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Reel
101

Box
35

Folder
61

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, undated.

A COMMUNIQUE ON THE BATTLE FOR JEWISH SURVIVAL

An Analysis of the Latest Report of the Joint Distribution Committee Shows It To Be the Guardian of Both Present and Future

Do you know what a montage is? It is a technical term which denotes a composite picture made up of individual photographs or scenes. You may look at a montage in its entirety, or examine the pictures in it separately. The relationship is one of simultaneous independence and interdependence.

The principle of montage runs like a thread through the years of Jewish life since the last war. We know now that no incident was too small to be insignificant. We know that no event was so isolated as to be unrelated to the general picture of contemporaneous Jewish history.

We know all this because as American Jews we possess a unique kaleidoscope through which to view the shifting scenes of our time. That kaleidoscope is the Joint Distribution Committee, which came into existence soon after the last war broke out. Then, as today, Jewish distress recognized no boundaries. It overflowed, became widespread. The Jews of Russia were no less the victims of war than the Jews of Poland, or of Lithuania, or of the Baltic countries, or of Palestine. American Jews, themselves constituting a montage of different nationalities, realizing that the troubles of Jews everywhere were their concern, and propelled by the urge to relieve suffering, then created the Joint Distribution Committee to deal separately and wholly with Jewish needs abroad.

One need but read the latest report which the Joint Distribution Committee has issued to see how effectively and faithfully this purpose has been fulfilled. The report covers a 17-month period, from January, 1941 through May, 1942. During these 17 months, which include six months of America at war, the J.D.C. brought help and hope to nearly a million Jews on five continents at an expenditure of \$9,285,000. The J.D.C. did not go to the aid of Polish Jews alone; it did not go to the aid of German, Austrian or Czechoslovakian Jews alone; it did not go to the aid only of Jews in Shanghai, Latin America, India or Turkey. It came to the aid of Jews everywhere, its primary concern to bring maximum help to the maximum number of sufferers everywhere.

Today we can look through the eyes of the Joint Distribution Committee and see the whole field on which the Jewish battle for survival is taking place. A boat loaded with refugees sinks, and the passengers whose lives have been spared need assistance; expulsions are decreed, and a whole community unites in a cry for help; visas expire, and despairing families rush to consulates and relief agencies; a pogrom sweeps a city or an entire country, and the victims appeal for food, shelter, medications. These are emergency cases which, as the J.D.C. meets them, highlight the more fixed scenes in the montage of Jewish distress. Why did the boat loaded with

refugees sink? Why do emigrants whose visas expire have to rush for help? The answer is, of course, that conditions in their homeland were so appalling that the refugees embarked on an unseaworthy vessel rather than stay. To the emigrants whose visas expired, getting to the United States, or some other country in the Western Hemisphere, meant the difference between life and death.

Each incident, subtle or sensational, adds another scene to the montage. Each time the J.D.C. goes to the aid of a group of stricken Jews, each program of relief which the J.D.C. launches, adds to our understanding of how inexorably our fate is collective, adds to our stature as Americans and as Jews.

Some of us may pause at one point in the montage of Jewish life and of J.D.C. work. Perhaps that point will be Portugal, because we have a relative in Lisbon who is waiting for a ship to take him to freedom. Perhaps it is the island of Jamaica in the Caribbean Sea, because we have a friend among the group of Polish Jews for whom the J.D.C. provided a haven there for the duration. Perhaps it is Turkey, or India, or Persia, because there we have someone who awaits J.D.C. help to enable him to go to Palestine. Perhaps it is Siberia, because there we have a mother or a father, a brother or a sister, who was evacuated from Poland and who looks to the J.D.C. for urgently needed medical supplies.

Perhaps it is in unoccupied France where a Jewish child has been orphaned for the duration of the war because of the deportation of its parents to unknown lands of the east. There the J.D.C. has had to step in and become father and mother to thousands of Jewish children thus abandoned. Only recently the J.D.C. announced that it had provided \$25,000 for the balance of 1942 to care for 1,200 Jewish children evacuated from Paris and taken to unoccupied France for asylum in child-care homes.

