medical facilities in Europe.

Religious and cultural reasons also require a special approach to Jewish problems. The Jewish masses of Europe, especially of Central and Eastern Europe, adhere to religious beliefs, customs, and rituals pertaining to diet, the slaughter of animals, and observance of the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, which must be respected.

Of utmost importance are the psychological reasons since in modern medical treatment the psychological factor, pedagogic influence, plays a decisive role, especially with respect to children whose hypersensitivity and suspiciousness of the outside world will persist for a long time after the war.

The second part of Dr. Wulman's report was dedicated to the "Character of Jewish medical and child-care institutions" to be created in Europe after the war. A carefully elaborated program was developed which includes provisions for:

- a) Large convalescent homes and camps.
- b) Hospitals, clinics, and sanatoria.
- c) Rapid disinfection and anti-epidemic units.
- d) Food kitchens and canteens.
- e) A network of Jewish child-care institutions.

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In accordance with a suggestion made by Dr. Tartakower, a working committee was appointed in order to organize the activities of the Committee for Health and Child-Care. This planning committee decided, at a recent meeting, to set up the following sub-sections:

- 1) For general medical help for Jews (demonstrating special Jewish needs, problems of nutrition, of recuperation of Jewish health, of Jewish mental diseases; and of the organization of medical help for Jews).
- 2) For child care (medical help for children in the mental and physical field, help to displaced and uprooted children).
- 3) For restitution of Jewish medical property. This sub-section will also have to deal with the future of Jewish physicians.

At the next general meeting to be held in the first part of November, the Committee will start its practical work on the above mentioned problems.

3. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR DISPLACED PERSONS.

Members: Prof. Eugene Kulisher, Dr. Joseph Schechtman, Dr. F. Fried, Dr. Julius Brutzkus, Mr. Sigismund Leib, Mr. Hermann Muller, Dr. Kurt Grossmann, Dr. Martin Rosenbluth, Mr. Herbert Seeliger, Mr. Marc Wischnitzer, Mr. D. Dr. Silver-Solis, Mr. Leon Alter, Mr. J. J. Spenszick, Dr. Simon Bernstein, Mr. M. Moses, Mr. J. de Lange, Mr. David Silva, Dr. S. Rickel, Prof. Max Laserson, Mr. Otto Heinrich, Mrs. Sophie V. Grinberg, Mr. Boris Gorlin, Mr. Raymond Weyl, Mrs. Trude E. Frank, Dr. Harry B. Bernstein-Bervory, Dr. Angiolo Treves, Dr. Guido Bachi, Dr. Oscar Karchch, Mr. Ernest Stiresny, Dr. Paul Neuberger, Mr. Isaiah Rosowsky, Mr. Ernest Adler

This Sub-Committee, which has already held two meetings, heard from Dr. Tartakower about the past efforts of the World Jewish Congress in the field of displaced persons, particularly with regard to the two sessions of UHRR in Atlantic City and Montreal.

The tasks in this domain are of utmost importance. There are over four million Jewish displaced persons in Europe. Here, too, the problem of priorities for Jews plays a great role. Another problem involved is that of the nationality of displaced persons. The original idea guiding UNRRR was to assist only citizens of allied nations. The repatriation of non-citizens is faced with particularly great difficulties, for certain governments are reluctant to admit persons of that kind. In other cases Jews do not wish to be repatriated. The World Jewish Congress has achieved significant gains in the field of displaced persons. At its last session UNRRR adopted two resolutions of great significance: a) To grant assistance to all displaced victims of persecution found in liberated areas, regardless of their nationality; b) To grant assistance to victims of persecution whether found in enemy or ex-enemy territory. Other problems still remain to be solved, e.g. the question of enemy or ex-enemy nationals found in neutral countries, of assistance to be granted to groups in enemy or ex-enemy territory who cannot be considered displaced persons. Concerning the resettlement of people who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated, UNRRR did not wish to make a decision, stating that the Inter-Governmental Committee would be competent to act in this field.

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Therefore, the task of the Sub-Committee is manifold. The military occupation authorities, who so far did not seem to be informed concerning the problems brought to the attention of UNRRA by us will have to be approached. Closer contact has to be established with the Inter-Governmental Committee, as it will be instrumental in finding homes for displaced persons who cannot or do not wish to be repatriated. Contacts with the International Labor Office have to be maintained and extended. The World Jewish Congress has already secured ILO recognition of Jews, deported for forced labor as "laborers", so that they may have the benefit of social insurance, for whose payment Germany is to be held. One of the main duties of the Committee will be to prepare for our approach to the various Governments, which will remain an important factor with regard to the problem of displaced persons. This Committee, in close cooperation with the representative committees of the World Jewish Congress, is to coordinate the plans for these contacts with the various Governments and the subsequent negotiations.

Dr. Tartakower proposed to establish four sub-sections of the Committee for Displaced Persons, namely:

- 1) a sub-section for communications with UNRRA; 2) a sub-section for approaching the various representative committees in order to discuss the problems of their communications to the respective governments; 3) a sub-section to inform public opinion concerning the problem of displaced persons; 4) a sub-section to approach the Soviet authorities and discuss with them the question of residents of the USSR, who were not there before the war.

In the discussion during the first two meetings of the Committee for Displaced Persons, many problems of detail were brought up. In order to materialize, as soon as possible, the above-mentioned coordination of our communications with the various governments, it was decided at the last meeting to call another meeting to which delegates of all representative committees affiliated with the World Jewish Congress should be invited. This meeting was scheduled for the beginning of November.

