

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

When, in March 1947, the Paris AJDC Office started to survey all location service offices, we submitted a short report of our activities. Below is an extract of our report, dated March 13th, 1947, which is of general interest:

"The Berlin AJDC is located in the capital of Germany, where the four major powers and the United Nations military missions are represented. This in itself, without further basis, leads organizations and individuals the world over to assume that the AJDC Berlin office is at the helm of all search and tracing informations for missing persons. Of course, this is an erroneous conception since our records are concerned only with our own area and in fact, we have no records on persons sought who lived outside that area.

The Berlin AJDC Location Service is carried on by a separate tracing office which employes seven local civilian employees, six of whom are paid, full-time workers, and one, who is a voluntary worker. Of these seven workers, three are engaged in handling correspondence in English, German, French, Polish, Yiddish and other languages; two are occupied with the filing system, and two in the index section. Our files consist of full lists of the present Jewish Gemeindes in Berlin and the Russian Zone of Germany, the registration lists of the UNRRA Displaced Persons Camps in our area and a Gestapo deportation index of 130 000 index cards on Jews deported from Berlin.

Since the discovery of the deportation index, more inquiries have been received since January 1947 for people deported from Berlin, so that the total number of incoming tracing requests has increased. In many instances, however, cases which had previously been conclusively closed as far back as February 1946, were reopened by us in order to reply to new correspondence sent to us by the original inquirers, who, having only recently received the publicity releases on the deportation index, hoped that we might be able to provide more and different information on their old search requests. However, the publicity releases had come

through only recently whereas we had actually been working with the index long before the time of the press releases, and all such information as was sent to the inquirers, was done so after checking these lists. Naturally, the inquirers are not in a position to realize these facts.

A. Tracing requests for people last heard of in Berlin are handled in the following manner:

1. List of present members of the Jewish Gemeinde is checked.
2. Investigations with the Berlin police precincts in question is instituted.
3. Gestapo deportation list is checked.

Correct Filing and Registration results many locations

B. Tracing requests for people within the Displaced Persons Camps, or for persons who left Poland on their way to Berlin, are handled in the following manner:

1. Registrar of the UNRRA Displaced Persons Camps is contacted.
2. Check with Berlin police precincts is made, (since some Displaced Persons are living in the community, but are not registered with the Berlin Gemeinde).

C. Tracing requests for persons last known to be in the present Russian Zone of Germany are handled as follows:

1. Lists of Jüdische Gemeinde in question are checked.
2. Correspondence with the police and the Bürgermeister of area in question is carried on."

The number of tracing requests filed by individuals here in Germany for their relatives in the United States, England, Palestine etc. has slightly decreased probably due to the fact that some of the survivors who had relatives abroad, have since been re-united with their families or at least have established direct communication with them.

Since many surviving Polish Jews moved from East to West almost daily during the last months of 1946, the Central Location Index has set a deadline for old tracing requests. All tracing requests for people in the United States filed before November 1st, 1946 were to be repeated and the tracing continued. Quite a percentage of tracing requests for the United States filed by individuals in our area has been eliminated. However, we went on repeating them when our individual inquirers asked for it. Tracing requests for countries abroad are generally not channelled through any "central" offices, but sent directly to our cooperating committees in the countries concerned. All tracing requests for USA are sent to the Central Location Index.

The AJDC European Executive Council in Paris operates a location service section which coordinates all tracing activities of the AJDC throughout Europe. The Berlin Office, with its location within the Russian Zone has never received any clear instructions as to the area which it is to cover. It has resolved to assume responsibility for tracing in Berlin and all of the Russian Zone, however, since it is the major Jewish relief agency in Berlin and the only Jewish relief agency engaged in tracing in the Russian Zone. Our complete index of Berlin deported Jews, our index of Berlin Jews residing in the city and displaced persons in our camps as well as the complete index of surviving Jews in the Russian Zone gave us a clear picture as to who lived in this area and could be serviced by our organization.

At the time of this writing current information is being received from the Russian Zone, the Berlin camps and the Berlin Gemeinde. We register each infiltree entering or leaving Berlin. Gradually our work has become more and more organized. Each tracing application filed by an individual living in Berlin or in the Russian Zone is checked against our index to determine whether he belonged to a Jewish community or was an infiltree in our area.

