



Guide (Incomplete) to the Records of the Geneva Office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1965-1978

Location: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Jerusalem Office of the Archives

Introduction: The Geneva office records are the records of JDC's European Headquarters office, which, in the aftermath of World War II, was located in Paris. When JDC's Geneva office opened in July 1958 as JDC's European Headquarters, earlier records were transferred from Paris to Geneva. After JDC's Geneva Office closed in 1977, these records were shipped to the Jerusalem office of the JDC Archives.

The Geneva 1965-1978 is a continuation of the Geneva Collections from prior decades. Processing and digitization of this collection is in progress, beginning with the Countries and Regions subcollection. Listed and described below are the record groups, in alphabetical order, that have been completed or are in the process of being digitized. This list will be updated periodically as further work is completed.

Accessing the Collection: Titles of the record groups that are available online are presented as links to the database records. Use the "Look Inside" tab to drill down to series, folder, and item level records. Some listed record groups do not yet have associated digital assets available online. Availability of digital files is noted in each record group description below. Researchers interested in material that has been processed but not yet digitized may contact us via this [online form](#).

Conditions Governing Access: The collection is open to researchers with the exception of files that are restricted due to the nature of their contents according to best practices. Restricted files may include legal files, personnel files, case files, and personal medical diagnoses, etc. Please see our [Access and Restrictions Policy](#) for further details.

Copyright Conditions: Copyright is held by The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. Other intellectual property rights may apply. The publication of JDC records in any format requires the written permission of the JDC Archives. Users must apply in writing for permission to reproduce or publish manuscript materials found in this collection. Please see our [Access and Restrictions Policy](#) for further details. For additional information, contact archives@jdc.org.

Acknowledgments: Cataloging and digitization of this collection has been made possible by support from the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe; and generous donations from Benay, Steven, Shelley, Ira, and Judy Taub in honor of Henry and Marilyn Taub; Marshall M. Weinberg; and Jane and Stuart Weitzman.

Subcollection: Countries and Regions

Record Group Descriptions

Record Group: [Aden](#)

The two files in the Aden record group cover the years 1952-1954, 1965-1968. The correspondence and legal documents detail the dwindling of the community including disposal of communal property, an ongoing legal dispute, school closure, and plans for an airlift in June 1967.

Record Group: [Africa](#)

This record group contains one file containing correspondence, a brochure, and proposals, most of it regarding a public health training project in Central Africa initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). The potential partnering of JDC with ORT on this project is discussed.

Record Group: [Albania](#)

This record group contains one file of correspondence regarding supply of matzohs to the community in 1966-1967.

Record Group: [Algeria](#)

This record group contains eight files consisting of correspondence, budget and financial records, annual reports, and press releases. One legal file from 1968 concerns Samuel Levis's legal status as JDC representative in Algeria.

Record Group: [Arab Countries](#)

The Arab Countries record group covers the years 1965-1980, with some material from as early as 1957, and contains correspondence, file memoranda, charts, meeting summaries, budgets, press releases, phone call summaries, reports, newspaper clippings, questionnaires, and information circulars. A significant portion of the material pertains to the refugee emergency resulting from the Six Day War. It documents Jews who left Arab countries and their arrival and care given by JDC; negotiations with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for their care; cooperation with the Red Cross who helped the JDC to supply goods and grants to Jews in countries where JDC did not officially operate; claims for refugees' lost property; tracing requests. The record group also contains much information on programs undertaken in aid of Palestinian refugees. For more information, see Middle East Record Groups in other collections, as well as individual record groups for the countries included in this category: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

Record Group: [Argentina](#)

The Argentina record group contains 23 files consisting of correspondence, telegrams, reports, budgets, press releases, and newspaper clippings. These documents date from the years 1965-1979, during which JDC ran a comprehensive medical program, with a particular focus on mental health, and geriatric care. JDC's medical program received extensive coverage in the local Yiddish press and included cooperation

with local Jewish organizations and institutions such as La Liga Israelita Argentina Contra la Tuberculosis, Burzaco Home, and Hospital Israelita "Ezrah" (Ezra Jewish Hospital). In 1968, JDC arranged for Dr. I. Margulec, an expert in aged care, to come to Argentina for a few weeks to develop a program in this field. This included training local doctors overseas, geriatric mental health, tuberculosis treatment, and many activities for senior citizens. JDC was also involved in funding the ORT program in Argentina and nearly half the files in this record group contain ORT financial and statistical reports.