#### 4. SUB-COMMITTEE FOR LEGAL AND POLITICAL REHABILITATION

Members: Prof. A. Fuesbaum, Dr. Hugo Ehammerich, Mr. Manfred George, Prof. H. Rheinstrom, Dr. Ernest Staeffel, Mr. Alfred Bondy, Dr. Paul Neuberger, Prof. Alex Pekelis, Prof. Renzo Rava, Prof. Angelo Piero Sereni, Dr. Angiolo Treves, Dr. Jacob Robinson, Dr. Jacob Trumki, Prof. Jean Sylvain Weiler, Maître Henry Torres, Dr. Henry Sinds, Prof. Roul Aglion, Prof. Robert Mosse, Dr. K. Stein, Mr. Wladislaw Szattenstein, Dr. Z. Wahrhaftig, Dr. Leon Kubovitzki, Prof. Nico Gunzburg, Dr. Harry Torczynar, Dr. B. Spies, Dr. Paul Reiner, Dr. Gerhard Jacoby, Mr. Simon S. Nessim, Dr. Siegfried Kantor, Dr. Oscar Kerbrich, Mr. Alexis Goldenweiser.

This Committee will hold its first meeting in the beginning of November, basing its discussions on the statement of the World Jewish Congress concerning "Restoration of Jewish Rights". In close contact with the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the Sub-Committee will also deal, among others, with the following problems: a) Jewish aspects of the proposals adopted at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference; b) the problem of international guarantees of Jewish rights; c) the question of anti-Semitism considered in its national and international aspects; d) the punishment of the war criminals.

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# WAR EMERGENCY CONFERENCE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

ATLANTIC CITY  
NOVEMBER 26 — DECEMBER 1, 1944  
NOVEMBER 12-17, 1944

St. Charles Hotel

Headquarters: New York, 1834 Broadway

## Report on the Registration of Jewish Public Property in Poland

Submitted by  
Dr. Kalman Stein

### I. Introductory Notes

In July 1944 it was decided that the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation should, in cooperation with the Representation of Polish Jewry and other Polish Jewish organizations, undertake the registration of Jewish communal property in Poland which, prior to September 1939, belonged to the Jewish communities and all social, religious, cultural and charitable organizations.

Dr. Kalman Stein was given the assignment of conducting the work of the registration of Jewish communal property.

### II. Reasons for the Establishment of a Special Office for the Registration of the Property of Polish Jewry

The Representation of Polish Jewry put forth the demand that a special office for the registration of Jewish communal property be organized in view of the fact that the post-war problems which will confront the remnants of Polish Jewry will be far greater and more complex than those facing the other Jews of Europe.

During the period of terrible losses suffered by the Jews in all Nazi-occupied countries, Polish Jewry was almost totally annihilated. There is not one Polish Jew today living in his pre-war home; nor is there one, of the almost 1000 pre-war Jewish communities, left. No active Jewish welfare organizations remain. There is nothing left of the rich pre-war Jewish life in Poland. After the war everything will have to be restored. The old communities will have to be re-organized. The few Jewish children still to be found alive will have to be brought back to schools after many long years during which they were deprived of all educational possibilities, and the Jewish welfare organizations will have to be restored so that they may be able to serve the needy Jewish population.

The total destruction of Jewish life in Poland makes it imperative that special effort be exerted, when the possibility presents itself, to restore the life of Polish Jewry. The magnitude of the tragedy which befell the greatest Jewish community in Europe and the immensity of the task of rebuilding it will, of course, require the particular attention of the World Jewish Congress.

### III. The Importance of the Task

The difficulties and the complex problem involved in the restoration and rehabilitation of Polish Jewish life will be too tremendous for us to hope to cope with at once. No matter how much outside help is rendered, it will not and cannot

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suffice to meet every important need. At the same time, we cannot expect that displaced and ruined Polish Jewry will be able, to any significant degree, to organize self-help which will enable it to recover its former status. But if we were to make preparations now - and help the Polish Jews to begin anew their social and communal life after the war, this vast problem of rehabilitation would be greatly facilitated.

The restoration of Jewish cultural, religious and social life in Poland will require extensive financial means. To a very large degree, the necessary means for the restoration of Jewish communal life could be supplied by the Polish Jews themselves if the communal property which belonged to them before the outbreak of the war were restored to them as soon as possible. It is not unlikely that the restoration of Jewish communal property may, for many reasons, be easier to accomplish than that of the looted Jewish private property. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that tremendous effort will have to be exerted in order to achieve the restoration of the Jewish communal property.

#### IV. Work Accomplished to Date

In order to be able to put forth our claims, it is essential of course, to have an exact knowledge of the assets of Polish Jewry before the war and it is our primary task to register and evaluate as accurately as possible Jewish communal property in Poland before the war. During the last three months, since the creation of the Registration Office, much of the necessary groundwork has been laid for the accomplishment of the large and complex task of registering and evaluating Jewish communal property.

It is our task to trace and register all types of property which formerly belonged to the Jewish communities and the cultural, religious, social and charitable organizations in pre-war Poland.

If we bear in mind the fact that Polish Jewry consisted of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million people; that it was composed of 1000 communities, each with its own synagogues, schools, and charitable institutions; that there were thousands of social, cultural, religious and welfare organizations in the country, that the communal property of Polish Jewry represented the accumulation of hundreds of years - then, and only then, can we properly appreciate the vastness of our task.

There are two bases on which such a registration can be conducted, and both are utilized by us to the greatest extent: first, reference to all published material relating to Jewish life in Poland; second, reliance on personal information received from various sources.

As the first step in instituting our investigation, we have gathered all the available material in the New York libraries, and have now started the personal inquiries.

