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## THE HUMANITARIAN MISSION BY JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE IN HUNGARY (1914-1921)

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the research paper* is coverage of the process of deployment of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's humanitarian mission in Hungary, determination of its scope and addressees, evaluation of aid results.

*The scientific novelty* is lies in the fact that for the first time the JDC's humanitarian mission is shown in the Hungarian territories – during the First World War, as part of Austria-Hungary, after – as an independent State. The JDC's role in helping both Hungarian Jews and refugees from the territories who suffered from hostilities is shown. The volumes of assistance, its forms and the main addressers of its receipt are disclosed.

*Conclusions.* In spite of insurmountable difficulties during World War I and in the post-War years that followed it; in spite of the lack of unity and of many internal differences; in spite of negative attitudes from various governments – in spite of all these obstacles, American Jewry was able not only to deliver general organized relief to the starving European Jews (including Hungarian Jews), but also to assist in the organization of the machinery for the transmission of private relief. Indeed, on November 13, 1919, Dr. Bogen wrote in his report: “The most essential factor in this rehabilitation is the establishment of the necessary means to transmit the relief so generously proffered by American Jewry, the organization of the transmission system”.

JDC for the first time had brought together in the common task of mercy American Jews of all shades of opinion. The experience of these years had developed an organization and had recruited dedicated personnel. A small but adaptable staff of diverse background and experience brought together a corps of experts ready to take on additional assignments. A network of affiliated Jewish organizations was prepared to assume responsibility for reconstruction, but was also available in the event of unexpected crisis.

Aids for the Jews of Hungary was, though small, but very tangible. Local Jews, as well as refugees from neighboring territories (especially Galicia) received much-needed support. Participation in the program of the European Children's Fund saved tens of thousands of children and their families from death. At the same time, this program had its continuation in the future. All this created the basis for the transition to the stage of reconstruction, which, if possible, we will highlight in further studies.

*Keywords:* JDC, Hungary, Hungarian Jews, humanitarian mission, relief, ARA, European Children's Fund

## ГУМАНІТАРНА МІСІЯ «ДЖОЙНТ» В УГОРЩИНІ (1914-1921 РОКИ)

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### АНОТАЦІЯ

**Метою наукової роботи** є висвітлення процесу розгортання гуманітарної місії «Джойнт» в Угорщині, визначення її масштабів та адресатів, оцінка результатів допомоги.

**Наукова новизна** полягає в тому, що вперше гуманітарна місія «Джойнта» показана на угорських територіях – під час Першої світової війни у складі Австро-Угорщини, після – як незалежної держави. Показано роль «Джойнта» у допомозі як угорським євреям, так і біженцям з територій, які постраждали від військових дій. Розкриваються обсяги допомоги, її форми та основні адресати її надходження.

**Висновки.** Незважаючи на непереборні труднощі під час Першої світової війни й у післявоєнні роки; відсутність єдності та багато внутрішніх відмінностей і на негативне ставлення з боку різних урядів – незважаючи на всі ці перешкоди, американське єврейство змогло не лише надати загальну організовану допомогу голодуючим європейським євреям (включаючи угорських євреїв), але й допомогти в організації механізму для передачі приватної допомоги. Так, 13 листопада 1919 р. д-р Боген написав у своїй доповіді: «Найважливішим фактором у цій допомозі є створення необхідних засобів для передачі допомоги, яку так щедро пропонує американське єврейство, організація системи передачі».

«Джойнт» вперше об'єднав спільну задачу милосердя американських євреїв усіх поглядів. Досвід цих років розвинув організацію та набрав відданий персонал. Невеликий, але здатний до адаптації персонал із різним досвідом об'єднав корпус експертів, готових виконувати додаткові завдання. Мережа афілійованих єврейських організацій була готова взяти на себе відповідальність за відбудову, що також була можлива у випадку несподіваної кризи.

Допомога для євреїв Угорщини була хоч і невеликою, але дуже відчутною. Місцеві євреї, а також біженці із сусідніх територій (особливо Галичини) отримали вкрай необхідну підтримку. Участь у програмі Європейського дитячого фонду врятувала від смерті десятки тисяч дітей та їх сімей. Водночас ця програма мала своє продовження і в майбутньому. Усе це створило підґрунтя для переходу до «етапу реконструкції», який, за можливості, висвітливо у подальших дослідженнях.

**Ключові слова:** «Джойнт», Угорщина, угорські євреї, гуманітарна місія, допомога, АРА, Європейський дитячий фонд

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, non-state humanitarian organizations are gaining an ever-increasing role. Today, non-governmental organizations deal with a wide range of issues, including the provision of humanitarian aid, protection of human rights and health, protection of childhood and others. The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Cornelio Sommaruga, in his speech at the conference dedicated to humanitarian activities (Singapore, February 24-26, 1997) noted: "The goal of humanitarian activities is not to settle conflicts, but to protect human dignity and save human lives"<sup>1</sup>.

The understanding of this high task in the consciousness of mankind was actualized during the First World War, which at that time was the largest conflict in the history of civilization. In the course of the war, a few humanitarian organizations, among which the ICRC was the most important, faced new humanitarian problems. Millions of war's prisoners, new methods of total war, destruction of civilian objects and property, long-range artillery fire, use of chemical weapons – everyday life of that unprecedented war horrified most citizens. The consequences of military actions were no less frightening – famine, epidemics, mass mortality, child homelessness, etc.

The progressive circles of the United States of America were among the first to approach the systematic solution of the stated consequences of military actions. In 1914, the rich Jewish community of the continent created a relief organization to support fellow tribesmen who suffered from the war – American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). The range of humanitarian questions solved by the organization was quite wide: providing financial and material assistance to the needy, setting up canteens and medical centers, supplying clothes and underwear, organizing children's shelters and much others. In the proposed article, the authors focus their attention on the Joint humanitarian mission in Hungary in 1914-1921. Clarifying the process of deployment of the humanitarian mission in the country, determining its scope and addressees, and evaluating the results of relief constitute the *research goal and tasks* of this article.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of humanitarian relief from American organizations received its first researchers quite early. This was due both to the scale of relief and to fairly good public reporting. Already during the humanitarian operation of the American Relief Organisation (ARA) in 1920, a reporting and analytical brochure was published on the work of the European Children's Fund in Hungary from November 2, 1919 to August 28, 1920. This was a division of the ARA that worked closely with the JDC<sup>2</sup>.