Tracing requests filed locally by people not of the mentioned categories are refused. Applications filed by people abroad are worked on only if the missing persons are Jewish residents of Berlin or of the territories now known as the Russian Zone of Germany. This is the same principle according to which the Joint distributes food and clothing. There are, however, many non-Jews searching for friends abroad or for people last known in Germany. Some of them actually had helped refugees to get out of Germany or wanted to know, whether they managed to establish themselves abroad. Others were business friends of Jewish deportees, but hundreds of non-Jews also had Jewish properties in their possessions and just wanted to have the definite proof, "AJDC form", that the former Jewish owners of the held properties did not survive. The plan was to obtain a death declaration and to establish personal profit. The determination of whether the tracing request for a Jew deported to unknown destination is meant for good purposes or not, is not the job of the AJDC Tracing Office. The Berlin Gemeinde decides and files an application if it finds it worthwhile. No tracing requests for people abroad are filed for individuals who do not belong to the Gemeinde, are not victims of Fascism or Displaced Persons.

Very close cooperation is maintained with the Property Restitution Office which is a sub-section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Joint Distribution Committee. Information is constantly taken from our deportation index for property restitution purposes.



Results of interviews and investigations are being discussed before further steps are taken



Upon discovery of the earlier described deportation index world-wide publicity placed us in a spot light which made people believe that this office could fulfill unbelievable tasks. It seemed at a time that we were considered a central tracing office and only through great efforts and constant corrections of this misconception have we managed to stay as we are, a Berlin AJDC Tracing Office.

One of our main headaches during April 1947 was the checking of hundreds of very old tracing forms which were sent in to this office by the Central Tracing Bureau of UNRRA. Old tracing requests filed by individuals in the United Kingdom were forwarded via the Foreign Relations Department of the British Red Cross and the United Kingdom Search Bureau for Stateless Persons to the UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau in Arolsen/Germany. Since UNRRA was about to close down, such cases were kept at the CTB UNRRA for a period of 12—14 months and then returned to England with an endorsement advising the committees to communicate with the Berlin AJDC. Such forms have been received here from England by the pound.

More photostatic copies of Gestapo transport lists were made during April 1947. At the same time circulars were sent to all Jewish communities and DP camps in Germany and Austria as well as refugee committees in Switzerland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and France requesting that all survivors of concentration camps who have earlier been deported from Berlin, should report their names and personal data to this office so that a clear picture could be made as to the factual number of returnees and survivors. This circular was very effectful.

At the time of this mentioned survey, reports on transports were requested through weekly advertisements in the Berlin Jewish press. Samples of such survivors' reports are included in this two years' report. (See appendix I)

In an earlier paragraph we indicated the type and group of people we are servicing. It was established that forms on deportation data are to be given only to victims of fascism,

Displaced Persons and Jewish residents in Berlin and the Russian Zone. Of course, all inquirers in countries abroad received the similar form. However, we refuse such forms to non-Jewish individuals in Germany and Austria who after obtaining death declarations may use them against former Jewish property owners. The Central Tracing Bureau UNRRA (now IRO) Representative here in Berlin was notified accordingly and was requested not to file tracing requests for deported Jews if the individual inquirers were Germans residing here in Germany. Through a special circular we have requested such offices to refer the non-Jewish inquirer to the nearest Jewish Gemeinde which would determine whether the tracing request was made out of interest towards the deported or with the future plan to keep certain Jewish properties turned over for custody to them from the time of nazi persecution. We have also requested all cooperating Jewish tracing offices and communities throughout Germany to check on such cases and to write to us instead of referring the individual directly to this office. Although the mentioned IRO Central Tracing Bureau Representative was fully informed of the above, he kept on filing tracing requests for Germans and sending them in to our office. Some of such forms were returned to the IRO for the reason stated above. After some antisemitic remarks and expressions made by the German Red Cross of the British Zone of Germany, every relationship and correspondence with the German Red Cross in the British Zone has been broken off.