Perhaps it is in Palestine, for even there the J.D.C. reaches out a helping hand quite apart from what Zionist organizations accomplish through independent channels. Ever since 1918 the J.D.C.'s interest in Palestine has not flagged and it has spent over \$13,000,000 in that land for many different kinds of help. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent annually by the J.D.C. to transport refugees from Europe to Palestine.

Perhaps we may linger at the map of Latin America because we are interested in the significant reconstructive activities of the J.D.C. for 123,000 emigrants there. The brighter colors of the Latin American scene are a welcome sight after the darker-hued aspects of most of the Jewish montage. In Latin America, the J.D.C. is providing more than emergency relief. It is providing for the peaceful future when Latin America may help solve the problem of post-war reconstruction by opening its doors to thousands of European peoples, Jews and non-Jews, who will have been economically and socially dislocated by the present conflict. How this is being anticipated is told in the J.D.C.'s latest report: by helping the local communities there to establish permanent welfare institutions, loan banks, training farms and many other concrete forms of aid so that the newcomer in Latin America may speedily fit himself into the new life.

The new life - that phrase runs constantly through our minds and hearts. Will the Jewish montage after the war assume a new luster? Will the Jewish wanderer finally find a place of rest? Will the Jewish community be able to build over the ruins? If we

are to have peace of mind, we must believe in affirmative answers to these questions. We must at all times remember that the J.D.C. is saving more than one life every time it helps a man, a woman, a child. It is also saving the more-rewarding life in which there will be no war, no falling bombs, no deportations to unknown hell-holes, no persecutions, no discriminations. In equipping the J.D.C. with the means to continue to spread mercy overseas we are simultaneously strengthening it for the huge task of post-war reconstruction to which it will be called upon, as a matter of course, to contribute.

Some of us are rather complacent about the J.D.C.'s role in post-war reconstruction. "History will repeat itself," is what we say in effect. By that we mean that the J.D.C. will go among the ruined Jewish communities of Europe and elsewhere and apply the same magic touch it did after the last war ended. True, at that time, the J.D.C. performed a miracle. In Eastern Europe, whose Jews had suffered most because they were trapped on the battlefield itself, the J.D.C. wrote one of the most heroic pages in the history of Jewish self-help. In Poland alone, the J.D.C. spent \$30,000,000 from 1918 until the day, three years ago, when it was invaded by Germany.

The requirements of the coming post-war era will be staggering by comparison. We need but pick up our daily newspaper to see this. Whole Jewish populations are being shifted; thousands of refugees are in uncertain havens; destruction of community life and community resources is incalculable. The montage of Jewish need, after a United Nations victory, will be the most frightening in our history. The J.D.C. will be confronted with a task so immense as to be epochal. In the face of this future reality, dare anyone question the necessity for the J.D.C. to engage in that task? If it is to do so, we must go on preparing it in ever increasing measure through support of its present activities, which perpetuate the lifeline of Jewish help and strengthen it for post-war burdens. How else will Jewish leaders and Jewish communities be strong enough and trained enough to pick up the jagged ends of their previous life? Though a man be saved from instant danger, he may sometimes die of loss of blood. The J.D.C. is striving hard to give European Jewry unremitting transfusions of help.

Perhaps the secret of J.D.C. success is that it itself constitutes a montage. Since the first day of its creation it has drawn within its framework of mercy every element in American Jewish life. It is made up of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews, Zionists and non-Zionists. Its leaders come from many spheres of endeavor. At its council table men and women, who otherwise might have differences of opinion, come together in the unanimity of need to relieve Jewish distress.

Wisely, the Joint Distribution Committee has never attempted to offer a panacea for Jewish ills. It knows that much needs to be done beyond the fields of relief or even reconstruction. It knows, too, however, that these must necessarily be the first steps before any other programs can be launched.

A new order is arising in the world. Not the so-called New Order of the Nazis, but a new order of humanity and decency and equal rights for all men. While that new order is being forged on the battleground of the world, we can help thousands to stay alive so that not only may they be able to benefit from and enjoy the fruits of civilization as we want it to be, but help to plant and harvest those fruits as well.