Record Group: [Australia](#)

The Australia record group consists of 38 files and covers the years 1965-1981. In 1965 80% of the Jewish population were postwar immigrants. Social welfare programs were subsidized by JDC and run by the more established community through local organizations: Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS) in Sydney, and the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society (AJWRS) in Melbourne. These operated jointly as the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies (FAJWS) and under the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ). The ECAJ headquarters rotated between Sydney and Melbourne every two years and acted as the conduit for JDC allocations to local organizations; local organizations also submitted financial reports to JDC through ECAJ. Each community's head was also a politician. While they were active in local and national Jewish leadership, they were involved in non-sectarian organizations as well: Sydney Einfeld in Sydney, and Walter Lippmann in Melbourne.

Several factors necessitated the need for a transition away from JDC subsidies to greater self-reliance. In 1965 JDC cosponsored the five-month trip of fundraising and community organization consultant Bernard Gottlieb. Other sources of funding proved helpful: in 1968 the Australian Jewish community turned to Austcare, the non-sectarian Australian Care for Refugees organization, procuring funds for both local aid to immigrants, as well as for international JDC use supporting refugees from Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia and Poland) as well as Arab countries, and in later years to Israel. The local community also applied successfully to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) securing funding for immigrant projects such as housing for the aged, "Pras Court," ceremoniously opened by UNHCR Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Loan fund documentation makes up roughly one fourth of the record group; the repayment of housing loans to loan funds also improved the financial position of the local Jewish community. With the influx of Soviet Jewish refugees beginning in 1978, the Australian Jewish community once again turned to JDC for a loan to help in their absorption. Materials include account statements, balance sheets, financial and statistical reports, charts, correspondence, annual reports, newspaper clippings, budgets, article reprints and extracts, meeting minutes, program schedules, and press releases.

Record Group: [Austria](#)

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Austria record group covers the years 1965-1978. It includes statistical information going as far back as 1938, some material from the 1950s as well as correspondence up through 1983. Egon Fink was country director 1965-1968, Moritz Einziger acted as country director during most of the years 1969-1979, and Louis Stern 1980-1981. Akiva Kohane covered the Austria desk at European Headquarters in Geneva from 1961 through this period and was also the director of JDC's transmigrant program. As of 1965 the local Jewish community took over welfare cases, education, and youth activities; in 1975 the loan fund was transferred to the Jewish community. The office was maintained for care given to transmigrants leaving Soviet bloc countries who were not going to Israel. From 1974-1980

the program's purpose was limited to this aid and the accompanying substantial public relations program. The Administration: Public Relations series constitutes over a third of the total number of files in the record group. It documents the many missions, VIP visits, and other meetings between American Jews and emigrating Soviet Jews. For more information see the Subject Matter: Transmigrants record group.

Record Group: Belgium

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Belgium record group covers the years 1965-1978 and includes some material in the 1963-1964 and 1979-1982 ranges. It consists of 172 files arranged in fourteen series and contains information going as far back as 1945. The largest series, with 28 files each, are Organizations: Service Social Juif and Subject Matter: Youth and Community. After the closing of the Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) office in 1964, Belgium did not have a local country director. This period was marked by further withdrawal of JDC funding and a need for greater independence on the part of local organizations. Nevertheless, developments such as inflation, immigrant influx, and severe recessions in the diamond industry dictated that the JDC occasionally step in to fund local efforts. Henri Elfen covered the Belgium desk at European Headquarters in Geneva, and various Geneva-based JDC staff gave guidance to diverse local organizations. While the major social welfare organizations, the Centraal Beheer Van Joodse Weldadigheid En Matatschappelijk Hulpbetoon (Centrale) and the Service Social Juif (SSJ) cooperated with each other, for example in conducting a joint study of the social and medical needs of the Brussels community, it was necessary for JDC staff to mediate between the two bodies at times, and to implement a plan for fundraising from the local communities.

Belgium received refugees over these years from Soviet bloc countries and from North Africa. JDC personnel took part in arranging the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Belgian Scheme, a plan to absorb handicapped refugees from Eastern Europe. In addition, JDC financed aged care and supported refugees and veteran residents through loan funds. JDC also maintained involvement with Claims Conference-funded synagogue renovation and construction, and the training of community center and camp staff. For example, JDC staff were heavily involved in the planning of the Romi Goldmuntz Jewish Community Center, which opened in Antwerp in September 1970.

The documents in this record group reveal pan-European joint efforts to improve care and training in various fields, as well as disagreements between organizations regarding Russian returnees from Israel and whether to grant them support enabling them to stay in Western Europe. Materials relate to internal JDC finances and meetings, as well administrative activity of various Belgian Jewish organizations. These include monthly financial reports, statistical reports, press releases, annual reports, event programs, package recipient lists, meeting minutes, correspondence, questionnaires, trip reports, Belgian senate legislation. For earlier material, see the Records of the Geneva Office, 1955-1964 Belgium. Case files are restricted.

