Treasures of the JDC Archives and Resources for Librarians

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Director of JDC Global Archives

Association of Jewish Libraries Conference
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JDC: Context and Background

**JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)**

- World’s leading Jewish humanitarian agency
- Founded in 1914 at outset of World War I
- Assists vulnerable Jewish communities in over 90 countries worldwide
- Support professional development and self-sufficiency initiatives for global Jewish communities
- Provides non-sectarian relief to victims of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies
Justice Calls Your Attention to the Tragedy of the Jew

New York has undertaken to raise Five Million Dollars between December 3rd and December 15th

You may designate part of your subscription for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare Work U. S. Army and Navy

JUSTICE calls your attention to the needs of our people.
Justice calls your attention to the sufferings of our people.
Justice calls your attention to the helplessness of our people.
Justice calls for justice if you would have our people live.

JEWISH WAR RELIEF COMMITTEE
NEW YORK CAMPAIGN
885 FIFTH AVENUE
JACOB H. SCHIFF, Chairman

Poster from New York Campaign (1917).
PALESTINIAN JEWS FACING TERRIBLE CRISIS Belligerent Countries stopping their assistance serious destruction threatens thriving colonies fifty thousand dollars needed by responsible committee, Dr. Ruppin Chairman to establish loan institute and support families whose breadwinners have entered army conditions certainly justify American help will you undertake matter

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Background

**JDC Archives**

- Founded in early 1960s
- Institutional repository for global organization
- Names Index with 500,000 names
- Over 3 miles of documents
- Over 100,000 photographs
- Over 2,500 audio-visual holdings
- Research library of over 6,000 titles
- Global branches in New York and Jerusalem
First shipment of kosher meat sent to the hungry Jews of Poland. Port of New York (1918)
Jewish war orphans brought from eastern Europe by JDC’s War Orphans Bureau (1921).
The Dreyfus soup kitchen in Jerusalem (1921)
Waiting for the opening of JDC’s soup kitchen in Aleksandrovsks (Zaphorizhzhya), Soviet Ukraine (1921).
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

Knowing of your deep interest in children and how greatly you love children, many of whom due to your active efforts tell you about the children of the United States abroad today.

They are really a fine lot of youngsters. They are the last year or two, the children of the Lisbon newspaper’s beautiful sea sons. The children to quiet, restful days and regain childhood memories.

When they came here there were seven and eight. They were clumped around in sandals and pitifully now serve as soles.

One of the most pathetic cases of the last few years is a story. Despite the fear and the new unaccustomed life, they have been thrown back into the memories of their childhood.

Through our Quaker friars, the spirit, most of them, fortunate ones. I know understanding they need the in each one of them bears the sediment of the childhood stolen into normal men and women.

There is one tot in the group, a wan, undersized girl of seven whom we haven’t yet been able to make smile. She had been separated from her mother for over a year. When they met at Oloron, for the last time, for it is most unlikely that they will ever meet again, they were unable to converse for the child had forgotten her native German in the effort of learning French and English, and they had no common language except tears.

There is another girl of thirteen, busy mothering her four younger brothers and sisters. Her father died in the Buchenwald concentration camp. Her mother died of pneumonia at Gurs. I found her writing a letter to a woman in a letter to a woman at Gurs, encouraging her, “because she befriended my mother when she was sick.” Lisa is taking her brood to live with their grandmother in America.

And the little boy who was smiling when the train pulled out of Oloron while all his comrades were in tears. “It is my birthday,” he explained, “and I’ve just had the best birthday of my life.”

I could go on for pages telling you about each of these children, but I think you understand they need the in each one of them bears the sediment of the childhood stolen into normal men and women.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D.C.
Jewish refugee who fled from Germany to Shanghai (1946)
Yemenite refugees preparing to board plane for Israel (1948-1949)
Who Uses the JDC Archives?

- Scholars and students
- Filmmakers and publishers
- Authors and journalists
- Archivists, librarians, and curators
- Genealogists and family researchers
- JDC Staff
Using the Online Collections

From the Home Page, go to “Search the Archives.”

Finding Aids may be found on the “Explore” page.

Search our Names Index directly from the Home Page.

http://archives.jdc.org
Search the Database

FAQ-style search guides and Video Tutorials

Enter a search term for quick search.

Allows more detailed, complex searching
Names Index Search

Click on the name(s) to view details and documents.
Our Shared Legacy

Our Shared Legacy: World War II and "The Joint"

Welcome to our extraordinary collection of documents and photographs from the World War II era. Explore our shared legacy of "The Joint's" work rescuing and providing relief during and after the Holocaust.

Explore Our Photo Galleries

Search images from the countries where "The Joint" operated during and after World War II.