The nature and scope of the difficulties which beset us can best be realized from the fact that there was no complete list of Polish Jewish communities available. On the basis of a publication issued by the Polish Statistical Office, such a list was compiled. We now have a card index file of 1053 communities whose Jewish population numbered 5000 or more. The latter group is of course more important for the purposes of registration since the major part of the Jewish communal property can be found in these larger communities.

Primarily, we must make every effort to see that a complete registration and evaluation of Jewish property is made for these communities. When this, which is our most important task, will have been accomplished, we will be able to complete our work by adding information concerning smaller and less important communities.

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The accumulated published material (found in yearbooks, community publications, historical books, etc.) was the source of much valuable information regarding Jewish communal property in various communities (mainly in the large communities, such as Warsaw, Lwow, Cracow, Vilna, Lublin, etc.) and while this material is far from being complete, it is now being used as a valuable basis for personal inquiries. In the course of our research work, we have succeeded in gathering an almost complete record of the various Jewish schools in Poland for the year 1936. Thus we now have an almost complete register of one very important section of Jewish communal property, insofar as educational institutions are concerned.

Besides the accumulation of "library" material which provides us only with a fractional part of the required data, we have also begun to gather personal information. A detailed questionnaire was prepared and printed. It consists of 24 pages and is divided into three sections: 1) Immovable property, with the following subdivisions: Office buildings, apartment houses, synagogues, cemeteries, school buildings, charitable institutions (orphanages, nurseries, kindergartens, homes for the aged, homes for the disabled and blind, etc.), hospitals, convalescent homes, ritual bath houses, dormitories, recreation centers, lots and farms. 2) Movable property, with the following subdivisions: religious articles, book collections, art collections, school equipment, equipment of communities, welfare organizations, societies, etc; and also mortgaged property, securities, bank accounts, claims, etc. 3) Cooperatives, banks, Gemilath Hoesed funds. This questionnaire is being sent out to Jewish leaders from Poland now in Palestine, America and the British Empire, who will be able to supply us with accurate information regarding Jewish property in their respective communities.

We know that the filling in of the very detailed questionnaire will require much effort and time. However, we are of the opinion that the registration will be of real value only if it is as complete as possible under the circumstances. Superficial information will be of no consequence.

Besides information received from individuals, additional information can be obtained from different landsmannschaften and groups of Polish Jews in various countries, and especially here in the United States. Before the war, almost every Polish Jewish group abroad financed some institution in its home city. We have therefore prepared a second questionnaire for the landsmannschaften and we are now beginning to send it out. We hope that these groups, in view of the importance of the post-war rehabilitation work, will cooperate with us fully. Finally, we have approached the various organizations (The Joint Distribution Committee, Ose, Ort, Yivo, Jewish Colonization Association, etc.) which functioned in Poland, and we hope to receive from them information concerning their respective fields of activity in pre-war Poland.

In the organizational field, we have pursued the following plan: we have organized a special Commission on Registration of Public Property in Poland, inviting Polish Jewish leaders in this country to participate, and we will try to obtain the cooperation of organizations of Polish Jews. We hope to be able to establish a close collaboration with the Central Representation of Polish Jewry in Palestine and the various groups of Polish Jews in the countries of America and the British Empire, especially with respect to obtaining personal information from the leaders of the Polish Jews now residing in those countries. We have also approached several experts in the different spheres of Jewish life in pre-war Poland, and we are certain that their knowledge will be of value to us in our work.

Following the registration, it will be necessary to evaluate all the Jewish communal property in order to prepare the essential material for the political steps that will have to be taken toward its restitution. It will also be the task of the Registration Office to prepare drafts of proposals for laws whose adoption (by the Polish authorities) will be a prerequisite to the restoration of looted Jewish communal property. Of course, all these proposals will have to implement the general policy of restitution laid down by the World Jewish Congress in connection with the general problem of restoration and rehabilitation of European Jewish life.

We have already prepared the draft of a law for the establishment of a "Fund for Polish Jewry" the purpose of which is to preserve Jewish property (for which there are no living claimants) and to be of general assistance in the rehabilitation of Polish Jewry. This proposal was presented to the Polish Government in London by the Representation of Polish Jewry.

#### V. Conclusions

It is obvious that this registration work, having first of all, a political and practical purpose, will also be of tremendous significance from the historical point of view. No matter how sincere and painstaking our efforts, even if we should succeed in having Jewish communal property restored, there can be no doubt that total restitution cannot be achieved. Part of that property was destroyed during the war. Part of it (mostly movable property) was looted and can never be regained. Hence, historical documents and other objects of historical and art value will forever be lost. The registration of Jewish communal property will at least serve the purpose of acting as an authentic record of property lost and irretrievable.

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## REPORT ON A JEWISH SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK

The idea of establishing a school for Jewish social work originated in the Institute of Jewish Affairs, and was adopted by the Relief Department of the World Jewish Congress. The necessity of a training course for Jewish social workers arises from the distinctiveness of the Jewish problem after the war. Hundreds of thousands of Jews will have to be saved from starvation and epidemics. A mass movement of deportees and refugees will have to be organized and directed. New economic foundations will have to be laid for the rehabilitation of the uprooted Jewish population especially in Central and Eastern Europe; the social and economic reintegration of Jews with the general life of European countries will have to be planned and carried out.

One of the important conditions of success in rebuilding the Jewish community in Europe after the War is to secure a trained staff for the work of relief and rehabilitation. The agencies of Jewish social work in pre-War Europe did not survive the Nazi regime. The only way to secure properly trained personnel to deal with the situation is to begin now to train Jewish students willing to devote themselves to these tasks.