Record Group: Bolivia

NOTE: Documents in this record group have not yet been digitized and are not available online. The Bolivia record group consists of 1 file from 1966. It includes a list of newly elected Board Members of the Jewish Communal Association Cochabamba (Asociacion Israelita Cochabamba).

Record Group: Brazil

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Brazil record group covers the years 1965-1977 and consists of four series. Most of the files are on refugee integration through vocational training, granting of loans, and health care. Most refugees arrived from Eastern European countries such as Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria, while some came from Egypt. The Sao Paolo JDC office closed in 1965. Fred (Efraim) Weinstein took over as Country Director from Henry Levy on October 6, 1966.

Record Group: Canada

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Canada record group covers the years 1965-1976 and consists of two series. Most of the material is correspondence between JDC staff and the staff of Canadian Jewish organizations, with whom the JDC partnered in providing educational resources and medical aid. In addition, most such help was directed at recent immigrants. A few files deal with study missions to Europe and Israel, planned jointly by the UJA and JDC.

Record Group: Chile

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Chile record group covers the years 1965-1977 and consists of three series. Most of the files are concerning mental health care for refugees. There is one file that is a statistical report for ORT. One file is a report on the loan fund for refugees.

Record Group: China

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The China record group covers the years 1965-1980 and consists of 5 series. Most of the files are on financial remittances to refugees from Eastern Europe and their families, including intermarried, half-Chinese, families. These remittances were usually for medical aid, funds for fleeing China, or general living expenses.

Record Group: Cuba

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Cuba record group covers the years 1965-1978 and consists of three series: Administration: Individual Files, Administration: Public Relations, and Subject Matter: Aid and Relief. Most of the files are on financial remittances to Jews living in Cuba. Much of the other files are correspondence of JDC members on the same subject. Significant and ongoing contributions were made to a campaign run by JDC, through the Standing Conference of European Jewish Community Services, by European Jewish communities. One file addressed individuals who were aided in emigrating from Cuba to Madrid or Israel. The JDC operated through the Canadian Jewish Congress and other organizations, because American organizations could not aid Cuba directly due to the political conflict.

Record Group: Czechoslovakia

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Czechoslovakia record group contains 35 files and covers the years 1965-1981. The files contain JDC reports on program activities, expenditures, accounting, correspondence, and overviews of assistance provided in the form of cash relief, support to programs, and supplies to the Jewish community.

There are also newspaper clippings concerning the political situation in Czechoslovakia, which became harsher with the invasion of the Soviet army in Spring 1968. As a result, many sought to emigrate. The record group contains details of JDC's extensive assistance to Jewish refugees who arrived in Austria.

The refugees eventually settled in Israel, North America, and other locations. For more on this topic, please see the Austria record group.

A significant portion of the record group consists of German-language information bulletins from the Council of Jewish Communities of Bohemia and Moravia in Prague from 1965-1972. The record group also contains legal case files and other files documenting assistance to individuals. These files are restricted for confidentiality reasons. Please see our guidelines for [access and restrictions](#).

Record Group: Denmark

NOTE: This record group is currently being digitized; a link to the database will be added when it is available. The Denmark record group contains 48 files covering mostly the years 1965-1978, with some earlier exceptions. Moreover, there are files documenting the years after 1978, as late as 1988. The majority of the material in the record group deals with the condition of Jewish Polish refugees. In 1968, the Polish government launched an "anti-Zionist" campaign against Polish Jews that caused the emigration of about 13,000 Jews. While most emigrants went to Israel, others settled in the US and Europe. Denmark granted automatic visas for all Polish Jews, sending a signal of "open doors" to the country. Consequently, in the autumn of 1969 approximately 600 Polish Jewish refugees arrived.

The refugees got immediate help from the Danish Refugee Council, a leading protection agency. Eventually, JDC partnered with local Jewish communities to strengthen communal infrastructure in absorbing the new arrivals. JDC provided financial support to communal organizations, sending consultants and providing guidance regarding social and educational services, as well as cultural and religious programs.

The record group contains correspondence, file memoranda, recommendations on allocations, documentation of transfers of funds, bills showing how the allocations were spent, charts, meeting summaries, budgets, reports, bank statements, financial reports, newspaper clippings, brochures, and other kinds of material.

Record Group: Eastern Europe

NOTE: Documents in this record group have not yet been digitized and are not available online. This record group contains four files including correspondence and materials regarding Area Committee and Program Review meetings, a published article that surveys events of 1969, and Situation Reports regarding refugees.

