THE AMERICAN JEWISH
JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OF REPORT

for
1932

Submitted to
the National Council

March 30, 1933

by Joseph C. Hyman
Secretary
THE AMERICAN JEWISH
JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE, INC.

Officers
FELIX M. WARBURG, Honorary Chairman
PAUL BAERWALD, Chairman
HERBERT H. LEHMAN, Vice-Chairman
JAMES N. ROSENBERG, Vice-Chairman
MARC O. F. HELLMAN, Associate Treasurer
MRS. H. B. L. GOLDSTEIN, Comptroller
JOSEPH C. HYMAN, Secretary

COMMITTEE ON FUND RAISING

DR. JONAH B. WISE, National Chairman

7 Hanover Street
New York City

THIS ORGANIZATION IS SUPPORTED SOLELY BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS
To The National Council

of

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

These have been indeed days of trial and tragedy. In the Joint Distribution Committee we are not unaccustomed to crises. From the very beginnings of this historic enterprise, we have been called upon to meet the anguish of man-made suffering and the disasters visited upon mankind by Providence. We are met today in another moment of sadness for hundreds of thousands of our people in Eastern Europe and Germany. We are not unmindful of the almost chronic despair of millions of fellow-Jews in lands that have long nurtured active racial hatred and denial of elemental rights.

1932 reflected grave problems confronting the American people in the field of domestic and local needs. In the face of these conditions here, we moved slowly in our fund-raising effort, always with due regard to the responsibilities which rested so heavily on our devoted colleagues in many communities.

Meantime the Committee spared no effort to build up a strong National Council of representative men and women devoted to the task of sympathetic understanding of the plight of our people abroad and willing, as conditions made practicable, to apply themselves to fund-raising. It is significant, in the face of all these conditions, that the income of the Committee from campaigns, earmarked donations and refunds in 1932, totalled $387,519.71. Necessarily, because of reduced income, because of aggravated needs abroad, the Committee effected sharp, drastic administrative and operating reductions abroad and here, with the willing and cheerful cooperation of our staff. Our entire campaign personnel for field work was reduced to two men who served for part of a year. We were fortunate, too, that the year 1932 marked the completion of two matters that had long been under discussion and negotiation—the satisfaction of a balance under an appropriation to the Palestine Economic Corporation and the working out of an agreement with our affiliate body, the American Joint Reconstruction Foundation concerning payments due it, as well as certain reimbursements from it.
On the other side, the most sober recital bears witness to Jewish distress and oppression to an extent not less acute and tragic than during the World War and the immediate post-War period. All reports substantiate a condition in many instances of unparalleled, almost hopeless suffering and destitution. These conditions are due, not alone to the general and worldwide collapse affecting all of the population, but, unfortunately, to the added tribulations visited upon our people through special disabilities, racial hostilities, discrimination, excesses, economic boycotts, which weakened the very foundation of their livelihood and sapped their courage and morale.

This is not intended to be a detailed report; only a few figures can now be cited. In Poland, of 3,000,000 Jews, half are destitute; three-fourths of the Jewish workers are without employment; half of the balance without any means of livelihood. Hundreds of thousands of adults and especially children are in the actual throes of starvation. What is true of Poland, is true of almost every other land in Eastern Europe. The number of Jews in the public service or in quasi-public service is well nigh negligible. Government monopolies have thrown Jews out by the thousands from industries like salt, tobacco, alcohol. Jewish physicians find it next to impossible to secure official or semi-official employment. Jewish lawyers are handicapped severely through administrative regulations. Discriminations are complained of in the collection of taxes, the granting of licenses for all kinds of business, the regulation of Jewish artisans, the meagre appropriations from government and municipalities to Jewish institutions and Jewish cooperative loan societies. Nor have the governments taken steps to correct discrimination or remedy injustice or undertake any constructive measures to enable the Jewish people now forced out of their livelihoods, to regain a means of self-support.

That is why today it is necessary to feed children and adults, to provide clothing and shelter, to heed the tragic appeals that come daily from institutions for the care of orphans and children, from medical-sanitary societies, hospitals and clinics closing their doors, from Jewish schools and institutions of religion and culture, from trade and vocational organizations, from free loan societies, virtually the last stronghold upon which the Jewish people can rely. More and more the merchant, tradesman and artisan, who last year was still credit-worthy and who could still contribute his mite to charity, has sunk to the ranks of the destitute. Mu-
nicipal, State subventions, won meagrely after many years of unremitting effort, have steadily decreased, even ceased.

In Roumania, of 1,000,000 Jews, 400,000 are in dire straits. In Bessarabia, Bukowina and especially in Marmorosch, the tragedy of Jewish existence beggars description. To add to their woes, acts of anti-Semitism, terrorism, student riots and disorders aggravate their despair. Floods in Bessarabia and parts of Moldavia made a horrid situation even more intolerable. In Sub-Carpathia, with its 100,000 Jews, famine, in the literal sense, and disease are widespread. In Latvia and Lithuania conditions are rapidly becoming desperate and our fellow-Jews are undergoing misery and privation, with virtually only the credit institutions of our Foundation throwing open any measure of help. In Lithuania, a new and horrid phenomenon appears—unhappy fathers, with no hope of feeding their families, desperate, are abandoning their wives and children. By the hundreds, these women have come to place their children in orphanages. Their lot is truly pitiful. In Austria, in Hungary, the Jews are being rapidly displaced from every point of economic security or vantage and forced into the ranks of the unemployed and destitute.

