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May, 1948

Dear Mr. Alexander,

I take much pleasure in enclosing six copies of the draft Ordinance on the Restitution of Property to Victims of Nazi Oppression which I have just received from Germany.

I should like to discuss this matter with you and other members of the interested Jewish and refugee organisations in the very near future, and I am sending you the draft for your early consideration. I hope to let you know the date of the meeting in a few days.

I am sending a copy of this letter and the draft Ordinance to the representatives who attended my meeting in January. If I have omitted an organisation from the attached distribution list which you think should be represented I should be grateful if you would let me know. Meanwhile perhaps you could forward one of your spare copies of the draft to the organisation.

I should be grateful also, in the interests of despatch of business if you and other representatives could agree to nominate one, or at the most, two spokesmen at the forthcoming meeting.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd). C. F. Hampshire.

K. Alexander, Esq.,
Council for the Protection of the Rights
and Interests of Jews in Germany,
8 Fairfax Mansions,
N.W.3.

115992

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Copies to:-

L. Stein, Esq.,
Anglo-Jewish Association,
Woburn House,
Upper Woburn Place,
W.C.1.

A. L. Easterman, Esq.,
World Jewish Congress,
Congress House,
55 New Cavendish Street,
W.1.

A. G. Protman, Esq.,
The Board of Deputies of British Jews,
Woburn House,
Upper Woburn Place,
W.C.1.

L. Cohen, Esq.,
Jewish Committee for Relief Abroad,
7 Endsleigh Place,
Taverton Street,
W.C.1.

W. Stephany, Esq.,
Central British Fund,
Woburn House,
Upper Woburn Place,
W.C.1.

Dr. R. O. Munster, A.L.A.A., A.A.Y.A.,
United Restitution Office,
5 Lower Grosvenor Place,
S.W.1.

Dr. F. Goldschmidt,
U.S.A.,
8 Fairfax Mansions,
N.W.3.

115993

WJC C43

MILITARY GOVERNMENT - GERMANY

BRITISH ZONE OF CONTROL

ORDINANCE NO.

Restitution of Property to Victims of Nazi
Oppression

In order to provide for the restitution of property to those persons who between the 30th January, 1933, and the 8th May, 1945, were deprived thereof by reason of their race, creed, nationality or political belief,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE I

Claims

1. Any persons, whether natural or juristic, who between the 30th January, 1933, and the 8th May, 1945 was unjustly deprived by discriminatory legislation or otherwise of any identifiable property within the British Zone of Germany, may, where the cause of such deprivation was his race, creed, nationality, or political belief, recover such property in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

2. A person who belonged to a race or nation oppressed by the Nazi Government or who professed a religious or political belief in conflict with National Socialism shall be presumed to have been unjustly deprived of property in the following cases:-

- (a) where the transfer of ownership or possession was contrary to law;
- (b) where the transfer of ownership or possession took place by reason of any discriminatory law, decree or order, oral or written, of the German Government or any State, provincial or local Government body, or any representative thereof, made between the 30th January, 1933, and the 8th May, 1945;

(c) where the transfer of ownership of possession resulted from an agreement but the transferer was acting under duress and the transferee was aware of this fact. The fact that the transferer did not receive good value for the transfer or was not allowed to dispose of it freely in Germany shall be deemed evidence of duress.

3. Where good value was paid for a transfer and there is no evidence that the transfer was made under duress, no claim shall lie for restitution of the transferred property.

4. Where a person belonged to a race or nation oppressed by the Nazi Government or who professed a religious or political belief in conflict with National Socialism was debarred between the 30th January, 1933 and the 8th May, 1945 from succeeding to any property by reason of any discriminatory legislation, he shall be presumed to have been unjustly deprived of such property, and may recover it in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

ARTICLE II

Property not liable to Restitution

5. The following property is not subject to the provisions of this Ordinance:-

- (a) property of a value of RM. 1,000 or less at the date of its original transfer;
- (b) consumable goods;
- (c) property which by reason of loss or destruction or for some other reason is not identifiable at the date on which this Ordinance comes into effect: provided that if the transferee or any subsequent holder

/who

who would otherwise be liable to make restitution hereunder has received or is entitled to receive any compensation in money or kind in respect of such loss or destruction, he shall pay such compensation, or assign the right thereto, to the claimant in whose favour a restitution order would have been made in respect of that property.

ARTICLE III

Protection of Innocent Third Parties

6. Where property claimed has passed into the hands of a third party who, at the time he received it, did not know that the original owner had been unjustly deprived of it, neither such third party nor anyone claiming title under him shall be liable to make restitution.

