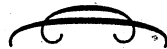


AIDING JEWS OVERSEAS



**A report of the work of the
JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE
in bringing relief to thousands
of distressed Jews throughout the
world during the year 1941
and the first 5 months of 1942**



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH
JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE, Inc.**

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New York, N. Y.

numbers of scholars, Hebrew teachers, rabbis, religious functionaries, artisans and intellectuals. In cooperation with the European Students Fund, it paid tuition fees and maintenance costs of students.

The care of destitute children was the special sphere of the Ose. With 90% of its funds coming from the J.D.C., the Ose maintained 12 homes to care for and educate orphans, children who had lost contact with their parents, and those whose parents were in internment camps or occupied France. Through Ose efforts, financed by the J.D.C., some 750 children were taken out of internment centers and placed in institutions and private homes.

In addition to these activities, the Ose ministered to the medical needs of undernourished and ailing internees and refugees in ten French departments and of 25,000 French and foreign Jews who were evacuated or expelled from Alsace-Lorraine into the unoccupied zone. It also gave individual assistance to some 420 physicians no longer permitted to practice.

Those among the refugees in unoccupied France who were fortunate enough to secure visas for countries in the Western Hemisphere found their

way to liberty through the offices of the Hicem, which received the bulk of its transportation budget from the J.D.C. (see page 14). Internees with emigration possibilities were helped along by Hicem representatives stationed in the camps. When visa-holders could not go to Lisbon to board ship, the J.D.C. worked out the system of transferring them from Marseille to Casablanca, in French Morocco, where west-bound boats picked them up.

Close collaboration existed among a number of Jewish, non-Jewish and non-sectarian agencies in unoccupied France, which were engaged in bringing help to refugees in internment camps and labor battalions. The camp assistance programs of the Joint Distribution Committee, the Unitarian Service Committee, the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), the International Y.M.C.A., the American Red Cross and the Secours Suisse, were coordinated through the Comite de Coordination pour l'Assistance dans les Camps.

The J.D.C. made several grants during the period under review to the Unitarian Service Committee for its medical aid work in unoccupied France.

PORTUGAL

During the period under review, Lisbon continued to be the principal port of embarkation in Europe for emigrants going overseas. The Portuguese Government continued its benevolent attitude towards the refugees who spent shorter or longer periods in Portugal and who continued to arrive from every part of Europe—in organized transports from Berlin, Vienna, Prague and Bratislava; in individual groups from France, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia and Hungary.

There were several sharp peaks in Portugal's refugee population. The largest number to be in Lisbon at any given time during the period under review was 12,000 in January, 1941.

Working through the local refugee committee, the J.D.C. kept its pledge to the Portuguese Government that no refugee would become a public charge. The committee gave full maintenance to an average of 1,500 people, the number rising or falling as the refugee population in Portugal was increased or reduced. It operated a community soup kitchen, provided medical assistance, shelter and clothing, gave legal help, etc.

That the refugee population in Portugal was re-

duced from 12,000 in January, 1941 to 400 in May of 1942, is a tribute to the J.D.C.'s efforts to find permanent havens overseas for these people.

For purposes of relief to the resident refugees, as well as for the special needs of refugees in transit, the J.D.C. allotted \$179,800 during 1941 and an additional \$49,600 during the first five months of 1942.

The situation in Portugal is so closely linked with the problem of emigration that it is necessary to read the section on Emigration (see page 14) in order to grasp it completely. For example, in May, 1941 there

PORTUGAL AT A GLANCE

Number of resident refugees:	
Jan., 1941	12,000
May, 1942	400
Average number refugees on relief:	
Jan., 1941—May, 1942	1,500
Number of refugees in transit through Portugal, Jan. 1941—May, 1942.....	
13,000	
J.D.C. Appropriations:	
1941	\$179,800
Jan.-May, 1942	49,600

was so large a flood of emigration from Greater Germany and so many refugees arrived in a short period of time, that it became necessary—in addition to the functions of the local committee—to open a special J.D.C. Transmigration Bureau in Lisbon. This Bureau arranged temporary housing in hotels and pensions, provided for the required medical examinations and vaccinations, arranged the necessary contacts with Portuguese police and port authorities to put embarkation papers in order, supervised transportation details.

To preserve its neutrality, Portugal has had to maintain a most delicate political balance in Europe. From time to time during the period under review rumors that Portugal was about to be occupied by the Axis resulted in intense nervousness among the refugees. It was this situation, together with the fact that large numbers of refugees who had entered Portugal on transit visas had long overstayed their time, which prompted the Portuguese Government in June of 1941 to designate the suburban city of Caldas da Rainha as an assigned residence for the refugees whose visas had expired. A J.D.C. representative supervised living arrangements there.

At the end of May, 1942, new groups of refugees continued to arrive in Portugal, principally as a result of the J.D.C.'s efforts to move them out of Spain where the cost of supporting refugees was unusually high.

SPAIN

The refugee problem in Spain developed during the late summer of 1940 when, after the fall of France and the closing of its Atlantic seaports, thousands of refugees there tried desperately to make their way to Spanish and Portuguese seaports. There were a large number of illegal crossings of the border. When those who had crossed illegally were apprehended, they were placed in a Spanish concentration camp at Miranda del Ebro near Bilbao. In 1941 it was estimated that about 2,000 refugees, Jewish and non-Jewish were there.

There were very few Jews living in Spain, and Spanish laws prevent the formation of a Jewish organization for any purpose whatsoever. This meant that there could not be formed in Spain the type of local committee which the J.D.C. has formed elsewhere.

For the better part of the period under review, the J.D.C. was fortunate enough to have, in connection with bringing help to the refugees at Miranda del Ebro, the personal cooperation of important Americans in Spain who supervised the disbursement of J.D.C.

SPAIN AT A GLANCE

Number of Jewish refugees:	
Jan., 1941	1,000
May, 1942	300
Refugees in transit:	
Jan., 1941-May, 1942	2,000
J.D.C. Expenditures:	
1941	\$ 33,500
1942	117,500

funds. With monthly relief remittances, packages of food and clothing were sent into the internment camp.

During 1941 another type of refugee problem developed in Spain, resulting from the fact that many prospective emigrants who booked trans-Atlantic passage on Spanish steamers were required to embark from Spanish ports. When, as sometimes happened, sailings were delayed, the visas of a number of refugees expired and they were forced to remain in Spain until these visas could be renewed. Most of these people exhausted their resources within a short time after their arrival in Spain, and the J.D.C. was obliged to maintain them. Furthermore, the postponement of a sailing date usually resulted in the expiration of numbers of visas so that those passengers had to be left behind when the boat finally sailed and naturally had to remain on relief until their visas could be renewed.

When, in June, 1941, a regulation was adopted by the U. S. Visa Division restricting the immigration to the United States of refugees who had close relatives in enemy or occupied territories, once again large numbers of persons who had come to Spain in the confident expectation of receiving visas were stranded.

All of this was and is an expensive process, since the cost of living in Spain is extremely high, and since the refugees have had to be supported individually, at tourist rates, instead of in groups as is possible in other countries where organized relief work is permitted.

It is this high cost of living which accounts for the unusually large sums which the J.D.C. has had to appropriate, especially in the first five months of 1942, for assistance to relatively small numbers of refugees in Spain. Even transmigrants had to spend four, five and six weeks in Spain at a cost to the J.D.C. of almost \$20 a week per person.

The entire refugee situation in Spain is so sensitive that everything must be done to provide for the refugees lest they be imprisoned. Release from a Spanish internment camp is very much more difficult than in France or any other country.

For an average of 300 refugees who remained in