In the Soviet Union, the Jewish situation kept pace with that of other nationals, whether in agriculture or in industry, save for the thousands of declassed especially among former merchants, religious functionaries and other unadapted groups. In the light of news which emanates from Russia today, we are filled with great concern, the more so as our funds for all relief and reconstructive effort have dwindled during these last few years of depression and uncertainty in the United States.

Throughout Eastern and Central Europe, the Jewish people who had achieved a very large measure of self-support in the maintenance of their institutions of welfare and philanthropy, have lost ground and rapidly are giving way under the increased pressure upon them. In these circumstances even the smaller sums expended by the Joint Distribution Committee proved a real godsend to meet acute emergencies and needs which otherwise could not have been met at all; even more important, our aid rekindled a sense of morale and courage among our sorely tried brethren.

We expended during 1932 directly for our activities and operating expenses, $408,000, including the sum of $71,000 repaid by the free loan societies of Poland, a sum which was promptly reapplied to similar activities. How significant it is that of the $408,000, about half had to be applied to general feeding, cloth-
ing, aid to flood and fire victims, emergency subsidies to institutions, special child feeding, summer colony convalescent work in behalf of tuberculous and anemic children, increased medical-s sanitary aid, and in part to the keeping alive of students and teachers in schools of religion and culture. At the same time, we could not permit institutions that had been built up for the training and guidance of orphans and children in workshops, apprentice homes, to collapse for want of small sums. We gave funds wherever it was possible to such institutions. We were obliged to grant a substantial amount to the Cooperative Tool Supply Company and to make moderate advances to the free loan societies. In Russia, too, for emergency relief and certain economic industrial training activities, we granted some aid.

Meagre indeed this recital would seem to be in years gone by. Today, the results achieved extend far beyond the figures reported, because there must be added to these sums the additional sum of $587,000 representing new appropriations made by our Foundation—the American Joint Reconstruction Foundation—in loans to Jewish credit cooperatives in Eastern and Central Europe. It is good to be able to report that through the direct efforts of the Joint Distribution Committee and the combined activities of J.D.C. and I.C.A. in this Foundation, no less than $995,000 was expended during the crucial year 1932.

The impoverishment of the Jewish masses had assumed such tremendous proportions last year, that in many districts relief had to be undertaken in a manner similar to that rendered in the post-War period. Truly, the Joint Distribution Committee has had to become, in a continuing and permanent sense, a Red Cross of the Jews, called upon wherever emergency and calamity make their dread visitation upon our people.

In the small towns of Poland especially, actual starvation prevailed last Spring. In Sub-Carpathia, in the Marmorosch district of Roumania, and in Transylvania, important and worthy institutions of every character on the verge of utter breakdown pleaded desperately for aid. Special grants had to be given for flood emergencies in Roumania and for the rebuilding of homes destroyed by fire in Lithuania.

The most urgent and compelling need facing us last year was the problem of feeding children in all these lands. In Poland alone, in 114 different localities in approximately 360 schools, 40,000 children had to be fed during the months of February, March, April, May and June. During the summer months, the children were
cared for in summer colonies and feeding again was resumed in the Fall. Groups of starving children, literally at the point of death, had to be sent to hospitals and special sanatoria. Similar conditions prevailed in the other sections mentioned. 2,550 children had to be fed in Sub-Carpathia; 1,260 in Marmorosch. In the summer colonies, 217 of them, 26,000 children had to be housed, fed and nurtured.

At the same time, the schools for child care and trade training, with 10,840 children in 140 orphanages and homes had to be carried on, and 4,218 boys and girls continued to receive vocational training. Institutions, like the Union of Jewish Child Care Organizations of Poland, which has done notable work, like the TOZ, the association of Jewish physicians in Poland, like the OZE, the medical-sanitary society for the Border States, like the free loan societies—found themselves reduced in income, in fees, in government and municipal payments, facing stark ruin and extinction. Community after community begged, pleaded, cabled for advances, loans, so that the aged, the sick, the helpless, might not be thrown out upon the streets.

In the midst of all these tales of lamentation, it is still good to be able to point to the continued activity of many of these associations, to the renewed efforts of many of these organizations of self-help, to the splendid constructive work of some 700 credit cooperative societies ministering to a Jewish family population of 1,250,000 Jews. Many of these cooperatives had been weakened and had dropped out; many, fortunately, still are sound and under the supervision of our Foundation. It is hoped these may continue to render vital service.

I shall not refer at this time to the activities of Agro-Joint, whose land settlement work is under the auspices of the American Society for Jewish Farm Settlements, nor to the interesting and valuable activity of the Palestine Economic Corporation in which we have invested over $1,600,000 in the last eight years, which is carrying on constructive business and economic undertakings in the Holy Land.

Such, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the grim narrative of Jewish anguish of millions of our people in lands across the sea. A handful of men here, with splendid resolution and unflinching devotion, have carried on the work. I will not be misunderstood if I refer to the tremendous labors and unremitting energy and tenacity of our officers and others of our colleagues. If something of that
spirit which has animated this small group could extend out and make its impress in the minds and hearts of our leaders throughout the land, we could go forward with renewed vigor and zeal and singleness of purpose. Truly, if we are worthy of the communion of Jewish fellowship, we shall with resolute heart and hand take upon ourselves at least a small portion of that heavy burden which is grinding down our fellow-Jews to desperation and despair, and give again to these men and women of our faith and common blood and heritage the warm clasp of sympathy and understanding and helpfulness, symbolized and made articulate by the work of this Joint Distribution Committee.

Joseph C. Hyman,
Secretary.
BEQUESTS

For those who wish to make bequests to The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the following form is suggested:

I give and bequeath to:
The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc.,
the sum of .................................................................
................................................................. dollars for its general purposes (or a special purpose may be stated).