ARTICLE IV

Persons entitled to Claim

7. Only the person who himself suffered an act of unjust deprivation, or if he is dead, his heirs or legatees (Vermachtnisnehmer) may claim restitution under this Ordinance.

8. For the purpose of this Ordinance:-

(a) any transfer by a deprived owner of his claim to restitutable property, whether under this Ordinance or otherwise, and whether made before or after the date on which this Ordinance comes into effect, is void;

(b) a person who was last heard of in the hands of the German Authorities prior to the 8th May, 1945 is

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deemed to have died on the 8th May, 1945, unless the contrary is proved;

(c) a juristic person which has been dissolved under German Law is deemed to be without heirs.

ARTICLE V

Conditions of Restitution

9. Property subject to restitution shall be accepted by the claimant in the condition in which it was on the 20th October, 1947 and the person liable to make restitution may neither claim for any increase in value since the date of the original transfer, nor in respect of any money spent by him for maintenance charges or capital expenditure, nor shall he be liable for any loss, damage or deterioration of the property, except that where he has received or is entitled to receive any compensation for damage to the property he shall pay such compensation or assign the right thereto to the claimant in whose favour a Restitution Order is made in respect of that property.

Provided that where the property subject to restitution has increased in value by reason of improvements or additions, the claimant shall be liable to pay to the Trust Corporation established hereinafter an amount equal to the increase in value due to such improvements or additions, but may deduct therefrom the amount of any debt incurred in respect of the improvements or additions where such debt will remain secured upon the property after the Restitution Order is made.

10. Property subject to restitution shall be accepted by the claimant subject to all charges and encumbrances and with all rights attaching thereto at the date on which this Ordinance comes into effect, provided that an encumbrancer who, at the time his encumbrance was created, knew that the original owner had been unjustly deprived of the property shall lose his security or other right he would otherwise have against the property.

11. A successful claimant must pay to the person found liable to make restitution, whatever (if anything) he received for the property for his free disposal at the time of the original transfer.

ARTICLE VI

Limitation

12. All claims under Article I of this Ordinance must be lodged, with respect to property in the British Zone, with the Zentralamt für Vermögensverwaltung (hereinafter called the Central Restitution Authority) at Bad Nenndorf on or before the 31st day of December, 1949.

ARTICLE VII

Trust for Profits and Unclaimed Property

13. A Trust Corporation under German Law shall be formed in the British Zone for the purposes hereafter mentioned and its members be appointed, and subject to dismissal, by Military Government.

14. The Trust Corporation shall examine every claim made under this Ordinance and shall, before any order for restitution is made, lodge a claim

- (a) for any increase in value due to improvements or additions to the property, against the claimant;
- (b) for any profits which have actually accrued from the property since the date of the original transfer, against all or any of the persons through whose hands the property has passed, not being persons who are protected from liability to make restitution under Article III of this Ordinance. No person other than a successor under a will or intestacy shall be liable to pay any money to the Trust Corporation in respect of profits which he has not personally received.

15. The Trust Corporation shall claim any property which, according to available evidence, is liable to restitution, but which has not been claimed by any person under Articles I or IV of this Ordinance.

16. Out of the fund received by it, the Trust Corporation

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(a) may, in lieu of profits, pay to a successful claimant a sum not exceeding 4% of the capital value of the property at the time of the original transfer in respect of each year or part of a year since he was deprived of it.

(b) shall pay compensation to surviving members of corporation and firms which would be entitled to claim restitution under this Ordinance if they had not been dissolved under German Law.

17. The balance of the monies received by the Trust Corporation shall be invested and held upon trust for the compensation, maintenance and benefit of all persons in the British Zone who were victims of Nazi oppression, and for the maintenance, care and, where appropriate, the education of their dependants, in accordance with schemes for such purposes prepared by the Trust Corporation and approved by Military Government. Military Government reserves the right from time to time to review all such schemes and to give directions regarding the management and disposal of the funds in the hands of the Trust Corporation.

18. At a date to be fixed by Military Government, not earlier than 1960 the Trust Corporation shall be wound up and its assets distributed among the Land Governments for purposes to be then agreed between Military Government and these Governments, but the interests of all persons then receiving benefits under any of the schemes mentioned in paragraph 17 hereof shall be provided for.