A special school must be established for this purpose. The World Jewish Congress has concluded that it is preferable to set up such a school in cooperation with an educational institution in New York City. After making several contacts to this end, we decided to concentrate our efforts on the New School for Social Research. Plans for the future courses of study have been worked out in cooperation with Prof. Horace M. Kallen, Dean of the Graduate Faculty of the New School. (A description of these courses is attached). We are in touch with Professor Kallen and Mrs. Wise-Polier, member of the Board of Trustees of the New School and hope to start the courses in the near future.

## SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK COURSES OF STUDY

### 1. THEORY OF SOCIAL WORK

(Causes of and methods of counteracting pauperization, aid for physically or mentally handicapped people, case work with families and individuals, orphan and child care, public hygiene, social problems of education, psychiatric social work, legislation and social work, problems of unemployment, cooperation as method of social work)..... 10 hours

Mrs. Frieda Wunderlich, Prof. of the Graduate  
Faculty of the New School of Social Research,  
and a lecturer to be designated from the staff  
of the New York School of Social Work

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II. SOCIOLOGY OF THE JEWS IN EUROPE

(Statistics of the Jews. Jewish population movement; political, economic and cultural aspects of the Jewish community; Jewish education; Jewish migration and colonization; fundamental problems of Jewish life before the war with special consideration of the situation in individual countries)..... 21 hours

Jacob Lestschinski, Editor and Research Secretary  
of the Yiddish Scientific Institute in Vilna;  
Fellow of the Yiddish Scientific Institute in  
New York; Statistician of the Institute of  
Jewish Affairs.

Experts for individual countries: Rabbi Dr. J. S. Fischer,  
Research Assistant of the Institute of Jewish Affairs;  
Expert on Hungary

Dr. Gerhard Jacoby, Attorney, Court of Appeals in  
Berlin; Research Assistant, Institute of Jewish  
Affairs; Expert on Germany

Dr. Oscar Karbach, Secretary, Jewish Association  
for the League of Nations in Vienna; Research  
Assistant, Institute of Jewish Affairs; Expert  
on Austria

III. JEWISH RELIGIOUS LIFE IN PRE-WAR EUROPE

(Jewish religious unity: Rabbinate, synagogues, social and cultural activities)..... 7 hours

Professor Dr. A. Weiss  
Professor, Yeshiva College; Former Rector  
of Institute of Jewish Sciences in Warsaw

IV. JEWISH SOCIAL WORK BEFORE THE WAR..... 6 hours

Dr. A. Tartakower, Head, Department Relief  
and Rehabilitation of the World Jewish Congress

V. DESTRUCTION OF JEWISH LIFE IN NAZI-DOMINATED EUROPE

(Deprivation of rights: Denaturalization, outlawing; expropriation of individual and communal property; Displacement: Refugees, deportation, ghettos, labor and concentration camps; extermination)..... 6 hours

Dr. Jacob Robinson, Lithuanian Counsel  
of the Permanent Court of International  
Justice in the Hague; Director, Institute  
of Jewish Affairs

VI. RELIEF AND RESCUE WORK

Relief and rescue during the war by non-Jewish and Jewish organizations. (Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, U. S. War Refugee Board, International Red Cross, Joint Distribution Committee, World Jewish Congress, etc.)..... 6 hours

Dr. Bernard Kahn, Hon. Chairman, European Executive  
Council, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki, Attorney, Court of Appeals,  
Brussels; Head, Rescue Department World Jewish Congress

Zorach Warhaftig, Vice-Chairman, Central Palestine  
Office of the Jewish Agency at Warsaw; Research  
Assistant, Institute of Jewish Affairs

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VII. POSTWAR PROBLEMS OF RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

- A. Psychological problems of relief to distressed people, with special consideration of Jewish aspects..... 3 hours  
Prof. Dr. Horace M. Kallen, Dean  
of the Graduate Faculty of the New  
School for Social Research
- B. General relief, food, clothing, shelter.....4 hours  
Lecturer to be appointed from the staff of  
the New York School of Social Work
- C. Care of invalids ..... 1 hour  
Lecturer to be appointed from the  
American Committee of the OSE
- D. Care of children and war orphans.....3 hours  
Lecturer to be appointed from the  
American Committee of the OSE
- E. Medical and health problems.....2 hours  
Dr. J. J. Golub, MD, Vice-Chairman,  
Executive Committee of the American  
Committee of OSE  
  
Dr. L. Wulman, MD, Secretary,  
Executive Committee of the American  
Committee of OSE
- F. Reunion of Families..... 1 hour  
I. Dijour, Secretary General, Hicem
- G. Retraining of War Victims..... 3 hours  
Lecturer to be appointed from the  
American ORT Federations  
  
Zorach Warhaftig (Training for Palestine)
- H. Role of cooperatives in relief work, with special consider-  
ation of free-loan cooperatives.....2 hours  
Salomon Tarashanski, Former Inspector  
of the Joint Distribution Committee in  
Poland; or  
  
Dr. Ernest Hamburger, Visiting Professor,  
New School for Social Research
- I. Care of the displaced Jewish population  
(Return of persons displaced within their own  
country; repatriation, resettlement; colonization-  
with special reference to Palestine- and  
"infiltration")..... 10 hours  
Dr. A. Tartakower and  
Dr. M. Wisnitzer, Former Director,  
Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland.
- J. Problems of citizenship in connection with relief  
work..... 2 hours  
Mrs. S. Grinberg-Vinaver, Doctor of  
Law, Paris University; Lecturer at the  
Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes, New York
- K. Restoration of Jewish community life..... 2 hours  
Zorach Warhaftig
- L. Religious and cultural problems of the Jewish population  
in connection with relief activities..... 3 hours  
Rabbi S. Brodt, Chief Rabbi, Jewish  
Community, Antwerp