In 1940, Joseph C. Hyman published a substantial article dedicated to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the JDC<sup>3</sup>. The author only fragmentarily recalls the help to the Jews of Hungary, but quite fully reveals the history of the creation of the organization, the general situation of the Jews during the Great War and in the post-war period, shows the main

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<sup>1</sup> Somмаруга К. Гуманитарная деятельность и операции по поддержанию мира. *Международный журнал Красного Креста*. 1997. Апрель (№ 317). С. 57-65. С. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Vokay John & etc.* The Work of the American Relief Administration, European Children's Fund in Hungary. 1919 Nov. 2 – 1920 Aug. 28. Budapest, 1920.

<sup>3</sup> *Hyman J.C.* Twenty-Five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas: A Record of the Joint Distribution Committee. *The American Jewish Year Book*. 1939. 41. P. 141-179.

directions of the organization's activities. Later, in 1964, Oscar Handlin, already by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, repeated the main thesis of his predecessor in a separate book<sup>4</sup>.

A well-known Jewish researcher Zosa Szajkowski devoted a several of articles to certain aspects of the JDC's activities. Of particular interest in the context of our research interest is his work on private relief to European Jews, which went through the JDC<sup>5</sup>. Again, like previous authors, Zosa Szajkowski does not pay attention to the Hungarian Jews, focusing on the Polish-Ukrainian territories. At the same time, the author provides quite interesting conclusions regarding the significance of private transfers in the total amount of relief to European Jewry.

In recent years, researchers of the problems of the philanthropic history have pleased with two serious books. In 2021, Jaclyn Granick's book was published, which is a study on humanitarian relief to Jews in different territories: Galicia, Ukraine, Palestine, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, etc. Unfortunately, the author only indirectly recalled the aids to the Jewish population of Hungary, but created a general picture of the philanthropy of American Jews for their brethren in Europe<sup>6</sup>.

In 2022, the book Friederike Kind-Kovács was published, covering the humanitarian mission of various international organizations that provided relief to Hungarian children in the post-war period<sup>7</sup>. F. Kind-Kovács explores the ways in which migration, famine, and destitution affected children's lives, casting light on children's particular vulnerability in times of distress. The research to investigate the dynamic interplay between local Hungarian organizations, international humanitarian donors, and the child relief recipients. The scientific work is interesting due to the depth of disclosure of the problem, a wide source base and geographical reference. Unfortunately, the role of the JDC is considered only indirectly.

The lack of a holistic study on the stated topic prompted the author's interest in the history of the humanitarian mission of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) in Hungary during the war and in the first post-war years.

### **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF HUNGARY IN 1918-1921**

The First World War, against the backdrop of deepening economic ruin, exacerbated social and national contradictions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The country was in a state of ruin and poverty. Agriculture fell into decline. The able-bodied male population of the village was in the army, there were few workers left. Cultivation areas have been sharply reduced. Continuous requisitions of grain, fodder and livestock completed the ruin of the village. There was not enough food even for domestic needs, and it was still taken to Germany.

In January 1918, in large cities, 100 grams of bread per day per adult were issued on ration cards, and in June the grain ration was further reduced; in small towns there was

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<sup>4</sup> *Handlin Oscar*. A Continuing Task. The Joint Distribution Committee 1914-1964. New York: Random House, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> *Szajkowski Z*. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief (1914-1938). *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*. 1967. Vol. 57 (1). P. 52-106; *Szajkowski Z*. Private American Jewish Overseas Relief (1919-1938): Problems and Attempted Solutions. *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*. 1968. Vol. 57 (3). P. 285-350.

<sup>6</sup> *Granick J*. International Jewish Humanitarianism in the Age of the Great War (Human Rights in History). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. DOI: 10.1017/9781108860697

<sup>7</sup> *Kind-Kovács Friederike*. Budapest's Children. Humanitarian Relief in the Aftermath of the Great War. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2022.

no rationed supply of bread at all. Famine gripped most parts of the country. Speculation has reached monstrous proportions. Industrial enterprises were militarized, the working day was extended, workers were deprived of the elementary rights of self-defense, wages did not provide them and their families with a living wage.

The soldiers were also starving. The working population also experienced an acute shortage of shoes, clothing, soap, kerosene and other essentials. Food prices increased by 300-700%, clothing and footwear – by 900-1000%. The difficult economic situation of the country (famine, poverty, epidemics, speculation) caused unrest in the army and the growth of discontent among the working masses, there were unrest, demonstrations, attacks on food shops and warehouses. Many letters to soldiers from relatives and friends described pictures of the plight of the working people; they reported on the continuous requisitions carried out by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, on famine and mass epidemic diseases. In 1918, the requisitioning detachments took away even the seeds intended for sowing. The colossal increase in the cost of providing the army with industrial and food products led the country to starvation. Local authorities in the province increasingly reported this to Budapest. All this aggravated the political crisis<sup>8</sup>.

After the general political strike in January 1918, and the February uprising of military sailors in Kotor (Kattaro), the revolutionary movement in Austria-Hungary began to grow at an accelerated pace. On June 18, in connection with the decision of the government to reduce the grain ration, a general strike broke out again in Austria, which spread to Hungary. In October 1918, the revolutionary movement flared up with renewed vigour and led to the collapse of the Empire.

In Hungary, on October 25, 1918, the democratic opposition led by Mihály Károlyi formed the Hungary National Council (Magyar Nemzeti Tanács), which actually began to play the role of a parallel parliament. On November 11, 1918, the Kaiser of Austria and the King of Hungary Charles I (for Hungary as King Karl IV) declared his self-removal from the reign over Austria, and on November 13 over Hungary. On November 16, 1918, the National Assembly abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the Hungarian People's Republic (Magyar Népköztársaság), which was headed by President Mihály Károlyi<sup>9</sup>.

