SEVEN TIMES SEVEN YEARS

Highlights in the History of JDC

November 27, 1914 — Representatives of the American Jewish Relief Committee (organized by the American Jewish Committee), the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and the People's Relief Committee (representing Jewish labor) create the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to distribute the funds they had raised separately to bring relief to the vast mass of Jews living in Eastern Europe, trapped in the paths of the warring armies of Russia, Germany and the old Austro-Hungarian Empire at the start of World War I. Felix M. Warburg is named Chairman of the Committee, a post he was to hold continuously until his death in 1937.

1915-1921 — Until America entered the war in 1917, JDC distributed its funds for the needy through the official Jewish welfare agencies of Russia, Germany and Austria. When America joined the allies, JDC organized a committee in Holland which, as a neutral body, was able to distribute funds in the areas occupied by Germany and Austria.

At the same time, JDC found ways to send relief to the Jews of Palestine, isolated by the war from world Jewry and completely helpless.

During the war years, 1914-1918, JDC expended approximately $15,000,000, of which $2,250,000 went to Palestine.

The end of the war brought no real relief to the Jews of Eastern Europe. Fighting and disruption brought calamity to this entire area, especially to the Jews who, in addition to the common hardships they shared with others, were the special victims of murderous pogroms (200,000 were slain in the Ukraine alone), discrimination and organized boycott. At first JDC worked through the various publicly recognized agencies in the field, but soon realized that the Jewish situation was so critical that a special effort had to be made just to bring the Jews to the level of the rest of the population. JDC sent out units of trained workers to conduct and administer medical, child care and economic relief.

During the immediate postwar period, JDC spent close to $23,000,000 on its emergency programs.

1922-1928 — This can be called the period of reconstruction of the Eastern European communities, although emergency relief went on, due to the great movement of refugees that continued from 1921 through 1923, more than 300,000 of whom were assisted by JDC during those years.

The JDC reconstruction program took various forms. A vast network of loan funds and credit and producers' cooperatives was set up to provide economic assistance which, at its peak, granted 500,000 loans totalling more than $65,000,000; at the same time there existed more than 750 cooperatives, with 320,000 members. It can be flatly stated that this assistance was the primary factor in the survival of Jewish life in that area.

In the field of medical care, JDC revived, transformed and financed 500 medical and hygienic institutions. It set up child care institutions and, at the same time, set up local agencies which eventually took over the responsibility of operating them. It worked hand-in-hand with existing organizations (such as ORT and ICA) in the field of vocational training, subsidizing 670 such institutions. It set up a program of religious and cultural activities which made grants to more than 2,000 educational and religious installations with an enrollment of 250,000 students, thus helping assure a thriving Jewish community life.

Paralleling all this, JDC launched a vast program in Soviet Russia, where the changed conditions of the new society deprived Jews of their traditional occupations and made it necessary to retrain them for survival. The primary tool set up for this program by JDC was Agro-Joint, for the purpose of settling Russian Jews on the land, and the organization of a large training program for those in the cities. By 1938, when Agro-Joint's work was terminated, it had succeeded in transforming a large section of Russian Jewry from a ghetto population into self-reliant field and factory workers.

JDC expenditures in Russia during the war and postwar period amounted to more than $30,000,000.

1929-1935 — This was a period that started with hope and ended in tragedy.

Despite the economic crisis that affected the entire world, there was sufficient evidence of community revival amongst the Jews of Eastern Europe to warrant hope for an early end to the need for the continuation of JDC activities. In fact, a program of liquidation was drawn up and budgeted for the years 1932 and 1933, and JDC prepared itself for going out of business.

Then came Hitler and the taking over of power by the Nazis—and JDC was back in business—more than ever before.

JDC GOES INTO A

ISRAEL

Immigrants from the Shanghai camps arrive at Haifa.

GERMANY

Children being fed at a DP Camp.

AUSTRIA

4,500 escapees from Poland found shelter in the Rothschild Hospital, designed for only one-fifth of that number.

ACTION — AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

MARSEILLES

Medical care for one of the thousands who came through this city on their way to Israel.

FRANCE

The Porcelan family leaves the camp for a new home overseas.

1936-1942 — In 1935, the Nazis promulgated the Nuremberg laws which sealed the fate of 500,000 German Jews. In 1938, the same year that Austria and the Sudetenland were annexed, the Germans authorized a pogrom in which more than 500 synagogues were destroyed and thousands of Jews from the ages of 18 to 60 sent to concentration camps.