ARTICLE VIII

Powers, Duties and Appointment of the Restitution Authority

19. All claims shall be filed with the Central Restitution Authority which shall advertise such claims in a manner approved by Military Government and refer them to the appropriate Land Restitution Authorities.

The Central Restitution may, however, make Restitution Orders in such cases as Military Government may specify.

20. The Land Governments shall establish one or more Land Restitution Authorities in each Land and these Authorities shall have power to make an order for restitution in any undisputed case six months after the date of such advertisement and to arrange a settlement by agreement in respect of restitution or profits and to make an order accordingly at any time. Such orders shall vest the property in the claimants, and shall be accepted as evidence of title in all German Registration Offices. An order made in respect of profits shall entitle the Trust Corporation to recover the amount thereof under the ordinary process of law for the recovery of judgment debts.

21. The appointment of the members of the Restitution Authorities shall be subject to the approval of Military Government.

22. No costs or fees shall be payable to the Restitution Authorities by any claimant under this Ordinance.

ARTICLE IX

Disputed Cases

23. In cases of disputes either as to title or profits, the issue shall be decided by the German Ordinary Courts provided that where the dispute is as to profits only, the Restitution Authority may make an order for restitution without awaiting a decision of the Court as to profits. In judging a case the Court shall apply German Law and procedure, including the law relating to costs, supplemented by and subject to the provisions of this Ordinance. Where no existing rule of law or procedure governs any issue arising the Courts shall decide in accordance with natural justice.

ARTICLE X

Savings Clauses

24. Nothing herein contained shall prevent any person from claiming any property of whatsoever kind under the provisions of German Law, nor from exercising all his rights thereunder, provided that if he has lodged a claim under this Ordinance he shall be barred from making any claim to profits under German

Law in respect of the property claimed under this Ordinance.

25. Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to render lawful any transaction prohibited by Military Government Law No. 53.

ARTICLE XI

Powers of Review

26. Military Government may review all decisions made under this Ordinance and nullify, amend, suspend or otherwise modify them.

ARTICLE XII

Implementation

27. Military Government may from time to time issue directives or regulations for the clarification or carrying out of this Ordinance.

ARTICLE XIII

Official Text

28. The German text of this Ordinance shall be the official text and the provisions of Military Government Ordinance No. 3 and of paragraph 5 of Article II of Military Government Law No. 4 shall not apply to such text.

ARTICLE XIV

Effective Date

29. This Ordinance shall come into force on.....1948.

BY ORDER OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

April 14, 1950

Memo to: Dr. Marcus
cc. Mrs. Klausner
From: Dr. Blattberg

On April 12, there was a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., which I attended on behalf of the JCR.

Dr. Hannah Arendt, Executive Secretary of the JCR and who just returned from an extended tour of Germany, reported on her mission. Her task was first to get as much information as possible with regard to the whereabouts of Jewish cultural property still in German possession, and secondly to try to enlist the cooperation of German librarians, museum officials, and archivists. It is impossible as yet to assess how much cultural material will eventually turn up. However, it seems as though more archives and more ceremonial objects were saved than were books, largely because the German Jewish book collections were more strictly centralized in Berlin, while synagogue silver and archives very frequently found their way to local institutions.

Dr. Arendt, with the advice and help of some friends, discovered much material in various places of Germany. She is convinced that in our investigations for further cultural treasures still hidden, we depend upon the goodwill of German personnel, and that all other methods of investigation are impractical. She, therefore, entered into negotiations with German librarians, the result of which was an appeal to be issued by the Librarians Association asking all libraries to search for confiscated Jewish material and to centralize all information through the JCR office in Wiesbaden.

As far as museum material is concerned, it can be located through the German Monuments and Fine Arts Sections, which are in charge of supervising local museums. Archives present a special problem because they do not always fall under the authority of the Ministry of Education, but in most instances are under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. The JRSO has claimed the Bavarian material, but it is still uncertain whether it will be possible to ship archives out of the country.

The fact that the deadline for filing claims in the American Zone was December 31, 1948 presents of course great difficulties. The most feasible way of having the JRSO or the JCR take over cultural material found later and not covered by the claims of the JRSO is to have the deadline extended.

Considerable difficulties are encountered also on the part of the German Jewish communities. These communities hold many cultural treasures which, in most instances, are not used at all, and in the majority of cases never belonged to the communities. Since many of these communities are very small in numbers, the communal property located there has a tendency to be transformed into private property. In the American Zone, where theoretically the JRSO is recognized as the successor to community property, German Jewish communities are in a position to interfere with every single claim.