VIII. PROBLEMS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF RELIEF AFTER THE WAR

- A. General problems of the organization of relief  
(Private and governmental and intergovernmental  
agencies)..... 3 hours  
Lecturer to be appointed from the New York  
School of Social Work

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B. UNRRA, its aims and structure..... 2 hours  
Zorach Warhaftig

C. Jewish relief organizations..... 4 hours  
Dr. A. Tartakower

IX. PRACTICAL TASKS OF THE RELIEF WORKER  
(With special consideration of Jewish problems).....10 hours  
Mrs. Cecilia Razovski- Davidson,  
Assistant Director, National Council  
of Jewish Women; Editor, Interpreter  
Releases (Common Council for American  
Unity)

Dr. Bernard Kahn and

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## COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA

by Dr. Kalman Stein

### Introduction

In November 1943, the World Jewish Congress, in conjunction with the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the Conference on Jewish Relations, and the Research Institute on Peace and Post War Problems of the American Jewish Committee decided to conduct a joint research project on the possibilities of Jewish immigration into Latin America.

The purpose of the study is to find out whether a new, more liberal trend can be reasonably expected in Latin American Immigration Policy, and whether economic, political, and social conditions prevailing in South American countries make Jewish immigration in the future feasible.

It was decided that the research work would be divided in the following way: legal aspects are to be handled by the Conference on Jewish Relations; economic and sociological aspects by the World Jewish Congress; and administrative practices by the Research Institute on Peace and Post War Problems of the American Jewish Committee.

The legal aspects of the study deal with the policy with regard to Jewish immigration at the present time. Since the problem of Jewish immigration is only rarely the subject of special laws, the whole topic of immigration regulations must be considered. Of primary importance are the constitutional or other provisions relating to immigration control. The standards of immigration selection as reflected by racial, qualitative and occupational tests must be especially studied.

The sociological and economical aspects of this study deal with the following questions:

To ascertain the extent of general and Jewish immigration to date; to study the ways in which Jewish immigration has been absorbed in the several countries; to examine the reaction of public opinion to Jewish immigration; and finally to investigate post-war immigration possibilities from the economic, sociological, and political viewpoint.

The research on administrative practices covers the special limitations imposed by the administration with respect to religion, race, countries of origin, financial requirements, etc. These practices are outside the immigration laws and have therefore to be dealt with separately.

A joint committee was set up to conduct the research consisting of Professor Salo Baron, Professor Arthur Schiller, and Dr. Theodor Gaster of the Conference on Jewish Relations; Dr. Arieh Tartakower and Dr. Kalman Stein of the World Jewish Congress, and Dr. Max Gottschalk and Mr. Ilga DiJeux of the Research Institute on Peace and Post War Problems.

The committee held a few meetings to discuss the scope of the work. In view of the magnitude of the research task, it was decided that for the time being the project be limited to a study of the opportunities for immigration into Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico, as the most important countries from the point of view of post-war possibilities. In addition to its discussion on scope, the committee so far considered only a preliminary report on Argentina. The reports on the other countries are scheduled to be discussed.

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in the near future. No final findings have been discussed by the committee and, therefore, all statements and conclusions reached in this paper are the personal opinion of the author.

This report deals mainly with Argentina and Brazil and is an outline of a much longer study.

### I. General Remarks

South America has only recently an immigration center for Jews. Until 1914, Argentina was the only South American country which figured importantly in Jewish immigration. Jewish emigrants from Eastern and Central Europe could find economic and political security in other parts of the world (Western Europe, the British Empire, and especially the United States.) These countries were, for various reasons, more attractive to the Jewish masses than Latin America. Until the first World War, nearly all Jewish immigrants to Latin America, with the exception of Argentina, were Sephardic Jews from the Balkans, Turkey, and North Africa. This was probably due to the fact that the Sephardic Jews spoke "Ladino", and thus could easily find a common language with the Spanish-speaking peoples of Central and South America.

The situation changed entirely after the first World War. The importance of Latin America as an immigration center grew because of the closing of doors in the British Empire and the restriction of immigration into the United States. In the quarter century after the first World War, Jewish immigration to Latin American countries totaled well over 250,000. While in the period 1920-1933 most of the Jewish immigrants to Latin America went to Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, the years after 1933 witnessed a rapid spread of Jews throughout all of Central and South America.

The reasons for this are quite obvious. Immigration restrictions were introduced first in Argentina, later in Brazil. On the other hand, the growing Nazi pressure and the dangerous situation in most of the Central and Eastern European countries in the period before the outbreak of the war, made it imperative for European Jews to seek havens wherever they could be found. Thus, in the last years before the outbreak of the second World War, we found growing Jewish communities in various Central and South American countries, where several years before there had been only a few scattered Jews.

### II. Argentina

The final report on Argentina will consist of about 200 pages. Here we will deal only with immigration possibilities.

#### 1. The Prospects for Immigration - Favorable Factors

Between 1869 and 1944 the total population of Argentina increased from 1,877,000 to 13,906,000,<sup>2)</sup> due in considerable measure to a net immigration of some three and a half million persons. On the other hand, the rate of natural increase which was 20.6 per thousand in the years 1910 and 1913, had dropped to 11.3 per thousand by 1940. Furthermore net immigration which totalled 269,000 in the period 1911 - 1920 and was 876,000 between 1921 and 1930, dropped to 73,000 in the period between 1931 and 1940. After 1940 immigration practically ceased. One of Argentina's leading sociologists and economists, Alejandro E. Bunge, has constructed a statistical table showing that if the rate of natural population growth continues to fall in accordance with the trend of the past years and if present immigration policies are maintained, the Argentina population in 1968 will be only 13,200,000, and in 1988 it will have fallen to about 11½ million. Thus, the sparsely populated country would be even more depopulated. A renewal of immigration is therefore imperative. Even today there is ample room for additional population. The mean distribution of the population is only 13 persons per square mile, as against 47 in the United States, and 600 in Great Britain. Only about 10% of the country is under cultivation (cereals, sugar, fruits, etc.) though conservative estimates rate 23% as cultivable. The present output of agricultural products is only a fraction of the vastly greater crops which could be grown if the potential productivity of Argentine were even approximately realized.