From the beginning of this emergency situation, JDC worked closely with local Jewish organizations and was the largest foreign contributor toward their budgets. Because of impoverishment, the Jewish population were able to do less and less for themselves as time passed by. In 1936, one-fifth of the Jews in Germany received JDC assistance—in 1937, one-third.

In the face of the most adverse conditions, JDC undertook to maintain some semblance of Jewish life. In 1938, loan funds set up by JDC had made grants of some 3,163,000 Reichsmarks. JDC gave vocational training to 31,000 persons. As Jewish children were excluded from more and more schools, existing Jewish schools had to be expanded and new ones added. By 1937, 167 JDC-subsidized schools provided education for 23,670 children. These were only emergency measures—the one real solution was to move as many Jews as possible out of Germany. Thanks to the concerted efforts of organizations supported by JDC, some 85,000 persons emigrated from Germany. Tens of thousands of others left the country, of course, without organizational aid.

It became difficult for Jewish communities in other countries to cope with the influx of refugees. JDC therefore began to provide financial subsidies for local committees set up throughout Western Europe, parts of Eastern Europe, Latin America and the United States.

The outbreak of World War II brought tremendous new burdens to JDC. In Poland, the first victim of Hitler's aggression, the Jewish population was uprooted, some escaping eastward into Soviet Russia and others moving to larger towns seeking asylum, most of whom, however, were soon confined in ghettos.

Until the United States entered the war in December 1941, JDC was able to render direct aid. JDC programs of emergency aid were conducted in 300 Polish cities in the latter part of 1939. In 1940, 600,000 in more than 400 localities benefited from these programs, and that year JDC was able to send 97 carloads of matzoth for Passover. Even in 1941, JDC was able to expand this program and to open feeding stations, hospitals, clinics and child care installations.

In Poland, JDC staff continued to operate throughout the war, borrowing large sums of money on the strength of JDC's credit and reputation, continuing to provide help of some kind so long as such work could be carried on. The JDC

headquarters office overseas kept moving from place to place, one step ahead of the Nazi invaders, and finally wound up in Lisbon, devising ways and means of reaching with money and supplies those hidden away, setting up camps and a full-scale immigration office in Portugal for those who managed to escape.

It is significant that even in the war years JDC helped more than 81,000 persons to emigrate from Europe.

1943-1949 — JDC representatives entered the war areas in 1944, following close upon the heels of the liberating allied armies. With the liberation of the concentration camps, JDC threw its entire strength into a mighty effort to keep alive those Jews who had miraculously escaped the fate decreed for them in the extermination camps or who had survived the miseries and horrors of the concentration camps, or succeded in remaining alive through years of hiding.

The amount of aid provided by JDC now assumed gigantic proportions. Because of the shortage of food, clothing and medical supplies, JDC developed a huge supply program that shipped almost 227,000,000 pounds of goods to Europe from U.S. ports alone. In 1946, when Jewish needs were at their high water mark, JDC provided aid of all kinds to more than 750,000 men, women and children, half of all the survivors. In the peak year of 1948, more than 106,000 men, women and children were treated in a network of 529 JDC medical installations. That year JDC also aided 150,000 children a month, helped provide educational aid to 110,000 and vocational training assistance to 78,500.

JDC realized from the first that large-scale emigration was the only real solution to the problem faced in the postwar years. In that period it aided 53,000 to emigrate to the United States and 28,000 to Australia, Canada and Latin America. But it was not until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 that the JDC immigration program was to reach its full effectiveness. By the time JDC turned over its immigration program to the newly-formed United Hias Service in 1954, it had moved more than 630,000 Jews to new havens, approximately 500,000 of them to Israel.

The creation of the State of Israel caused increasing difficulties for Jewish communities in the Moslem lands of North Africa and the Middle East, and made it necessary for JDC to reach out a helping hand to the Jewish population in these areas, the vast majority of whom lived in squalid ghettos under incredible conditions of poverty. The first program, initiated in 1948, provided relief to 100,000 people, mostly children, in Moslem lands. This figure remained constant for many, many years. In those areas where anti-Jewish hostility persisted, JDC instituted major emigration programs that took large numbers out of Morocco,

(Continued on page 16).