The general relationship and cooperation between the AJDC and other cooperating agencies is on a high level. The Central Location Index and the United Service for New Americans give us the most pleasant cooperation in tracing people in the USA. The Canadian Jewish Congress, the UJRAC, and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society have helped us in many instances on tracing requests in Canada. Very smooth cooperation has been established with practically all South American tracing offices. After some general correspondence back and forth we have finally established a satisfactory contact with the United Kingdom

Search Bureau for German, Austrian and Stateless Persons in London, and the European Tracing Office of the World Jewish Congress. The South African Board of Deputies has proved to be one of the best tracing offices we have ever worked with. The Jewish Welfare Societies in Australia and our AJDC office in Shanghai provide fast service at all times. Needless to say, all AJDC offices throughout Germany and in Europe generally have always shown great interest and cooperation.

The Jewish Gemeindes throughout the Russian Zone, the Berlin Police, the US Public Safety Division as well as the Polish Authorities have helped us in many instances. US consulates throughout the world, especially the US Embassy in Moscow and the American Red Cross in Moscow have been very helpful. The Jewish Agency for Palestine and the different search and tracing offices in Scandinavia, the Balkan, Czechoslovakia and Italy have helped us a lot in obtaining information on those "behind the iron curtain". Only with the help of all the cooperating committees and the real interest of all such agencies have we achieved such grand results and such deep satisfaction. Our total number of located persons reaches over 35 000 people. With the help of the discovered deportation index and cooperating agencies in Czechoslovakia, Poland and other Eastern countries have we reached 91 700 deportation reports and were able to refer some 80 000 cases to other agencies.

With the completion of the first two years since our inception attempt has been made to compile the total record of our efforts which is set forth below as a statistical summary:

TOTAL OF TRACING REQUESTS AND LOCATIONS PER MONTH

(SEPTEMBER 1945 - SEPTEMBER 1947)