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The meeting then discussed propositions on microfilming in Germany of all Hebrew manuscripts, catalogues, early prints, and rare books now in German libraries and of German ownership. These microfilms would, of course, be of great importance for Jewish research in the United States, in Israel, as well as in other countries. Some archival material of former German Jewish communities, which is now being claimed by the JRSO or handed over to the JCR, may also be microfilmed. It was decided to start this work of microfilming as soon as the matter of expenses involved is settled.

At the meeting, I raised again the matter of the shipment of the books previously allotted to Latin American countries, which is lagging. I emphasized the importance of these books for the Latin American Jewish communities, and requested that all shipments be made as soon as possible. In response to my representations, it was made clear that actual shipments were delayed because of technical reasons, namely, that the shipments could not be arranged from the warehouse in New York and the books will have to be sent directly from Wiesbaden. However, the office of the JCR in Wiesbaden has already received orders to send the allotted books to Latin America.

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

116004

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Members of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee
FROM: Hannah Arendt, Executive Secretary

August 18, 1950

Re: Distribution of Ceremonial Objects, New York Depot

1,698 out of a total of about 3,800 ceremonial objects, in the category of museum pieces, have been allocated and are ready for shipment.

Schedule A: List of Institutions and Number of Objects

| | | | |
|-----|---|-------|-------|
| 1. | <i>American Jewish Congress</i> The Jewish Museum | 127 | Items |
| 2. | Hebrew Teachers College, Roxbury, Mass. | 53 | " |
| 3. | B'nai Brith Hillel Foundations, N.Y.C. | 65 | " |
| 4. | Hebrew Theological College, Chicago | 53 | " |
| 5. | College of Jewish Studies, Chicago | 56 | " |
| 6. | New York University, Library of Judaica and Hebraica, N.Y.C. | 36 | " |
| 7. | Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn | 19 | " |
| 8. | Museum of Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati | 99 | " |
| 9. | The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio | 70 | " |
| 10. | Yeshiva University, N.Y.C. | 245 | " |
| 11. | National Jewish Welfare Board, N.Y.C. | 147 | " |
| 12. | Committee on Restoration of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives, London, England | 247 | " |
| 13. | So. African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg, So. Africa | 150 | " |
| 14. | Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal, Canada | 151 | " |
| 15. | Delegacion de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentin- tinas, Buenos Aires, Argentina | 150 | " |
| 16. | Joods Hulp-Comite Curacao, Curacao, N.W. Indies | 30 | " |
| | Total | 1,698 | Items |

Schedule B: Categories of Distributed Items

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Eternal Lights | 4 |
| Thora Shields | 212 |
| Pointers | 196 |
| Spice Boxes | 274 |
| Cups | 64 |
| Plates | 53 |
| Menoroth | 133 |
| Hanukah Lamps | 182 |
| Collecting Boxes | 20 |
| Rimonim | 180 |
| Textiles (Torah Curtains, etc.) | 96 |
| Torah Wrappers | 100 |
| Ataroth Ornaments | 88 |
| Megiloth | 9 |
| Candlesticks | 12 |
| Torah Crowns | 17 |
| Medals and Coins | 35 |
| Miscellaneous | 23 |
| Total | 1,698 Items |

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C.D.

April 19, 1950

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

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Cult.

Meeting of Board of Directors of JCR

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On April 12, Dr. Blattberg attended a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., which heard Dr. Hannah Arendt report on her mission to Germany, during which she tried to get as much information as possible about the whereabouts of Jewish cultural property still in German possession and to enlist the cooperation of German librarians, museum officials, and archivists for its recovery. She discovered much material in various places and is convinced that further cultural treasures are still hidden. The German Librarians' Association, upon her suggestion, asked all libraries to search for further confiscated Jewish material. Museum material can be located through the German Monuments and Fine Arts Sections. Archives present a special problem because it is still uncertain whether it will be possible to ship them out of the country.

The meeting then discussed plans for microfilming in Germany of all Hebrew manuscripts, catalogues, early prints, archival material, etc. It was decided to start the microfilming as soon as the matter of the expenses involved is settled. Dr. Blattberg raised again the question of the shipment of books previously allotted to Latin American countries, which is lagging. It was explained that shipments were delayed for technical reasons; they could not be arranged from the New York warehouse, but have to be sent directly from Wiesbaden. The JCR office in Wiesbaden has received orders to dispatch the books to Latin America.