The Károlyi government was unable to take real measures to eliminate the post-war economic ruin and to improve the food situation in the country. Many enterprises did not work in Budapest and other industrial centers, and the workers thrown out into the street were left without a livelihood. Inflation grew rapidly, usurers and speculators enriched themselves uncontrollably. Rents, prices for food, commodities, and fuel rose rapidly. Compared to 1914, bread, butter, sugar, potatoes rose in price by 1918/19 on average by 400-600%, fuel by 700-800%, etc. In the famine winter of 1918/19, the working people experienced great hardships. All this increased the discontent of the masses<sup>10</sup>.

In overcoming a humanitarian catastrophe Hungary government attached great hopes to the two missions of the Entente Powers (in actual fact of the United States) – economic mission headed by A.E. Taylor and the political mission under A.C. Coolidge, and for this

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<sup>8</sup> Минц И.И. (ред.). Всемирная история. В 10 т. Т. 8. Москва: Издательство социально-экономической литературы, 1961. С. 150; Пушкаш А.И. (ред.). История Венгрии. В 3 т. Т. 3. Москва: Издательство «Наука», 1972. С. 17-19, 32-35.

<sup>9</sup> Pamlényi Ervin (Ed.). A History of Hungary. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1973. P. 415-423.

<sup>10</sup> Минц И.И. (ред.). Указ. соч. С. 156.

very reason the government through its representatives made contact with them even before they reached Budapest. It was hoped that as a consequence of direct negotiations with the representatives of the Entente, Hungary would be included among the beneficiaries of the American Relief Administration which, under the direction of Herbert Hoover, had been extended to Central and Eastern Europe. They were also confident that the attitude of the Allied Powers towards Hungary would soften, and they would support the government in its difficult foreign and domestic situation.

The heads of the two missions gave recommendations for the lifting of the blockade, coupled with economic aid and political support for the country, primarily in order to consolidate the position of Karolyi and the bourgeois democratic regime. These recommendations were given a good chance of acceptance, for the Great Powers at the Paris Conference regarded the disarming of revolutionary aspirations in countries neighbouring on Soviet Russia as their paramount task. Ultimately none of the missions' recommendations were implemented, although a member of Hoover's staff, Captain T.T.C. Gregory of the United States, made efforts to send food and coal supplies to Hungary<sup>11</sup>.

On March 21, 1919, the Social Democratic Party and Communist Party of Hungary united, as a result of which more than half of the seats in the Budapest Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet came under its control, which on the same day abolished the Governing Council and the Hungary National Council, took power into its own hands and proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic, which lasted until August 1, 1919<sup>12</sup>.

The Communist government nationalized industrial and commercial enterprises and socialized housing, transport, banking, medicine, cultural institutions, and all landholdings of more than 40 hectares. Public support for the Communists was also heavily dependent on their promise of restoring Hungary's former borders. The government took steps toward normalizing foreign relations with the Triple Entente powers in an effort to gain back some of the lands that Hungary was set to lose in the post-war negotiations. The Communists remained bitterly unpopular in the Hungarian countryside, where the authority of that government was often nonexistent. The Communist party and their policies had real popular support among only the proletarian masses of large industrial centers, especially in Budapest, where the working class represented a high proportion of the inhabitants<sup>13</sup>.

The United States of America, Britain, France and their allies refused to recognize Soviet Hungary and establish diplomatic relations with it. At the same time, the Entente began organizing military intervention against Hungary. On April 16, 1919, military intervention began. It was attended by colonial French troops, as well as troops from Romania and Czechoslovakia.

By order of the allied command, all trade with Hungary was prohibited, which subjected Hungary to an economic blockade. The import of iron ore, coal, oil, industrial raw materials and even bread, which the population lacked, was stopped. The American Relief Organization refused to send food to Hungary. Hungary's refusal to help was due to

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<sup>11</sup> *Pamlényi Ervin* (Ed.). Op. cit. P. 428.

<sup>12</sup> *Hajdu Tibor*. The Hungarian Soviet Republic. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979. P. 7-22.

<sup>13</sup> *Lukacs John*. Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture. New York, Grove Press, 1990. P. 212; *Okey Robin*. Eastern Europe 1740-1985: Feudalism to Communism. London & New York: Harper Collins Academic, 1986. P. 162.

the complete rejection of the ideas of Bolshevism by the head of the ARA, Herbert Hoover, who announced that he would not supply the Soviets with bread<sup>14</sup>.

On August 6, 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic government fell under the blows of the Romanian royal troops, and its leaders fled to Austria. In an atmosphere of chaos and anarchy on the Hungarian territory not occupied by Romanian troops, the Hungarian National Army was created under the command of Admiral Miklós Horthy. His troops brutally cracked down on the disorganized communist forces and entered Budapest on November 16, 1919.

After the withdrawal of the occupying Romanian troops, on February 29, 1920, a coalition of right-wing political forces united and returned the constitutional monarchy to Hungary – the Kingdom of Hungary (Magyar Királyság). The choice of a new king was delayed due to the civil war and so the decision was made to elect a regent. On March 1, 1920, the former Admiral of the Austro-Hungarian Navy Miklós Horthy was elected regent and remained so until the fall of the state in 1944.

In 1920, the country fell into a period of civil conflict, with Hungarian anti-communists and monarchists violently purging the nation of communists, leftist intellectuals, and others whom they felt threatened by, especially Jews. This period was known as the White Terror (autumn 1919 – summer 1920), including anti-Jewish massacres<sup>15</sup>. Then the regime embarked on a fight against Jewish economic “domination”. Traditional anti-Semitism continued to grow: Hungarian Jews were accused of sabotaging military service, cowardice, black marketeering, and fraud in military deliveries.

Only a small fraction of Hungarian Jews participated in the revolutions; the majority, who were middle class, opposed the Commune from its very first days and some actively supported counterrevolutionary activities. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism flared up in wide-ranging sectors of Hungarian society to an even greater extent than before. Anticommunist and anti-Jewish atrocities in the central region of the country and the towns and villages of Transdanubia accompanied the establishment of the regime in August 1919. The anti-Semitic acts were meant as retribution for the “Red Terror” that in reality had had many more Jewish than non-Jewish victims (the number of Jews was estimated to be about 3,000).