Record Group: [Far East](#)

This record group contains one file that contains blurbs regarding the Jewish situation in China, India, and Shanghai.

Record Group: [Ghana](#)

This record group contains one file of correspondence with S.J. Associates in Accra regarding the establishment of a social action program and with A.Y. Kubinson, a Christian missionary working in remote areas.

Record Group: [Iran](#)

JDC's program for the Jewish community of Iran began in the 1940s and ultimately grew to include an extensive school feeding program, medical care, education, and social welfare programs throughout the country. Many of the JDC programs in Iran were founded before 1965 but were strengthened during this time, and others, such as the local fundraising organization, were developed in cooperation with JDC staff during this period. JDC worked together with local communal organizations in Iran, such as the Anjoman Kalimian (Jewish Association) and the Central Jewish Committee of Iran, founded in the 1930s. Members of the Anjoman Kalimian, who acted as representatives of the Jewish community, were appointed through elections in which a small fraction of the community was granted a vote. While this body represented the elite of the community, JDC staff cooperated with its members on behalf of the community's poorest Jews and its middle class.

JDC Country Directors during this period include Sidney Engel (1963-1966), Morris Rombro (1967-1973), and Merrill Rosenberg (1973-1977). In 1977 Arnulf Pins took over as country director for Iran from Jerusalem. In 1978 Stanley Abramovitch served as interim country director in Iran. While a significant number of Jews remained in Iran after the Iranian Revolution and the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, JDC operations ended at this time.

For more information, see the Iran Record Groups in earlier Geneva Collections, as well as New York and Jerusalem Collections.

Record Group: [Ireland](#)

This record group contains one file of correspondence between Murray Sklar and Moshe Green in Dublin regarding the European Council of Jewish Community Services.

Record Group: [Japan](#)

This record group contains one file of correspondence regarding ordering a microscope for Malben in Israel.

Record Group: [Kenya](#)

This record groups contains one file of correspondence regarding possible aid to the Jewish community in Nakuru, Kenya, led by Reverend F. Lichtenstein; and an appeal for funds from Mangus Marianist high school in Thika, Kenya.

Record Group: [Liberia](#)

This record group contains one file with a newspaper clipping and correspondence from and regarding a group of African American Hebrew Israelites from Chicago who fled racism in the United States and set up a farming colony.

Record Group: [Morocco](#)

The Morocco record group contains correspondence from those in supervisory roles at the Geneva JDC Headquarters, Herbert Katzki, 1965-1967, and Ted Feder, 1969-80. Country directors in this period were Abe Loskove 1965-70, with Morris Rombro as interim during 1966-67; Sidney Engel directed both Morocco and Tunisia 1971-77; and Mark Samoil 1977-80. For more information, see Morocco record groups in earlier Geneva collections, as well as in New York collections from this and earlier time periods. The majority of the record group covers the years 1965-1978. One file contains items from Helene Cazes-Benatar's personal recollections going back to 1939, original material from the World War II era to be found with other wartime era records. A few files contain material from 1979-1981, as well as one file which contains 1982 material.

Record Group: [Nigeria](#)

This record group contains one file with a newspaper article and advertisement, press releases, charts, and correspondence regarding humanitarian aid to Biafra during the civil war in Nigeria. JDC joined with other aid agencies in signing a statement on the situation, as well as advertising as part of the American Jewish Emergency Effort for Biafran Relief.

Record Group: [Philippines](#)

The record group's two files comprise the financial and statistical reports of the Jewish community of the Philippines for 1965 and January 1966.

Record Group: [Sudan](#)

The two folders in the Sudan record group deal with the situation of Jews in the country as well as efforts to provide relief to the population.

Record Group: [Taiwan](#)

This record group contains one file of correspondence regarding the Jewish community in Taiwan's request for aid in building a community center.

Record Group: [Tibet](#)

The record group contains one file of correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, a questionnaire, and information papers regarding activities of members of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies on behalf of Tibetan refugees in India and elsewhere. In addition, the file contains information on activity undertaken by the American Council of Voluntary Agencies and the European Common Fund for Tibetan Refugees, which was founded in April 1967. JDC staff involved in addressing the crisis were

Charles Jordan as chair of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service and Lou Horwitz as a trustee of the European Campaign for Refugees.

Record Group: [Venezuela](#)

This record group contains one file of ORT monthly financial reports from April 1975.

Record Group: **Western Europe**

NOTE: Documents in this record group have not yet been digitized and are not available online. This record group contains five files that include reports on Area Committee meetings, a report on JDC programs in Western Europe 1958-1968, a magazine article on JDC's activities in the region, and correspondence regarding the Brandeis Institute program for Jewish youth, 1969-1971.