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May 3, 1950

Dr. Hannah Arendt
Executive Secretary
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.
1841 Broadway
New York, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Arendt:

Thank you very much for your letter of May 2, in which you informed me that you are able to ship up to 500 items to all the Jewish communities in Latin America which filed applications, and 2,000 to Brazil. I am happy indeed that 34 cases with 4,932 items have already left Germany for Argentina, and I am sure that you will see to it that Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay receive their proper share.

I wish to tell you how much I enjoyed your report on Germany delivered at the meeting of the Conference on Jewish Relations. It was really a remarkable presentation of the German problem.

I am attaching herewith copies of Nos. 1 and 2 of our list of books of Jewish content published in the United States, which we prepared mainly for the benefit of our friends abroad.

With kindest regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Wolf Blattberg
Dept. of Culture and Education

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Members of the Corporation

Agudas Israel World Organization
Alliance Israelite Universelle
American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee
Anglo-Jewish Association
Board of Deputies of British Jews

Commission on European Jewish Cultural
Reconstruction
Committee on Restoration of Continental
Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives
Council for the Protection of Rights and
Interests of Jews from Germany
The Hebrew University

Interessenvertretung der jüdischen
Gemeinden und Kultusvereinigungen
in der US Zone
Jewish Agency for Palestine
Synagogue Council of America
World Jewish Congress

May 2, 1950

President

SALO W. BARON

Chairman, Board of Directors

JEROME MICHAEL

Vice-Presidents

LEO BAECK
SIMON FEDERBUSCH
GERSHOM SCHOLEM
ALAN M. STROOCK

Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

MAX GRUENEWALD

Executive Secretary

HANNAH ARENDT

Dr. Wolf Blattberg
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York 23, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Blattberg:

Thank you for your letter of April 19. You will be happy to know that 34 cases with 4932 items have already left Germany for Argentina. As for the smaller Latin American communities for which a minimum of 250 was recommended by the Advisory Committee, I am happy to tell you that we are now trying to ship to them up to 500 items. However, I cannot promise you 1,000 for Mexico, Chile and Uruguay, but we shall try our best. Brazil will get 2,000.

As to the four complaining countries:

(a) Chile.-- We are in correspondence with them. We received a letter from them dated March 22. Dr. Lowenthal, manager of our Wiesbaden depot, is also in touch with them. I don't understand the complaint.

(b) Costa Rica.-- We contacted the Asociacion Sionista Unida. We don't have any reply from them, but advised them in a letter dated February 3 to get in touch with Wiesbaden directly. At a later date we received your letter advising us that it would be wiser to deal with the Centro Israelita Sionista. I will contact them as soon as I learn from Wiesbaden if the rival body ever replied. Their allotment is already being prepared in Wiesbaden.

(c) Ecuador.-- I wrote you in my letter of March 29 the reason why we did not contact them. However, since you tell me that two-thirds of the Jewish community is German Jewish, I will try to find books "of an entertaining character" in the Wiesbaden depot, and then contact the Asociacion de Beneficencia Israelita.

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Dr. Wolf Blattberg
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(d) Uruguay.-- We have a letter from Montevideo dated March 8, in which the President of the Comunidad Israelita de Montevideo declares that he is ready to pay freight charges for 1,000 books. I asked Dr. Lowenthal to get in touch with him. There was a certain delay because the Advisory Committee, according to our files, never agreed to 1,000 books. Moreover, at that time, in February, we did not yet know how great our stocks in Wiesbaden would eventually be.

I hope this answers your questions, and I am, with kindest regards,

Yours,



Hannah Arendt
Executive Secretary

HA:s

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May 15, 1950

Centro Israelita Sionista
Apartado 1473
San Jose, Costa Rica

Gentlemen:

Dr. Blattberg of the World Jewish Congress referred to me your request to have the Costa Rican Jewish libraries included in the re-allocation of books recovered from Nazi Germany through Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. I am glad to tell you that your request has been granted by our organization and that a shipment of 300-500 books, chiefly Hebraica, but also Judaica, is now being prepared for you in Germany. Shipping charges from Germany to Costa Rica are to be covered by you. Our representative in charge of shipments from Germany is Dr. E.G. Lowenthal, and the address: M.G. Club, 6-8 Alexandra Strasse, Wiesbaden, Germany. Please contact Dr. Lowenthal at your early convenience, so that he may communicate to you the actual expenses involved.

I will send you in the near future an agreement which lays down the conditions under which Jewish Cultural Reconstruction distributes the books entrusted to it.