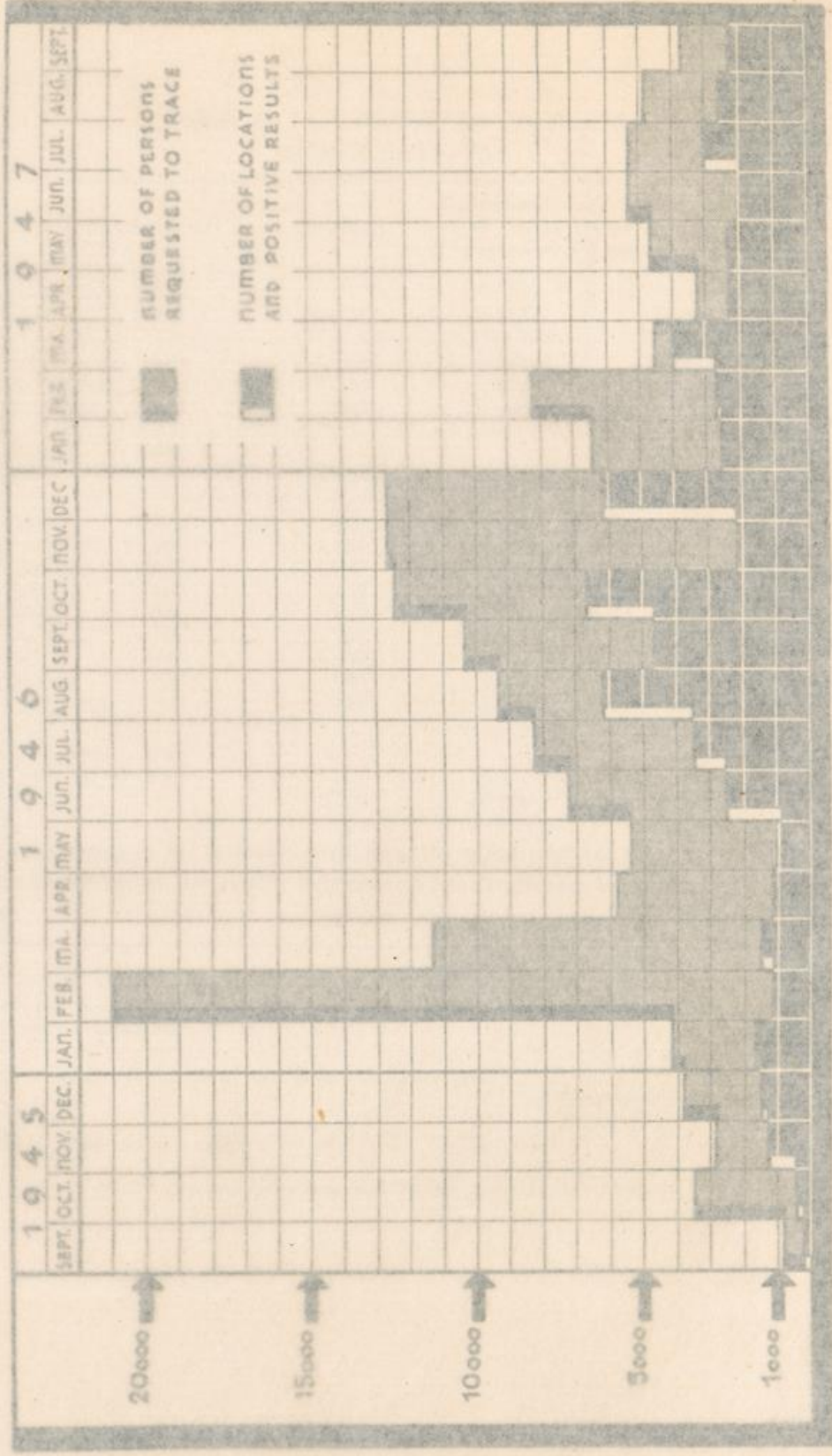


Table III

STATISTICS ON PEOPLE SERVED BY THE
BERLIN AIDC THROUGH OUTLET
(SECOND YEAR)

During Month of	Inquiries		Replies *	
	received	sent to inquirers	received from inquirers	sent to inquirers
January 1948	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
February	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
March	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
April	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
May	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
June	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
July	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
August	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
September	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
October	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
November	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
December	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
January 1949	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
February	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
March	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
April	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
May	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
June	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
July	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
August	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
September	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
October	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
November	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
December	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Total for 1948-49	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000

* For explanation of asterisks see Table II.

The number of tracing requests is decreasing slightly and we hope that one day we will have done our full job. Our information is of value to all those working on Jewish property restitution. Starting here without supervision or instructions, we have reached a peak, thanks to the cooperating attitude of all welfare agencies concerned. We have found valuable documents which will not only serve as basic data for tracing and restitution activities, but constitute a historical document as a consolidated list of thousands deported and murdered during the 12 years of the third Reich.

Berlin, Dec. 16th, 1947

Year	Deportations	Murders	Total
1947	1,113	1,113	2,226
1946	1,113	1,113	2,226
1945	1,113	1,113	2,226
1944	1,113	1,113	2,226
1943	1,113	1,113	2,226
1942	1,113	1,113	2,226
1941	1,113	1,113	2,226
1940	1,113	1,113	2,226
1939	1,113	1,113	2,226
1938	1,113	1,113	2,226
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1932	1,113	1,113	2,226
1931	1,113	1,113	2,226
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1929	1,113	1,113	2,226
1928	1,113	1,113	2,226
1927	1,113	1,113	2,226
1926	1,113	1,113	2,226
1925	1,113	1,113	2,226
1924	1,113	1,113	2,226
1923	1,113	1,113	2,226
1922	1,113	1,113	2,226
1921	1,113	1,113	2,226
1920	1,113	1,113	2,226
1919	1,113	1,113	2,226
1918	1,113	1,113	2,226
1917	1,113	1,113	2,226
1916	1,113	1,113	2,226
1915	1,113	1,113	2,226
1914	1,113	1,113	2,226
1913	1,113	1,113	2,226
1912	1,113	1,113	2,226
1911	1,113	1,113	2,226
1910	1,113	1,113	2,226
1909	1,113	1,113	2,226
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1907	1,113	1,113	2,226
1906	1,113	1,113	2,226
1905	1,113	1,113	2,226
1904	1,113	1,113	2,226
1903	1,113	1,113	2,226
1902	1,113	1,113	2,226
1901	1,113	1,113	2,226
1900	1,113	1,113	2,226
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1818	1,113	1,113	2,226
1817	1,113	1,113	2,226
1816	1,113	1,113	2,226
1815	1,113	1,113	2,226
1814	1,113	1,113	2,226
1813	1,113	1,113	2,226
1812	1,113	1,113	2,226
1811	1,113	1,113	2,226
1810	1,113	1,113	2,226
1809	1,113	1,113	2,226
1808	1,113	1,113	2,226
1807	1,113	1,113	2,226
1806	1,113	1,113	2,226
1805	1,113	1,113	2,226
1804	1,113	1,113	2,226
1803	1,113	1,113	2,226
1802	1,113	1,113	2,226
1801	1,113	1,113	2,226
1800	1,113	1,113	2,226