There were several reasons for this “new” anti-Semitism: the search for a scapegoat to blame for the defeat in World War I; negative sentiments raised by difficulties experienced by Hungarian refugees from successor states; economic competition; the prominence of Jews in economic and cultural life; and the role some Jews — or those perceived to be Jewish — played in the revolutions. The most vital ingredient of anti-Jewish sentiment was the manner in which Hungary was established anew following the loss of national territories: national integration was now based on ethnic principles.

After the stabilization of the political situation in 1921, violent anti-Semitic acts subsided but Hungarian society continued to be characterized by nationalistic, right-wing and anti-Jewish attitudes. The new government’s policy – contrary to the earlier pre-war liberal period – remained openly anti-Semitic. The Horthy regime tried simultaneously to consolidate and repress Hungarian Jewry as much as possible. One of the means of achieving this was to limit Jewish access to higher education.

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<sup>14</sup> Минц И.И. (ред.). Указ. соч. С. 164-165.

<sup>15</sup> The Bolshevik Revolution and the failed Communist takeover in Hungary under Béla Kun (1886-1938) further strengthened the stereotype of Judeo-Bolshevism and revived the myth of a Jewish conspiracy for world domination, endowing the Protocols of the Elders of Zion with an aura of prophecy fulfilled.

In 1920, influenced by anti-Semitic student movements and conservative Christian circles, the National Assembly passed the first “Jewish Law” in post-World War I Europe, the so-called *numerus clausus law* (Article XXV; 1920). While Jews were not mentioned explicitly and the law employed categories of nationality and race, it was aimed principally at Jews (who until then had never been defined legally in such terms). The *numerus clausus* placed a ceiling of 6 percent (corresponding to the percentage of Jews in the general population) on the percentage of Jewish students allowed in institutes of higher education. This law, silently designating Hungarian Jewry as a racial – national minority, posed a great blow for proassimilation Jews who had proclaimed their loyalty to the Hungarian nation. It came despite the fact that official representatives of the Hungarian Jewish Community – at the request of the government – refrained from turning to the League of Nations for help; they did not ask them to pressure the Hungarian government to withdraw this measure, and even went so far as to distance themselves from such initiatives by some international Jewish organizations<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, the difficult economic situation caused by the First World War and the revolutionary events in Hungary, the military defeat and intervention, as well as the pronounced anti-Semitism of the period 1918-1921 and later, explain the special interest in the country on the part of the American Jewish Distribution Committee. On the other hand, the desire of the United States to finally free itself from Hungarian Bolshevism by supporting the restored Kingdom of Hungary is also explained by the beginning of work in the country at the end of 1919 the American Relief Administration, which became an intermediary in providing relief from the JDC.

### **JDC AND HUNGARY IN WORLD WAR PERIOD (1914-1918)**

In November 1914, Representatives of 40 US Jewish organizations met in New York to discuss the coordination of relief measures for beleaguered Jewish populations in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They were inspired in part by an August 31, 1914, cable from Henry Morgenthau, then US Ambassador to Turkey, to prominent US philanthropist Jacob Schiff requesting \$50,000 to save the Jews of Palestine, then part of Ottoman Turkey, from starvation.

On November 27, 1914, they founded the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC or “Joint”) with headquartered in New York. The organization (until 1931) was called the Joint Distribution Committee of (the American) Funds for Jewish War Sufferers.

The JDC’s resources came from funds collected by the American Jewish Relief Committee (AJRC) – organized on October 25, 1914 and headed by wealthy Reform Jews of German origin, including Louis Marshall (who served as president), Jacob H. Schiff, and Felix M. Warburg; and the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering through the War (Central Relief Committee) – organized on October 4, 1914 by Orthodox Jews of East European origin and chaired by Leon Kamaiky. These groups were joined in August 1915 by the socialist People’s Relief Committee, chaired by Meyer London. Warburg became the JDC’s first chairman. The initial purpose of the Joint was to raise and distribute funds

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<sup>16</sup> Haraszti G. Hungary: Hungary from 1918 to 1945. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (2010, August 26). URL: [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary\\_from\\_1918\\_to\\_1945](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_from_1918_to_1945); Volovici L. Antisemitic Parties and Movements. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (2017, July 25). URL: [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Antisemitic\\_Parties\\_and\\_Movements](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Antisemitic_Parties_and_Movements)



to help support the Jewish populations of Eastern Europe and the Near East during World War I<sup>17</sup>.

In the activities of the Joint on the territory of Hungary (as well as on the European continent in general) during the period under study, there are two distinct periods: 1) 1914-1918 – World War period, when Jews suffered not only from ravages of war visited upon all peoples caught between the contending armies, but from additional disabilities resulting from their unfavourable political and economic positions and, 2) 1919-1921 – the post-war emergency relief period, a time horrible in its suffering for Jews in Eastern Europe, perhaps more chaotic and dreadful for the civilian populations even than the war years<sup>18</sup>.

The task thus undertaken by the American Jewish community was complicated not only by the terrors of war, but by extraordinarily difficult political and economic conditions under which more than nine million Jews – half of all Jews in the world – had been living for centuries in Eastern Europe. Against a background of political, civil and economic burdens, the outbreak of the World War was for the Jews living in Eastern Europe a far greater calamity than for the non-Jewish population, bitter as was the fate of the latter. The Jews suffered all the miseries of a population caught between contending armies<sup>19</sup>.

The task of the Joint Distribution Committee at first seemed simple. It was to transmit the sums collected by the three American fund-raising groups to the appropriate agencies in Europe. A small subcommittee passed on reports from abroad and made recommendations to the Executive Committee of twenty-five, which voted allocations. The proceedings were informal, carried out by devoted volunteers<sup>20</sup>.

Funds were given to existing European agencies, which were used to getting the life-saving food, clothing and medical aid to those who needed them. First aid in the Austria-Hungary area was organized on behalf of the Joint by the Jewish society Allianz Israelitische Zu Wien, which had its branch in Budapest<sup>21</sup>.

