

NEWS

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J.D.C. SHANGHAI REPRESENTATIVE LIBERATED

DIRECTED AID PROGRAM FOR 20,000 JEWS

NEW YORK, AUGUST 30 --

Manuel Siegel, Joint Distribution Committee representative who carried on its relief program for 20,000 Jewish refugees in Shanghai, and who was interned by the Japanese in February, 1943, has been liberated, it was made known today.

A cable from Shanghai via Switzerland to the J.D.C.'s New York office, 270 Madison Avenue, announced Siegel's liberation. It said he had resumed direction of the relief program pending his repatriation.

The release of Siegel, a 34-year-old welfare worker and a native of Boston, adds a new chapter to the dramatic story of the continued assistance which the J.D.C. has furnished the thousands of Jews who fled Nazi Europe to the safety of Shanghai, a free-port city. Close to \$2,200,000 has been appropriated by the American relief agency since 1938 for the support of the refugees in Shanghai.

J.D.C.'s work in Shanghai began in 1938, when the influx of some 1,500 refugees from Germany necessitated outside relief. Within a year the number had risen to 17,000, of whom 10,000 were utterly destitute. J.D.C., major American agency for the relief of destitute Jews overseas, provided food, shelter, clothing, medical aid, child-care and constructive economic assistance.

By 1940 there were more than 20,000 Jewish refugees in Shanghai, the majority of them entirely dependent on J.D.C. support. From Nazi-threatened Europe they

escaped by the back door to the free-port city after an overland journey through Poland, Russia, Siberia and Manchuria.

In May, 1941, the J.D.C. sent Miss Laura Margolis to Shanghai as its representative. She was joined in November by Siegel who had worked in Cuba for the J.D.C. After Pearl Harbor, the two were for a time permitted by the Japanese to continue their relief activities. They were able to provide free meals for as many as 10,000 persons daily, helping to set up feeding stations. They also arranged hospital and clinical care for some 3,000 patients weekly and extended other assistance.

Both Miss Margolis and Siegel were interned in February, 1943, but under a local committee the J.D.C. program continued to assist as many Jews as possible. Miss Margolis was repatriated late in 1943 in an exchange of American and Japanese nationals, and now heads the J.D.C. office in Belgium.

Last week the Swiss offices of the J.D.C. received the first direct word from Shanghai since 1941. A cable from the representatives of the Jewish community there expressed their deep gratitude for the assistance rendered them by the J.D.C. They added that they were "all cheerful and in good health." A later cable told of Siegel's liberation.

At present J.D.C. allocates \$100,000 monthly for the maintenance of the Shanghai group and only a few days ago the J.D.C. appropriated an extra \$35,000 for special needs arising out of the bombardment of Shanghai. For a period during the Japanese occupation of the city, funds for the relief program were obtained by borrowing against J.D.C. credit on arrangements made when war seemed imminent. These loans, repayable "not later than six months after the declaration of peace between Japan and the United States" total \$500,000. Then arrangements were made for the extension of funds by the Swiss office of the Joint Distribution Committee.

The J.D.C. receives its income from the campaign collections of the United Jewish Appeal in the United States and from the South African Jewish War Appeal in the Union of South Africa.

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