Hoping to hear from you at your early convenience,
I am,

Sincerely yours,

Hannah Arendt
Executive Secretary

HA:s

cc to: Dr. Blattberg ✓
Dr. Lowenthal

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Cult. Dept. - JCR

RECOVERY AND DISTRIBUTION OF JEWISH CULTURAL

TREASURES THROUGH THE JCR

During the early days of the Allied occupation of Germany, the American Army discovered a great number of book cases in various caches in the vicinity of Frankfurt. What distinguished this material from the various cultural treasures found in hiding places all over Germany was that the greater part of these collections consisted of material looted from private and public libraries all over Europe. In 1946, accordingly, the contents of all these caches were placed under the custody of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section of the Military Government, and stored in one of the Army's Central Collecting Points, first in Offenbach and now in Wiesbaden. Little by little, as the huge job of unpacking and sorting got under way, the history and the nature of this peculiar "collection" came to light.

It was immediately after the outbreak of the war that the Nazi Government assigned to the notorious Alfred Rosenberg the task of establishing a central library for the Study of the Jewish Question. For this purpose he looted systematically Jewish cultural material in all Nazi-occupied European territories. Later, when the Allied bombing started, these Hebraica and Judaica were shipped to caches together with regular German book collections. When the American authorities took over, they were faced with the task of returning about 1,700,000 volumes to European and German libraries. Among the Jewish collections found and restored almost without loss were such famous holdings as the library of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris, the Rosenhaliana of the Amsterdam University library and the Etz Chaim Collection of the same city, and the library of the Collegio Rabbinico of Rome.

Soon after the operations at the Offenbach depot began, it became clear that there existed considerable quantities of Jewish cultural material whose owners could no longer be identified or had perished in the meantime, or which belonged to centers of Jewish learning that no longer existed. In order to recover these homeless Jewish cultural treasures and to make them available again to the Jewish people, the JCR (Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.) was founded in 1947 with Professor Salo W. Baron of Columbia University as President, and the late Dr. Joshua Starr as Executive Secretary.

The JCR is a corporation composed of member organizations in Israel, Great Britain, Europe, and the United States. For the purpose of the work in the American zone of Germany, it is affiliated with the JRSO (Jewish Restitution Successor Organization) as the latter's cultural agent. The Chairman of its Board of Directors is Professor Jerome Michael; its Vice-Presidents are: Rabbi Leo Baeck, Professor G. Scholem, Mr. Alan Strook, and Dr. Simon Federbush of the World Jewish Congress. Its operational funds are provided by the Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

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When, in the beginning of 1949, the JCR was recognized by the American military authorities as the trustee of the Jewish people for unclaimed, heirless, or unidentifiable cultural property, the Offenbach Depot was ready to entrust to the JCR's care approximately 250,000 volumes, 700 torah scrolls, and 10,000 ceremonial objects, all of which the military authorities had classified as unidentifiable property. During the following year, about 50,000 more Judaica and Hebraica were turned over to the JCR as originating from various German-Jewish institutions which were no longer in existence, while 50,000 items of identifiable but unclaimed private property will be entrusted to the JCR this fall.

The chief characteristic of this material was that it consisted almost entirely of broken sets, remnants of private or public collections, with not a single collection which seemed an intact unit. The solution of this riddle was that Rosenberg's Einsatzstab had not been the only Nazi agency licensed to loot Jewish books and ordered to establish an anti-Semite library. Its greatest competitor in the field was Gestapo headquarters in Berlin. Another "competitor" was Streicher, the infamous Gauleiter in Nuremberg who collected about 6,000 volumes of Rabbinica, a collection which the JCR also succeeded in recovering and which has been allocated to the Yeshiva University of New York.

The ceremonial objects likewise did not originate from any of the famous art collections of Jewish museums but were looted from synagogues all over Central Europe. Unlike the books, which are comparatively well preserved, the majority of these objects bear visible marks of willful destruction.

It was precisely this situation which made it necessary for the JCR to process and sort the recovered material carefully and under the supervision of experts before allocation to Jewish libraries or museums could be made. Among the Hebraica were large amounts of Rabbinical literature of many centuries, including a number of early prints and other rare items, as well as works which have become extremely scarce since the war. Among the Judaica were Yiddish titles which were printed on the eve of the war and had never become known in any country, as well as scholarly and secular works in German, Slavic, and West European languages. To these must be added periodicals of all languages and centuries. Since the beginning of the JCR's operations in the spring of 1949, approximately 300,000 volumes and 10,000 ceremonial objects have been sent out of Germany to various countries and institutions, while the JDC in Paris has taken upon itself the task of sorting, repairing, and redistributing all torah scrolls.