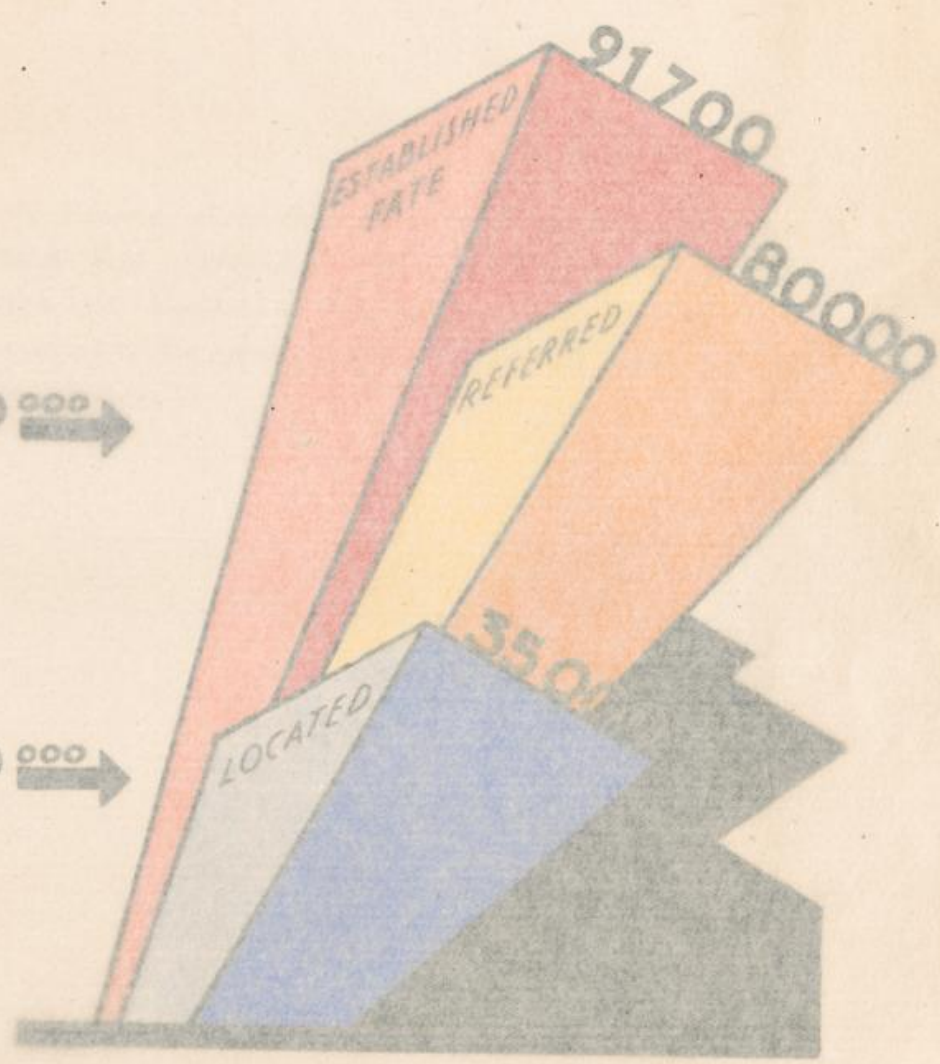
BERLIN
AJDC
TRACING OFFICE

SEPT. 1945-SEPT. 1947
TOTAL RESULTS

100 000 →

50 000 →

20 000 →



The number of tracing requests is increasing slightly and we hope that one day we will have done our full job. Our information is of value to all those working on property restitution. Starting here without supervision or restrictions, we have reached a peak, thanks to the responsive attitude of all welfare agencies concerned. We have found valuable documents which will not only serve as basic data for tracing and restitution activities, but constitute a historical document and a consolidated list of thousands deported and murdered during the 12 years of the third Reich.

Berlin, Dec. 1948