In February 1915, at the meeting of the Committee in Distribution, which was a subcommittee of the American Jewish Relief Committee, it was decided to send the sum of \$30,000 for the relief of Jews in Hungary. At the same time, as the treasurer of AJRC Felix M. Warburg wrote, "Some time since, an appropriation of \$35,000.00 was made for the relief of Jews in Austro-Hungary, this sum being sent to the Israelische Alliance of Vienna with a request that the Jews in Hungary receive proportionate attention"<sup>22</sup>. An interesting fact was that at the meeting the question was raised " regarding the impartiality as far as

<sup>17</sup> American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and Refugee Aid. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. URL: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/american-jewish-joint-distribution-committee-and-refugee-aid>; Beizer M. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (2017, July 25). URL: [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/American\\_Jewish\\_Joint\\_Distribution\\_Committee](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/American_Jewish_Joint_Distribution_Committee)

<sup>18</sup> Hyman J.C. Twenty-Five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas: A Record of the Joint Distribution Committee. *The American Jewish Year Book*. 1939. Vol. 41. P. 141-179.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* P. 145.

<sup>20</sup> *Handlin Oscar*. Op. cit. P. 28.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* P. 29.

<sup>22</sup> *Letter from Felix M. Warburg to Mr. Maxmillian Paul Schiff. February 20, 1915 // Joint Distribution Committee, New York Archive (JDC Archive)*. Collection: Records of the New York Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1914-1918. Sub Collection: Countries and Regions. Record Group: Hungary. Series: Hungary: Administration. Folder 111: Hungary, General, 1915-1918 (NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111).

the Jews in Hungary are concerned of the Israelitische Alliance", indicating the difficult relationship between the Joint Distribution Committee and the local Jewish organizations in Europe. After some discussion, it was decided to leave the sending of this money as regards the individuals who were to act as distributing agents, to discretion by Warburg and \$30,000 has been placed to credit of Maxmillian Paul Schiff for distribution among all needy Jews in Hungary suffering from the war. Also Warburg to proposed for distribute in Budapest and its vicinity to include, as local agents: Pressburg Rabbi Akiba Schreiber, President Kultus Gemsinde Lazar Gestatner, Ungvar Rabbi Lazar Levy, Huntzendorf Rabbi Samuel Rosenberg, Jacob Zauber from Laszo Saros Co. and Jonas Firth from Miskolcz<sup>23</sup>. At the same time, the money was distributed not only among religious communities, but also among 'laboral congregations'<sup>24</sup>.

In February 1916, a decision was made to allocate \$180,000 to the Jewish communities of Austria-Hungary through the American Jewish Relief Committee, whereof hundred for Galicia, fifty – Austria, thirty – Hungary<sup>25</sup>. September 8, 1916, at a meeting of the Joint Distribution Committee was appropriated the sum of \$30,000 for the relief of Jews who are refugees in Hungary. The relief was provided through the Allianz Israelitische<sup>26</sup>.

A committee has been formed in Budapest under the chairmanship of Mr. Francis Szekely to organize relief for refugees. It consisted of six members, three of whom represent one section of the Jewish church and three another section. Local committees have been formed in the larger provincial towns. All shades of religious opinions were represent in the movement and the work of the various committees is continually increased. A large number of Galician refugees were still in Hungary and some 25,000 more Galician's Jews to demanded help. The committee were receiving additional claims on its assistance from Transylvanian refugees also. The applicants for relief from smaller places in the country have invariably received it, but the money was always in short supply<sup>27</sup>.

December 14, 1916, Joint Distribution Committee to appropriated of \$30,000 for distribution to representative committees in Poland, Galicia, Hungary and Palestine. In Hungary, the relief was distributed among the rabbis, who received an amount of Marks 12,131.20. June 28, 1917, Oberrabbiner Koppel Reich, Rabbi Shreiber, Director of the Yeshiba at Pressburg and Mr. Adolph Frankl, President of the Orthodox Jewish Community in Budapest signed for receipt this aids<sup>28</sup>.

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I. Before that date both the State Department and private relief agencies in the United States tried to obtain permission from the Allies for sending relief to East European territories occupied by the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> *Copy of Cable Received from Mr. Pister Vunk, Amsterdam, March 14, 1915 // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111; Copy of Cable sent to Mr. Max Warburg, Hamburg, March 15, 1915 // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.*

<sup>25</sup> *Copy of Cable sent to Messrs.M.M. Warburg & Co., Hamburg, Feb. 11, 1916 // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.*

<sup>26</sup> *Letter from Chairman, Joint Distribution Committee to American Consul General, September 11, 1916 // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.*

<sup>27</sup> *Letter from Consul General to Mr. Albert Lucas, September 16, 1916 // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.*

<sup>28</sup> *A receipt has been received, dated June 28, 1917 signed by Oberrabbiner Koppel Reich and etc. // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.*

Central Powers on an arrangement similar to that used for Belgian Relief. However, only relief on a very limited scale for Eastern Europe was permitted by the Allies. Private remittances were restricted to persons not of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality and to amounts not to exceed the sum of \$125.00 per family monthly. Remittances were accepted also after the United States entered the War, but only after a period of much confusion and delay, and on a smaller scale.

The JDC and the Zionist Provisional Committee were permitted by the State Department to send remittances through neutral channels; first, through the Spanish Ambassador in Germany, and, later through the Amsterdamsche Bank in Holland. But the conditions were not as favorable as before the United States entered the War. There was no agreed policy among private bankers as to whether or not to send remittances. The State Department and the War Trade Board desired to exercise a strict control on individual relief remittances and messages which were usually sent together with such remittances<sup>29</sup>. With regard to Hungary, the official sending of relief was completely stopped until mid-1919, when the JDC joined the program of the European Children's Fund (ECF) and the ARA.

According to "Hungary Statement of appropriations, drawings and undrawn balances for the various activities from the inception of the Committee to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1923"<sup>30</sup> in total, \$135,700 (see Table 1) was spent to help Hungary during World War I, which is 0,9% of the total \$15,000,000, which is given by Oscar Handling<sup>31</sup>.