1) In analysing statistics of immigration into the various Latin American countries, we have to take into account the fact that for many of the immigrants these countries were only a temporary refuge. In the early 'twenties, Mexico and Cuba were transit countries for thousands of Jews for immigration to North America. In the 'thirties, many of the small Central and South American countries were only transit countries for immigration to the United States, Argentina, Chile, or Uruguay.

2) 1869 - official census; 1944 - official estimate.

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Industrially, also, there is every indication that in spite of the great progress made in recent years, Argentina is capable of considerable expansion. Up to the first World War, Argentina was practically entirely an agricultural country, which produced and exported wheat and meat and imported necessary industrial goods. The outbreak of the war in 1914 changed that situation. The shortage of shipping space and the inability of European industrial powers to provide Argentina with all the necessary goods forced Argentina to create her own industry. Between the two wars, the so-called consumers' goods industries, including food and textile, leather goods, etc. made rapid forward strides. The outbreak of the present war accelerated that progress and gave impetus to the establishment and expansion of the chemical and metallurgical industry. In 1914 the total value of Argentine industrial production was estimated at 1,800,000,000 pesos; in 1939 it was more than 5,100,000,000 pesos.<sup>1)</sup> The expanding economy of the country may best be measured by the growing production and consumption figures. While in 1910 and 1914 it was estimated that the average yearly total production was 2½ billion pesos, in 1941 the total production was three times as great. Similarly, while in the '70's the annual value of Argentina's foreign trade was only \$750,000, in the fifty years following it rose to 1½ billion dollars, and in the last years before the outbreak of the war it was still well over a billion dollars.

Thus, from the economic point of view as well as from the point of view of population trend, there is no doubt that Argentina could absorb a large number of immigrants and provide them with a livelihood. It may even be said that the future economic, and to some extent also political, progress of Argentina depends on the rate of increase of its population. Population growth would, on one hand, provide a large consumer market for Argentina's agriculture and industry; on the other hand, it could insure real independence for Argentina.

## 2. The Prospects for Immigration - Unfavorable Factors

While the picture is very bright from the objective, economic angle, it is less encouraging from the standpoint of political and social factors. The year 1930 brought to an end a considerable history of free immigration into the Argentine Republic. There could be no doubt in the minds of the founders of the Argentine Republic that a vast country, thinly populated, could safeguard its newly won independence and develop economically only under one condition - that vast numbers of immigrants enter the country. Thus, the original Constitution (1853), in Article 25, imposed upon the Federal Government obligation "to promote European immigration," and prohibited the restriction by any tax of "entry of foreigners who come to work the land, improve industries, or introduce and teach sciences and arts." At the end of 1930 the first "restrictive" measures were adopted. The purpose of the restrictive measures was to admit only immigrants with special knowledge or professional qualifications who would be of the greatest usefulness for the economy of the country and would contribute toward a more even distribution of the population throughout the country.

The restrictive measures were later supplemented by another device of immigration policy, the so-called "selective" measures. While the restrictive measures had a chiefly economic implication, the latter were political in nature. The immigration of persons belonging to a particular racial stock, who could be easily "assimilated" and who were politically "desirable" was to be promoted; other groups were to be banned from the country. In pursuance of this policy of restrictive and selective immigration, bilateral treaties with the Low Countries, Denmark, and Switzerland were signed. The policy of tightening up immigration provisions went further, and the doors of Argentina were practically closed.<sup>2)</sup>

The attitude of leading Argentine groups toward the immigration problem is very significant from the point of view of future immigration possibilities. Until the first World War, there was practically no opposition to free immigration by any important group of Argentine society. After World War I this unanimity of opinion came to an abrupt end. The Government, the political parties, sociologists, economists, and finally the public at large were deeply divided on the issues of free, restricted, or closed immigration. While this verbal battle was actually fought between the advocates of free immigration on one side and of a more or less restricted and selected immigration on the other side, the outcome, strangely enough, was the adoption of the extreme policy of closing the doors of the country entirely. The arguments of those who advocated free immigration were as follows:

a) The economic factor - a vast country like Argentina cannot fully utilize her natural resources with only a small population, and her future

1) The value of raw materials is included in these figures.

2) It is characteristic that all this came about, without changing the basic immigration laws of the country, but simply through regulations and orders of the administration.

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depends on population growth. Time and again it was stressed that previous progress was due to the policy of free immigration which prevailed until 1930.

b) All types of immigrants are useful. A good many of the European immigrants who came to the Republic during the period 1870-1910 were humble, illiterate, and semi-literate people with a slight occupational preparedness, yet, these very people were responsible for the growth of Argentina. Thus the problem of selecting immigrants should be approached broad-mindedly and generously and with confidence in the power of Argentine opportunities to develop human capacities.

c) The humanitarian argument - Immigration restrictions were introduced at the time when Nazi Germany began her brutal racial policy, and the closing of the doors of immigration was a terrible blow to persecuted people. Opponents of the restrictions contended that the refusal to open the doors of Argentina to the political victims was intolerable on humanitarian grounds.