JEWISH POPULATION AND TOTAL

A comparison between 1

Country	1 9 6
	Jewish Population
All Countries, Total	*2,949,500*
Israel	*1,984,200*
Europe	*558,300*
Austria	10,100
Belgium	35,000
France	375,000
Germany	30,000
Greece	6,000
Italy	34,000
Norway	1,000
Poland	25,000
Portugal	700
Spain	3,000
Sweden	13,000
Switzerland	19,000
Yugoslavia	6,500
Others	
Moslem Countries	*407,000*
Algeria	105,000
Iran	80,000
Morocco	170,000
Tunisia	52,000
Others	—
Other Countries	—

TAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES

tween 1962 and 1963

1962	1963	
Total Number of JDC Beneficiaries	*Jewish Population*	*Total Number of JDC Beneficiaries*
251,835	*3,010,660*	**277,385**
77,925	*2,068,900*	*84,110*
60,845	*683,360*	*88,905*
3,000	10,160	3,060
2,580	35,000	2,865
28,000	500,000	56,000
3,540	30,000	3,615
900	6,000	830
4,585	34,000	5,420
80	1,000	70
12,000	25,000	12,000
15	700	15
135	3,000	140
935	13,000	900
500	19,000	490
760	6,500	740
3,815	—	2,760
107,905	*258,400*	*98,205*
2,785	10,000	1,930
21,430	80,000	21,465
67,000	135,000	60,000
14,580	33,400	12,780
2,110	—	2,030
5,160	—	*6,165*

Tunisia and Iran and in two instances, Yemen and Libya, practically moved the entire Jewish population to Israel.

1950-1956 — The vast flow of newcomers to Israel brought with it a large number of aged, disabled and chronically-ill persons, far beyond the powers of the struggling new State to absorb, since so much of its efforts and financial means were devoted to the reception and settlement of the more productive elements that the movement brought into the country. The government and the Jewish Agency called upon JDC to set up a program for this non-productive element and Malben was set up at the end of 1949. Early in 1951, Malben became the full responsibility, financially and administratively, of JDC.

A wide network of homes for the aged, hospitals for the chronically-ill and disabled, rehabilitation centers and sheltered workshops were set up in Israel during this period. A special loan fund was set up to provide the means for post-TB cases and other invalids to open up small shops and stores through which handicapped newcomers could earn their own living. Malben's work removed a tremendous burden from the shoulders of the government. It was—and continues to be—the largest single JDC program, its annual budget going well over $12,000,000 in some years.

In Western Europe, the Jewish communities began to take on new life and steadily the JDC contributions in this area dwindled. The availability of German reparation funds, turned over by the Claims Conference for administration to JDC, enabled the communities to start on a program of restoring old and erecting new synagogues, schools and centers to replace those destroyed or damaged during the Nazi and war years.

Not the least accomplishment of this period was the closing, one after the other, of the Jewish displaced persons camps, for which JDC was responsible. The last one, Fohrenwald, was evacuated in the first months of 1957.

This was also the period of expulsion for JDC. On various pretexts, JDC was forced out of the East European satellite countries. Starting with Rumania in May 1949 and ending with Hungary in January 1952, JDC was ordered to close up its offices and give up its programs. Not that there was a diminution of needs. In the last full year before its expulsion from these countries, JDC was helping 55,000 people in Poland and 200,000 in Rumania. As late as 1952, when there were only 125,000 Jews left in Hungary, an average of 25,000 monthly were benefiting from JDC activities.

In each country JDC stayed on as long as possible, unwilling to desert the tens of thousands who still needed outside aid.

1957-1963 — We had looked forward to this period as a period of consolidation, of steady reduction or complete withdrawal from country after country in Europe, of beginning to turn over the programs we had established in Israel to the government, of having the time and the means for improving the conditions of the Jews in the Moslem countries.

Much of this was realized. We had not counted, however, on the series of events and crises that followed each other in rapid succession throughout this period.

There was, first of all, the abortive revolution in Hungary that sent nearly 200,000 men, women and children fleeing across the border into Austria, 20,000 of them Jews. From every part of the world, JDC had to call upon available personnel to meet the emergency created by the arrival of 20,000 penniless, homeless Jews. Working hand-in-hand with other Jewish organizations and governmental agencies, we took care of them all--- we housed them, we fed them, we clothed them, while the United Hias Service was processing them for migration. Within six months the problem of the Hungarian Jewish refugees in Austria was brought down to such a size that we were able to pull out all extra staff and leave the job to be finished by the regular local staff.