Allocation is made after careful investigation of the needs of the Jewish communities all over the world. Generally speaking, roughly 40% of all items are given to Israel, 40% to the Western Hemisphere, and the remaining 20% to all other countries. However, the Library of the Hebrew University has first call on all books needed there, and the Bezalel Museum receives first choice in the allotment of ceremonial objects. The close cooperation with Israeli institutions was emphasized by the choice of Dr. Shunami of the Hebrew University Library, and Dr. Nar-kiss, Director of the Bezalel Museum, as experts for the work on books and art objects in Germany.

With the exception of the United States, where the JCR is directly in charge of distribution to libraries and museums, distribution is carried out under the auspices of the national Jewish community of each country to which allocation has

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116011

been made. However, this distribution also follows certain specific rules which were laid down by the Board of Directors of the JCR and under which no book or object may ever be sold; each must be returned to the original owner should such ownership be proven; no library may keep any book which turns out to be a duplicate of one in its own collection; and a list of all items received has to be prepared for the JCR. Each book is marked by an ex libris and each object by a marker so that it may not be forgotten that these particular items are but the surviving relics of the great spiritual tradition of European Jewry.

Distribution in the United States started a year ago, and special attention is given to the needs of the Yeshivoth. In view of the great assistance given by American authorities in the work of the JCR in Germany, the chief Jewish divisions of non-Jewish libraries in the United States were recently included among the recipient institutions. The Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, Columbia University, and Yale University have already selected substantial material.

Distribution to the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, i.e. to Canada and the Latin American countries, commenced this spring and will be completed this fall. Allocation to the Latin American countries was made in close cooperation with the Cultural Department of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

About 45,000 books are still in the JCR's German depot. They constitute the only identifiable private property which was found in Offenbach. However, none of the great and famous private libraries of the European Jewish scholars is among them. These are stray volumes; the 45,000 books once belonged to approximately 16,000 owners! This material will be turned over to the JCR in the near future because it constitutes unclaimed property. Although the original owners who did not claim their property prior to January 1, 1949, have lost their legal rights, the JCR plans to publicize a list of private owners to whom six or more books belonged, in order to make recovery possible beyond the legal deadline.

In connection with this work in the American zone of Germany, and because no similar recovery of Jewish cultural property has been undertaken in the British and French zones, the JCR has begun an extensive search for Jewish cultural treasures which may have found their way into German libraries, museums and archives through the confiscation policy of the Nazis, or are now held in custody by various municipal and other German authorities. The most important finds again occurred in the American zone: many thousands of Jewish community documents in the Bavarian municipal and state archives and the remnants of the valuable collection of the Frankfurt Jewish Museum in the Historical Museum of Frankfurt have been discovered in the course of this search. But these are only the most important items. The German depot of the JCR continually receives small shipments of books, ceremonial objects, and torah scrolls in response to its communications to all major German cultural institutions and organizations. In the American zone, the JCR, through the services of the JRSO, is claiming Jewish property through regular channels. However, no such possibility has existed thus far in the British and French zones, so that the JCR has only been able to prepare the ground for future successor organizations through centralization and the checking of information.

WJC E10

116012

Copy Dr. W. Blauberg

29th January, 1951

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Dr. Hannah Arendt, Exc. Secretary,
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.,
New York.

Dear Hannah,

I am in possession of the Minutes of JCR, December 21st, 1950 and the attached statements. As I was ill during the last weeks I could not answer you at once, but having recovered now from my 'flu I am taking the first opportunity to thank you. I have read the minutes with much attention and I wish to thank you and Baron for your help. I hope that everything will go smoothly. As far as the archives are concerned I wish to state that we certainly will do our best to make a list of this material after it will be received here and to forward a copy of such a list to Cincinatti (or perhaps should we send it to you for transmission to Cincinatti?) which should enable them to state which of this material they wish to have microfilmed. I assume that only a part of it will be of real value to them. At any rate I should like to know who is going to foot the bill. We assume the receiving institution is supposed to pay for the expenses. Up to now we have had no information about the archives being shipped to us, but I assume that this is only a matter of some weeks. You will be informed by us as soon as the cases containing the material will be in our hands. Please notify the gentlemen in Cincinatti about this. We very much appreciate the sympathetic attitude taken by practically all concerned towards the general policy the Hebrew University has advocated.