Click Here to Explore Our Photo Galleries.

Search Our Names Index

Is your name among the over 500,000 in our extraordinary collection of historic documents?

Click Here to Search Our Names Index.

Tell Us Your JDC Story

Were you touched by JDC? We want to know your story.

Click Here to Tell Us Your JDC Story.

Create a Family Legacy

Honor our shared history by partnering with us to ensure that wherever in the world a Jew is in need, JDC is there.

Click Here to Create a Family Legacy.
Online Exhibits

Exhibits

Explore dynamic presentations of JDC’s critical work assisting Jews in crisis since 1914 based on the Archives’ remarkable collection of images and documents. Additional historic images are available in our photo galleries.

- **A Joint Effort: JDC’s Beginnings, 1914-1921**
  JDC’s evolution in the dark time of World War I.

- **Beyond Relief: JDC in Interwar Ukraine and Crimea**
  JDC’s Agro-Joint gave Soviet Jews new opportunities.

- **Children of the Displaced Persons Camps Exhibit**
  The Joint’s work with children in displaced persons camps after WWII.

- **In Memoriam**
  We honor our fallen colleagues who lost their lives in service to JDC and to the Jewish people.
JDC and the U.S. War Refugee Board (1944-45)

On January 22, 1944, President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order establishing the War Refugee Board (WRB) which declared, "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 WRB was the U.S. Government's formal response during World War II to the systematic persecution of millions of innocent people in Nazi-occupied Europe.

JDC was convinced that the most constructive action in such a tumultuous time was collaboration between the government and private efforts. On May 28, 1943, eight months before the WRB was formed, JDC formally offered the United States government its available resources for the relief and rescue of Jews in occupied countries. Paul Baerwald, Honorary Chairman of JDC, wrote:

"The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, consistent with its efforts of the past twenty-eight years in behalf of the distressed Jews of Europe, wishes to record with the Department of State its keen desire, by reason of the urgency of the situation, to bring the maximum aid possibly in ameliorating the plight of thousands of Jews now trapped and facing extermination in Axis-occupied Europe. Since the Evian Conference we have collaborated in every possible way to support concrete measures resulting from the efforts of our Government to take constructive steps for the relief of these stricken people..."
Primary Sources

The following are source materials in PDF format that can be used to teach about JDC’s role in the War Refugee Board and its implications:

Letter from Paul Baerwald to Mr. Sumner Welles, May 28, 1943

Executive Order No. 9417: Establishing a War Refugee Board, January 22, 1944

Memorandum from Paul Baerwald to Members of the J.D.C. National Council, Subject: Establishment by President Roosevelt of the War Refugee Board, January 25, 1944

Letter from Paul Baerwald to Mr. John W. Peble, February 28, 1944

Address by John W. Peble, Executive Director, War Refugee Board American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, April 2, 1944

Letter from Paul Baerwald to War Refugee Board, April 26, 1944

Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Congress of the United States

Memo Concerning Relief Work for the Jews in Hungary, Raoul Wallenberg

Letter from Jonah B. Wise, November 7, 1945

For Further Information on this Topic See


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**MEMORANDUM**

From: Paul Baerwald, Chairman

To: Members of the J.D.C. National Council

Subject: Establishment by President Roosevelt of the War Refugee Board

As governments turn to the problem of international relief, and implement their decisions by setting up agencies to deal with it, many of our friends throughout the country naturally want to know how these agencies affect the Joint Distribution Committee, its position, its work and its budget. I think that it will help to clarify this situation if you keep in mind two general rules. One is that the Joint Distribution Committee actively welcomes the formation of governmental or intergovernmental machinery to cope with the mammoth task of relief and refugee rescue. It does so for the very simple reason that the tragedy caused by the war is so vast and so complicated that only governments can bring large-scale action to bear on it.

The other is that the existence of a public agency by no means relieves the private agencies of their responsibilities, particularly an agency such as the J.D.C. —
JDC Archives: Audio Holdings

Oral Histories
• Over 250 oral histories
• Voice of “the caregivers”
• First-hand accounts:
  - DP camps in Europe after World War II
  - Immigration to Palestine and the new State of Israel
  - Work with Jewish communities behind the Iron Curtain
  - JDC Activities in North Africa and Iran

Sound recordings
• More than 1,100 recordings
• Radio broadcasts commissioned by JDC to publicize plight of refugees in wartime and post-war Europe
• Historic speeches about overseas needs
• Interview with Alaska Airlines president James Wooten, who piloted flights of Yemenite Jews from Aden to Israel during Operation Magic Carpet
Contact Us

Thank you!

http://archives.jdc.org

archives@jdc.org