Even while this was going on, at the very height of the influx from Hungary, came the expulsion of the Jews from Egypt. Once again, a centuries-old community was deprived of all its rights and all its possessions and forced to seek new homes, new havens of safety. Individual families flew to Rome, to Athens, to Milan. Boatload after boatload of indigents arrived in Naples and Athens to be met by us and to be cared for until they could be trans-shipped to Israel and other welcoming countries. The vast majority, approximately 20,000 of them, made their way to Israel. Thousands stayed on in Europe, taken care of by JDC until haven could be found for them elsewhere. Today, there are only about 3 or 4,000 Jews left in all of Egypt. They are still coming out but, naturally, at a slower rate, and we are still looking after them when they arrive in Europe, most of them in France.

The Egyptian and Hungarian crises were barely over when suddenly a call came to JDC from the Government of Poland. The Soviet Government had agreed to repatriate tens of thousands of Polish citizens who had been kept in Russia since the beginning of World War II. Of those who returned, the non-Jews were able to make their way to their former homes, to find friends and relatives and to start on the road to rehabilitation. For the 30,000 Jews who came, there were no homes, there were no friends nor relatives. Their homes had been taken

over by others who could not be dispossessed. Their friends and relatives were in the mass graves of Auschwitz and Treblinka. The Polish Government found that the job of receiving them, of helping them to find homes, of taking care of them until they could go elsewhere, was beyond its powers. They called on JDC to come back and help.

And JDC did come back. It set up a program of taking care of the Jewish repatriates, of finding them homes, of re-training them through ORT in new vocational skills, of providing their children with schooling and food and clothing.

Most of these repatriates have by now found their way to Israel. While working with them, however, JDC found that a large part of the old established Polish Jewish population, numbering approximately 25,000, were in great need of all kinds of welfare programs. JDC started work with them, providing them with medical help, with food, with provision for religious and cultural observance, with fresh air programs for children, and special facilities for care of the aged.

All this time there had been uprooting and unrest in North Africa, with each of the former French-held territories breaking away from France--- first Tunisia, then Morocco, then Algeria. In each one, the Jews of the country, largely indigenous but with strong ties to France, were placed in an uncertain position. They were neither Arab nor European and were faced first with the struggle between the two elements, with each side demanding its loyalties; and were then looked on as minorities in Arab countries, each of which was a member of the Arab League. They found themselves strangers in their own homeland, only partially accepted, and not in a position to live their own lives freely. Unlike Jews in the West, they could not at the same time observe their loyalties to the country in which they lived and preserve the traditional ties which they felt with the Jews of Israel.

A climax came with the Bizerta incident in Tunisia in 1961. Jews were accused in the public press of being friends of France. The government took the opportunity to firm and strengthen its ties with the Arab League. At the same time, laws were passed making life difficult for merchants and self-employed persons, affecting the Jews to a larger degree than they did the rest of the population. Filled with fears for the future, thousands upon thousands of Jews left the country for France, seeking to establish themselves in a more secure atmosphere. They were not French citizens and were not entitled to any governmental privileges when they arrived. They turned for help to the JDC-supported Jewish community institutions. Together with a sizeable community of newly-arrived

Jewish refugees from East European countries, they created a problem which the Jewish community of France could not face. In one year, the relief rolls of the French Jewish community doubled, and JDC had to step in and undertook the financing of the entire cash relief program for these newcomers.

All this, however, was as nothing compared to the vast influx of Algerian repatriates, coinciding with the granting of freedom to that country. Of the 800,000 Algerians who came to France within a three-month period, 120,000 were Jews. The newcomers had difficulty in finding permanent housing and suitable jobs. For a year they received the general repatriation grants from the French Government, but, even with that help, thousands came flocking to the Jewish agencies in need of extra assistance.

Community facilities were swamped. There were not sufficient synagogues, schools, centers, children's homes, old age homes to meet requirements of the newcomers. JDC became partners with the local French community and poured millions of dollars into the effort required to integrate these people into the economic life of France and absorb them into the Jewish community of the country. Progress has been made but the problem is far from solved and will no doubt continue to be with us for some years to come.

A North African youth trains for a new life in France at the Paris ORT School.