Table 1

**JDC relief to Jews in Hungary during the World War I (1914-1918)**

Date	Purpose	Appropriation (\$)	Drawings (\$)
<b>1915</b>	<b>General Relief</b>		
Jan. 20	General Relief	25,000.00	25,000.00
Mar. 2	Galician Jews in Hungary	30,000.00	30,000.00
May 13	Orthodox Jews	5,000.00	5,000.00
Oct. 8	General Relief in Zemplin, Beneg, Ung. Sares and Marmores	10,000.00	10,000.00
<b>1916</b>			
Feb. 12	General Relief	30,000.00	30,000.00
Sept. 8	Jewish Refugees in Hungary	30,000.00	30,000.00
<b>1917</b>			
Feb. 21	Relief for Rabbis thru Hilfsverein	5,700.00	5,700.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>135,700.00</b>	<b>135,700.00</b>

<sup>29</sup> Szajkowski Z. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief... P. 84-85.

<sup>30</sup> *Hungary Statement of appropriations, drawings and undrawn balances for the various activities from the inception of the Committee to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1923* // JDC Archive. Collection: Records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the years 1921-1932. Sub Collection: Countries and Regions. Record Group: Hungary. Series: Hungary: Administration. Folder 210: Hungary. Administration, General, 1921-1931 (NY AR192132 / 4 / 17 / 1 / 210).

<sup>31</sup> "In all areas and through all media the Joint disbursed close to \$15,000,000 during the war years". – *Handlin Oscar*. Op. cit. P. 31.

The above amount does not include private transfers that were delivered through the JDC. According to Zosa Szajkowski, private transfers of aid funds through the intermediary of the Joint were of great importance during this period, and “there is no doubt that the amount of relief sent through private remittances was much larger than those transmitted by the organized relief of the JDC and various smaller agencies”<sup>32</sup>. For some years when the JDC was active in the field of transmitting private remittances, it forwarded overseas more money through such remittances than through funds raised by it for organized relief. During the year 1920, the JDC transmitted to Poland, Rumania, Latvia and other European countries, except Soviet Russia, private remittances amounting to \$7,932,674.56<sup>33</sup>.

The remittances to German and Austro-Hungarian occupied East European territories were sent through the Zionist organizations in Copenhagen and Berlin. There was no charge for the transmission of such remittances. During the period November, 1917 – February, 1918, the War Trade Board permitted Jewish and non-Jewish relief agencies to send \$2,993,000.00 in general relief, and \$668,000.00 in individual remittances<sup>34</sup>.

Thus, during the war years the national societies made the allotments through their connections with hundreds of local committees in the depressed zones. Most of the money went simply to keep people alive – for bread, coal, shoes and medicine. There were efforts also to protect the refugees; especially Jewish families from Galicia. Employment agencies were established to find work for the needy, and the existing loan societies were underwritten to help the productive. Within the narrow limits of an impossible situation, there was also an effort to sustain cultural institutions (the Public Fund under the presidency of Baron Adolph Kohner (Budapest) supported by the JDC, has succeeded in making a large collection for the rebuilding of the synagogues and schools in Northern Hungary in 1916<sup>35</sup>), to rescue the children and to lay a groundwork for reconstruction. Shoemaking and tailoring workshops were creating, not only supplied needed employment but also developed skills for the future.

According to O. Handling, “these fragmentary efforts revealed the larger implications of the Jewish problem. As soon as men looked beyond the emergency need for relief from hunger and destitution, they saw the grim future that still awaited the Jews of Europe. The war had only deepened the dilemma of a group which was not yet accorded a secure place in the whole society. When the Armistice came on November 11, 1918, Europe lay in ruins, and the Jewish situation was no better than it had been in 1914. Aid from the United States had mitigated some of the hardships, but the challenge from the past still remained. The only difference was that now an instrument had been created, in the Joint, that would be available for some measure of support in the years to come”<sup>36</sup>.

### **JDC IN THE POST-WAR EMERGENCY RELIEF PERIOD (1919-1921)**

The years 1919-1921 were years of disintegration. The map of Europe was changed. Empires were dismembered, submerged nationalities came to the surface, clamouring for independence and eager to dominate as large areas and populations as possible. In this period of re-adjustment, the Jews suffered because their political and civil emancipation

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<sup>32</sup> Szajkowski Z. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief... P. 62.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. P. 62-63.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. P. 72, 88.

<sup>35</sup> *Letter from Dr. Simon Hevasi, Rabbi to Mr. Bettelheim, March 21, 1916* // JDC Archive. NY AR191418 / 4 / 8 / 1 / 111.

<sup>36</sup> *Handlin Oscar*. Op. cit. P. 31-32.

in European countries had been too recent to bring about their complete amalgamation with the people among whom they lived. They were still regarded as aliens, Furthermore, the conception of the State as a political unit in which different racial and political elements could cooperate for the good of the population as a whole, was as yet too new to be generally accepted<sup>37</sup>.

In this period of stupendous misery, the JDC became the most important factor in the lives of the war-seared Jewish communities. It became the agency whereby the Jews of America were able to bring succour to the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. In 1919 and 1920 the JDC began to send abroad its own agents and experts, headed by Dr. Julius Goldman and Dr. Boris D. Bogen, to direct and control the work. Two successive units of some 40 trained workers — sanitation, child care and economic experts — wearing the American uniform with the authority of the U.S. Government, went overseas to conduct their relief work.

It was during this period, also, that a large proportion of the appropriations made by the Executive Committee of the JDC in New York were distributed by non-Jewish agencies, principally by governmental, quasi-governmental, and other publicly recognized bodies, such as the American Relief Administration, the U.S. Food Administration Grain Corporation, YMCA, American Red Cross and others<sup>38</sup>.

On April 25, 1919, Herbert Hoover formulated an “Appeal to European Nationals in the United States for the Support of Child Feeding”. In the document, he stressed how essential it was to “amalgamate former bodies, or create out of important nations, committees for each of the [relief] countries” to “solicit from their own nationals, and possibly from a sympathetic public, support for their child feeding”. National committees could then “continue their charitable assistance to these European committees” after the US withdrawal. Hoover called for humanitarian cooperation in relief efforts between the ARA, American Red Cross, Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, American Friends Service Committee, Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), and various church organizations. He appealed to them for “joint and cooperative action in the effective organization of American charity to meet the piteous call of these helpless children”<sup>39</sup>.