The arguments of those who opposed free immigration were:

a) Economic factors - A frontal attack against immigration from the economic point of view was difficult in view of the patent facts. The fight against free immigration on economic grounds was therefore concentrated on two questions: the protection of workers against foreign competition, and the necessity of admitting into the country only such persons as would be most useful in the economic development of the country.

b) Selection of immigrants - The bogey of minorities and the fear of their settlement in the country in compact masses is repeated again and again. For that reason, some advocated a policy of admitting into the country only immigrants stemming from related racial stock and ready to be assimilated among the Argentines. Behind these arguments was unquestionably the specific unwillingness to admit Jewish immigrants. It is worth noting that the immigration restrictions were adopted by the Argentine Government at a time of Parliamentary control and over the opposition of active political groups and of a part of Argentinian public opinion. One should not expect the regime which took over the Government after the revolution of June 4, 1943, to change the policy then adopted on the immigration problem. On the contrary, opposition to immigration is now much stronger than before and has been strengthened by heightened fear of admitting persons of "undesirable" political views. Moreover, the specific element of anti-Jewish feeling has probably been on the increase in governmental and academic circles, in certain branches of the press and among the middle classes, and as we have seen, this is a factor contributing to the determination of immigration policy.

Other factors, too, have to be taken into account in forecasting the prospects of Jewish immigration. Not least among these are the unfavorable rules regarding land-tenure, as well as the current political struggle between the landowners and the increasingly powerful industrialists, also the generally tense political atmosphere surrounding Argentina.

### 3. Conclusion

a) The past 25 years witnessed a great increase of the Jewish population in Argentina, and steady improvement in their economic condition. The best proof of the absorptive capacity of the country is the fact that even the latest immigration wave of German Jews, who came from a highly industrialized country with conditions quite different from those prevailing in Argentina, now, after only a few years, are almost completely self-supporting.

Argentine Jewry played an important part in the industrialization of Argentina. An especially important contribution was made by Jews in the development of the textile industry. The clothing industry in Argentina was practically created by Jews and is still almost exclusively Jewish. Thus from the economic standpoint and especially in view of its immense potentialities of future development, Argentina would be excellently suited for Jewish immigration after the present war.

b) It seems, however, on the basis of a study of public opinion during the last fifteen years and of Argentina's present immigration policy, that favorable economic factors will not prove determining in Argentina immigration policy. The most we can expect is a policy of selective and planned immigration, which often means, in effect, the exclusion of Jews. But even if the restrictive and selective measures do not entirely close the country to Jewish immigration, it is a moot question - after a careful evaluation of all the circumstances - whether Jewish immigration into Argentina should be encouraged by the Jewish organizations. There can be no doubt that Argentina

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and will probably remain, a country of high political tension. Many aspects of the present atmosphere in Argentina and the attitude of some circles of society towards the Jews are reminiscent of the pre-war situation in a number of European countries.

### III. Brazil

The final report on Brazil will contain about 150 pages; in this place only a few remarks will be made on immigration possibilities.

#### 1. Brazil's attitude toward immigration.

a) Brazil as a racial melting pot.

Brazil is making probably the most interesting experiment in race mixture in the world.

Various laws have been enacted to facilitate, and if necessary even to enforce the mutual assimilation of the entire population regardless of race, color, and creed. Thus, the so-called "Immigration Act" of May 4, 1938, provides that no "colonial nucleus" may be organized by aliens of a single nationality; that the Federal Government, through a special agency, will exercise control over all colonies founded by states, municipalities, companies, organizations, or individuals in order to prevent the creation of colonies of aliens of a single nationality, and to prevent the preponderance or concentration of aliens of a single nationality to a degree not conforming with the general ethnic and social composition of the Brazilian people. The same law contains an impressive program for accelerating the assimilation of the immigrants through the following provisions inter alia: all school superintendents must be native Brazilians; no foreign name may be used for a colony, a commercial or industrial establishment, or association; publication of books in a foreign language is subject to authorization by the Minister of Justice. Another law, of August 25, 1939, is the most militant measure undertaken by a South American country in order to solve the minority problem by enforcing cultural uniformity. The law provided that all public, federal, state, and municipal officers are obliged to collaborate, within the sphere of their authority, in order to bring about the complete adjustment of Brazilians of foreign origin to the national way of life. This adjustment will be achieved by teaching and using the national language, by spreading the knowledge of Brazilian history, by inspiring all associations with patriotic spirit and by all other means which may contribute toward the growth of a common national feeling. To achieve these goals, the law contains the following extraordinary provisions inter alia: strict control, secretly if necessary, of the districts of foreign colonization; the supervision of foreign agents visiting the colonization districts; a ban, except by special permission by the President of the Republic, on Brazilians under 18 years of age going abroad unaccompanied by parents or tutors; the use by the authorities, at all gatherings of a public or private nature, of all means at their disposal, without offending any individual rights of warranty, to spread national sentiments.

b) Governmental attitude and public opinion.

After achieving independence, Brazil adopted a policy calculated to facilitate immigration. That policy was terminated in 1934, when the foundations were laid for the legislation of 1938, which introduced a 2% quota system. (The quota was based on the total immigration from various countries in the period 1884 to 1933. The total yearly immigration quota is 79,000, of which 80% must be farmers and 20% of other professions). In 1940, after the introduction of further restrictions, immigration was practically ended. This was the result of determined agitation by a small minority of nationalists led by the political party known as "Integralismo" and the group known as "Sociedad de Amigos de Alberto Torres". One of the aims of this group was to combat the "yellow peril" in Brazil. The bulk of the Brazilian people has never enthusiastically supported the drastic immigration restrictions. Brazilian economists opposed them vehemently, stressing the fact that Brazil is underpopulated and that her economic difficulties are largely the result of insufficient population and a small domestic market.