Thus, the relief work of the Joint Distribution Committee in Hungary, which for a time had been suspended, owing to the political conditions in that country, was partly resumed in November, 1919, in co-operation with the European Children’s Relief Fund (ECRF) of the American Relief Administration. The first step toward resuming relief work in Hungary was undertaken by the Joint Distribution Committee on October 6, 1919. On that date the Executive Committee at its meeting instructed the Secretary to find out when the American Relief Administration was going to begin its operations in Hungary through the Children’s Relief Fund. At its next meeting, on November 13, having obtained the desired information, the Executive Committee appropriated the first \$50,000 for Hungary, which was to be used by the ARA’s ECRF on a non-sectarian basis. A further \$150,000 was appropriated on April 14, 1920 for the same purpose<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Hyman J.C. Op. cit. P. 148.

<sup>38</sup> Handlin Oscar. Op. cit. P. 39-40; Hyman J.C. Op. cit. P. 150.

<sup>39</sup> Kind-Kovácz Friederike. Op. cit. P. 168.

<sup>40</sup> Notes on the general condition of the Jews, and on the work of the Joint Distribution Committee in Hungary // JDC Archive. Collection: Records of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of the years 1919-1921. Sub Collection: Countries and Regions. Record Group: Hungary. Series: Hungary: Administration. Folder 148.2: Hungary, General, 1919-1920 (NY AR191921 / 4 / 23 / 1 / 148.2).

On August 10, 1919, the JDC Conference held in New York, had among its "Suggested topics for discussion" the problem of "Transmission of funds and Remittance Bureau". In December, 1919, after Warburg's return from a trip to Europe, the JDC announced that it would establish a special department for the transmission of money, food and clothing, and the next month, in December, 1919, it announced that remittances could be forwarded through JDC offices in seven cities. It also recommended that the money be sent, not in large remittances, but in regular monthly instalments "of as much as the sender can afford"<sup>41</sup>. Hungary was also included in this system of private transfers.

On the April 1, 1920, Dr. Julius Goldman, European Director-General of the Joint Distribution Committee of America, visited Budapest and offered in the name of the American brethren the support for the Hungarian Jewish War Sufferers. After a thoroughly study of the prevailing circumstances, and after visiting the people to be relieved and looking about the work to be done he called a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, on which all the leaders of the Budapest Jewish Society appeared, and organised the "Hungarian Committee of the Joint Distribution Committee of America" (other name – "Joint Distribution Committee of America for Hungarian Jewish War Sufferers")<sup>42</sup>.

A Committee, which united Orthodox, Neology, and Zionist Jews, was created after it was ascertained that Hungarian Jews were being discriminated against in the distribution of aid transmitted by the JDC through the ARA. The members have been elected partly on the organization meeting on the 21<sup>th</sup> April 1920. Partly later on the meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1921, in both cases on the principles pointed out by Dr. Julius Goldman<sup>43</sup>. On October 31, 1920, the Budapest Committee's was included 88 employees (including the Executive Director and his assistant), whose combined salaries aggregate 203,020 Hungarian kronen a month<sup>44</sup>.

The Committee held its first meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1920. Which stated the principles to be followed and organized the necessary administration. Dr. Goldman fixed tasks of Hungary's Committee and then approved its program. In the first place War-widows, war orphans, disabled soldiers and their families, the families of war-prisoners, refugees and other war sufferers got support from Committee.

The Committee formed special sub-committees which discussed all the questions to be submitted to the whole Committee. Besides the Central-Office was organised a special office for the refugees which was exclusively kept busy with the feeding, clothing and transporting the unfortunate Galician refugees. In connection with this office, a society was organized that provided refugees with legal aid and procured the necessary passports and visas, further protected the refugees before the authorities and organized transportation into their country.

The distribution of clothes was provided personally by the President. Special committees were working in the matter of the Mensa, of the eating-house for the middle-class, the working-shops for tradesmen, the students, the training for practical professions the maintenance of children, the home for children, the control of the Office of refugees, the management of organisations in the country and their controlling. The

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<sup>41</sup> Szajkowski Z. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief... P. 78.

<sup>42</sup> *Memorandum of the Hungarian Branch of the Joint Distribution Committee of America. Budapest, 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1920* // JDC Archive. NY AR191921 / 4 / 23 / 1 / 148.2.

<sup>43</sup> Beizer M. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee...

<sup>44</sup> *Digest of report No. 2 of the Hungarian branch of the Joint Distribution Committee, October 31, 1920* // JDC Archive. NY AR191921 / 4 / 23 / 1 / 148.2.

Chief-Physician of the Committee to prescribed medicines, milk, food, clothes for the children and has artificial limbs made for mutilated people. A special workshop was occupied with producing "prothesis".

As a consequence of anti-Semitism movement all the physicians of Jewish faith have been dismissed from the municipal service of Budapest. With the aid of these dismissed physicians was organised a special institution to providing the poor with medical aid. Wherever orphans or sick were placed by the Joint Distribution Committee, a member of the Committee was went for inspection and superintendence of the institution. All were members assisted by the other members of the administration took great interest in the promoting of the cause of the Joint Distribution Committee<sup>45</sup>.

The report of the Hungarian branch of the Joint Distribution Committee, which is dated October 31, 1920, is present the various disbursements to made by the Budapest Committee in 1919-1920. The main areas of JDC's aid at this time were:

1. Refugees. For the care and repatriation of the Jewish refugees in Hungary, the sum of 1,079,854.70 kronen has been spent, which Includes 579,854.70 kronen mentioned in the first report.

2. Emergency Relief. The sum of 277,073 kronen has been distributed among 309 cases. This includes 56,976 kronen (granted to 114 cases) were mentioned in the first report.

3. Loans. For rehabilitation purposes the sum of 6,460 kronen has been lent without interest to 2 810 persons. This includes the 695,950 kronen (lent to 236 persons) mentioned in the first report. Of the whole amount, 13,000 kronen have been repaid, leaving a balance due of 6,447,000 kronen. The Budapest Committee has no means whatever to enforce the payment of these loans, nor is it able to say what proportion of these loans will ever be paid.