Together with the various immigration restrictions, drastic restrictions against foreign residents were put into effect. The so-called "Two-Thirds Act" established a minimum quota of two-thirds Brazilian citizens among the laborers in any enterprise. However, governmental circles in Brazil have often stressed the temporary character of all these regulations. It is emphasized that Brazil is very far from having attained her optimum population, and that the immigration restrictions were adopted for security reasons and were directed against dangerous minorities.

There can be question, however, of Brazil's resuming a policy of free immigration. All comments on future immigration policy indicate that though some relaxation of restrictions may occur, certain restrictive measures must be retained. In view of our experience in many countries where selective measures especially affected Jews, we cannot be too hopeful that a post-war relaxation of immigration policy will greatly facilitate Jewish immigration into Brazil. However we may assume that obstacles to Jewish immigration will be less formidable than in any other country with a selective immigration policy.

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## 2. Brazil as an immigration country in the future

### a) Immigration in the past

Since 1890, when the population of Brazil totaled about 14 million, the population has trebled; on the basis of official estimates, the Brazilian population today is over 45 million.

In practically the same period (1886-1940), about 4,130,000 immigrants arrived in the country. In the decade 1916-1925 immigration totaled 573,000 and in the following decade, 1926-1935, it rose to almost 635,000; but in the following five-year period, 1936-1940 the number of immigrants fell to about 120,000 because of immigration restrictions. It is significant that almost the entire immigration was absorbed by the southern states of Brazil, chiefly Sao Paulo. In the 20th century the southern states of Brazil made the most rapid economic progress. A close correlation may well be established between the influx of immigrants into that part of the country and the economic advance of that region. (those tolerable climatic conditions attracted this influx of immigrants)

### b) Economic possibilities

Brazil, has a total area of 3,286,200 square miles, and is one of the five largest countries in the world (larger than the continental United States). Relative to its size Brazil has a very small population (about 13 persons per square mile). In evaluating the economic strength of the country, the following elements have to be taken into consideration:

- 1) The vast size and the great productive capacity of the country.
- 2) In spite of the fact that nearly three-fourths of the land has a tropical climate, there is in the South and East an elevated region, several times as large as the British Isles, possessing a mild climate and supplied with water power and enormous reserves of high grade iron ore, which is suited to colonization by white men. This part of the country has economic potentialities of the most varied kinds.
- 3) The great progress in every field of economic activity during the past twenty years, in spite of the fact that the enormous wealth of the country is still only slightly developed.
- 4) Though Brazil is essentially an agricultural country, only 20% of the total area of the country is occupied by farms and of this land barely one-fifth is actually under cultivation.
- 5) The industrialization of the country progressed rapidly following the first World War. While light industries predominated up to the time of the last war, recent years have seen the rapid development of heavy industries as well. The rate of industrialization of the country can be measured by the following figures: In 1920 Brazil had about 13,000 factories, in 1937 there were 36,000; steel production totalled about 20,000 tons in 1930, by 1940 it had risen to 140,000 tons.
- 6) Almost all minerals, with the exception of coal, are to be found in Brazil, and its iron ore deposits are the richest in the world.

### c) Immigration possibilities.

Some economists and geographers are of the opinion that Brazil could feed five hundred million people. Whether this estimate is exaggerated or not, there can be no doubt that Brazil is capable of supporting a much larger population at a much higher standards of living. Thus, from the economic point of view Brazil offers a good possibility for future immigration. It may be that, through a future relaxation of the immigration policy and in view of the fact that the anti-Semitic tendencies have not had great success in Brazil, some Jewish immigration into Brazil can be expected. But when we consider encouraging Jewish immigration into Brazil, we should remember the strong "assimilationist tendencies" prevailing there. Brazilian Jewry has great difficulty in establishing any sort of contact with the outside world. The question therefore arises to what degree it would be possible to preserve Jewish life in Brazil.

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#### IV. Conclusions

The above summary of economic conditions and prevailing political and social tendencies bearing on immigration in Argentine and Brazil give us some basis upon which to evaluate immigration possibilities throughout all Central and South America. There can be no doubt that:

- a) All South American countries are under-populated, not fully exploited economically, and that further economic progress depends largely upon increased immigration.
- b) The Jewish population of the South American countries had made a substantial contribution toward the economic progress of various countries, especially in the field of industrialization and the establishment of trade connections with the outside world.
- c) The immigration restrictions in the Latin American countries are due to a rising nationalistic sentiment and we cannot foresee any great relaxation of the restrictive measures. As late as October 30, 1944, in the official gazette of Mexico, an immigration law was published which gives favored treatment to nationals of the Western Hemisphere and of Spain, but restricts the immigration of citizens of other nations. Nationals of countries other than those in the Western Hemisphere and Spain will be allowed to enter Mexico only after an exhaustive study of each case. Potential foreign investors will be required to deposit \$20,000 in a specified bank together with their applications. If it is true, as was stated in Mexican political circles, that the law was a result of conclusions reached at the Pan-American Democratic Conference held in Mexico City in 1943, then the outlook for the immigration possibilities into South America is not at all bright.
- d) In planning Jewish immigration, the assimilationist tendencies throughout Latin America and their effect upon the preservation of Jewish life have to be taken into consideration.
- e) We have noted the political tension prevalent in Argentine and its specific bearing on the Jewish situation. We have to take into consideration the fact that similar tendencies exist in many South American countries.

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It is quite understandable that this brief report falls short of a full picture of the situation. The purpose of this report is only to present a general outline of an exhaustive study which will be published by the Conference on Jewish Relations together with studies on other aspects of this same problem being prepared by the Conference on Jewish Relations and the Research Institute on Peace and Post War Problems of the American Jewish Committee.