4. Students' Relief. To date the sum of 780,156 kronen has been spent for the relief of the students. This includes 368,090.60 kronen previously reported. Beginning with November a mensa will be opened for 500 students.

5. Artificial Limbs. Besides the 2000 kronen previously reported, the sum of 14,600 kronen has been spent in order to provide 5 crippled soldiers with artificial limbs. The Committee has set aside 600,000 kronen for the purpose of establishing an artificial limb factory, where practically only Jewish technical students will be employed.

6. Medical Relief. To give medical aid to war sufferers , a dispensary has been opened, which is in charge of Dr. Ernest Deutsch, one of the most eminent physicians in Budapest and a member of the Committee. So far 244 person have been treated at the dispensary. Moreover, acting upon instructions from Dr. Goldman, the Committee has undertaken to pay for the treatment of sick and disabled Jewish soldiers, their wives and children in the Jewish hospitals, as well as for the care of blind or deaf-mute children and war orphans. For this purpose the Committee appropriated 1,289,469.75 kronen to be distributed among the various Jewish hospitals, asylums, and educational institutions. Of this amount, 111,957.75 kronen have already been used up, leaving a balance of 1,177,512 kronen. The subsidised institutions, be it said in passing, are continually supervised by a member of the Committee specially delegated for this purpose.

7. Aid to Emigrants. To help Hungarian Jews desiring to settle in Palestine, the sum of 1,400,000 kronen has been appropriated. It will be used to assist in the work of the local Palestine Office, established by the Zionist Organisation and the British government.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum of the Hungarian Branch of the Joint Distribution Committee of America...

8. Clothing and Shoes. To provide our students and needy professional men with clothing and shoes, 880,800 kronen have spent to buy 400 suits and 200 pair of shoes. 400 more pair of shoes have been ordered.

9. Aid to Rabbis. The members of the Committee were divided on the question of whether needy rabbis should be included among those entitled to assistance, seeing that the rabbis were not war sufferers in the strict sense of the word. The matter was finally decided at a full meeting, at which Mr. Morris Engelman of New York was present. Mr. Engelman urged that the rabbis be aided, and as a result a motion to that effect was carried. To date the sum of 1,115,000 kronen has been disbursed for the relief of needy rabbis, as follows: 5,000 kronen each to 193 rabbis; 2,500 kronen each to 25 acting rabbis; 2,500 kronen each to 25 widows of rabbis.

10. Food Parcels. 1,200 food parcels, which the Committee has received since the beginning of its activity, have been distributed among needy members of the middle class.

11. Expenses. To date the administration expenses (salaries, stationery, office equipment, telegrams, etc.) of the Budapest Committee have been 587,327.54 kronen, of which 154,376.08 kronen have already been accounted for<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, the assistance of the JDC to the Hungarian Jews was, although diverse, but insignificant. The total expenditure during 1919-1921 reached \$550,184.00 (see table 2). Only during the emergency relief period of 1919-1920, the JDC expended more than \$22 million for various forms of relief and rehabilitation abroad<sup>47</sup>. Thus, Hungarian Jews received less than 0.025% of the assistance that the organization allocated during this period.

Table 2  
**JDC relief in Hungary in the post-war emergency relief period (1919-1921)<sup>48</sup>**

Date	Purpose	Appropriation (\$)	Drawings (\$)
<b>1919</b>			
Nov. 13	Relief to Children thru ARA	50,000.00	50,000.00
<b>1920</b>			
Jan. 1 - June 30	European Children's Fund thru ARA	150,000.00	150,000.00
	Food drafts thru Dr. Goldman, Paris	12,000.00	12,000.00
	General Relief thru Budapest Committee	15,000.00	15,000.00
		83,192.31	83,192.31
July 1 - Dec. 31	General Relief Jewish Refugees in Hungary	25,000.00	25,000.00
<b>1921</b>			
Jan. 1 - June 30	General Relief	194,900.32	194,900.32
July 1 - Dec. 31	General Relief	20,091.37	20,091.37
<b>Total</b>		<b>550,184.00</b>	<b>550,184.00</b>

<sup>46</sup> Digest of report No. 2 of the Hungarian branch of the Joint Distribution Committee...

<sup>47</sup> Beizer M. American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee...

<sup>48</sup> Hungary Statement of appropriations, drawings and undrawn balances for the various activities from the inception of the Committee to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1923 // NY AR192132 / 4 / 17 / 1 / 210.



On May 30, 1921, the JDC closed its Remittance Department completely<sup>49</sup>. In Hungary JDC relief committees were liquidated in June 1921<sup>50</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

In spite of insurmountable difficulties during World War I and in the post-War years that followed it; in spite of the lack of unity and of many internal differences; in spite of negative attitudes from various governments – in spite of all these obstacles, American Jewry was able not only to deliver general organized relief to the starving European Jews (including Hungarian Jews), but also to assist in the organization of the machinery for the transmission of private relief. Indeed, on November 13, 1919, Dr. Bogen wrote in his report: “The most essential factor in this rehabilitation is the establishment of the necessary means to transmit the relief so generously proffered by American Jewry, the organization of the transmission system”<sup>51</sup>.

JDC for the first time had brought together in the common task of mercy American Jews of all shades of opinion. The experience of these years had developed an organization and had recruited dedicated personnel. A small but adaptable staff of diverse background and experience brought together a corps of experts ready to take on additional assignments. A network of affiliated Jewish organizations was prepared to assume responsibility for reconstruction, but was also available in the event of unexpected crisis.

Aids for the Jews of Hungary was, though small, but very tangible. Local Jews, as well as refugees from neighboring territories (especially Galicia) received much-needed support. Participation in the program of the European Children’s Fund saved tens of thousands of children and their families from death. At the same time, this program had its continuation in the future. All this created the basis for the transition to the stage of reconstruction, which, if possible, we will highlight in further studies.

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<sup>49</sup> Szajkowski Z. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief... P. 98.

<sup>50</sup> Granick J. Op. cit. P. 270.

<sup>51</sup> Szajkowski Z. Private and Organized American Jewish Overseas Relief... P. 100.

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