As to the Frankfurt Museum I ~~xxx~~ understand that Dr. Rabinowicz has asked for a reconsideration of the resolution about ~~xxxxxx~~ it. In case such a discussion should be resumed I wish to state that I certainly would vote in favour of the proposals made by the ~~xxxxxx~~ British Committee.

As to the Paris books, especially the Baltic collection, I understand that there will be further negotiations before a final decision will be reached. I hope very much that by then all parts will agree that these books should go to Israel where they are so urgently needed. I can tell you that we are under constant pressure from the Ministry for Religious Affairs to give them more and more books of this kind for the libraries they are setting up in new and old settlements and this is indeed one of the vital functions we should fulfil here and in which JCR will have every interest to take a share. These books cannot be bought today and those offered are to be had only at prohibitive prices. It is this situation which prompts us to insist on a maximal allocation to Israel.

With kindest regards to you, as always,

Yours sincerely,

Prof. G. Scholem

116013

WJC E10

April 19, 1950

Dr. Hannah Arendt
Executive Secretary
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.
1841 Broadway
New York 23, New York

Dear Dr. Arendt:

I have your letter of April 18, and wish to advise you that, according to our files, the following countries have applied to you for allocations of books: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Argentina, of course, is a case by itself.

Some countries, such as Mexico and Curacao, have asked also for small allocations of art and ceremonial objects. Other countries have not made such applications, as far as I know, but this does not preclude the possibility of applications from them in the future.

May I also state that at a meeting of the Advisory Council, it was recommended that books be sent to any Latin American country applying for them, without exception, and a minimum of 250 was set for the small communities. Larger communities, according to the Advisory Council, should get proportionately more, and for Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay, a figure of 1,000 was fixed, while for Brazil, the amount was 2,000. Argentina, again, is a separate case.

I received personal or written complaints from representatives of the following countries that their allocations had not been acted upon: Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Uruguay. I would also like to add that in Costa Rica and Curacao, two parties appeared as claimants, and I wrote to Mr. Ben-Horin about this during your absence. I am sure you will find a proper way to determine the distribution of books in these countries.

With kindest regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

116014

Dr. Wolf Blattberg
Dept. of Culture and Education

WB:bg

WJC EK

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Directors
FROM: Hannah Arendt, Executive Secretary

Re: Disposition of the Baltic collection

This topic was discussed at length by the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee at their joint session on June 4, 1951. The original plan had been to ship the entire collection to Israel but no formal decision had as yet been taken.

During the discussion the following was pointed out: The Baltic collection contains chiefly rabbinics and other Hebrew literature of a rather high quality. Innumerable requests from libraries in the United States and other countries of the Western hemisphere for this type of material could not be filled from our New York depot. Moreover, the Educational Department of the JDC in Paris has stressed repeatedly their need of this material for distribution in Western Europe. This request from the JDC carries special weight because of the generous help we have been receiving from their Paris offices during the two years when we were not permitted to touch the Baltic collection. It also should be taken into consideration that more than 12,000 of the original 30,000 books of this collection were shipped to Israel to various Yeshivot.

During the meeting of June 4th a motion duly made and seconded that the remaining 16,346 items of the Baltic collection be distributed on the same principle as all previous collections (40% to Israel, 40% to the Western hemisphere, and 20% to all other countries) was carried by a vote of 7 to 3 with 3 abstentions.

In view of the importance of the matter we wish to submit this vote to all members of the Board. Will you kindly cast your vote on the enclosed card.

Hannah Arendt

June 12, 1951

WJC E10

116015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Directors
FROM: Hannah Arendt

Re: Disposition of 18 cases containing about 450 ceremonial objects from Frankfort/M

It is very likely that the claim of JRSO for these objects formerly belonging to the Jewish Museum in Frankfort/M will be decided upon during the next few months. According to a decision of the Board of Directors, on December 21, 1950, 40% of this material will go to Israel, 40% to the Western hemisphere and 20% to other countries.

The discussion on June 4th centered on the request entered by the Advisory Committee that this time the procedure be reversed and that some member of the Advisory Committee from America, preferably Dr. Guido Schoenberger, who was formally in charge of this collection, be given access to the material first, to make the selection for the United States.

During the discussion, the following was pointed out:

1. There are six Jewish museums in this country. The museum in New York alone has an average of 80,000 visitors per year. The remnants of the Frankfort collection, of which photographs were made available to the Advisory Committee, would enhance the value of the American museum collections as no other distribution before, whereas it would only add similar items to the collection which Bezalel already has.
2. The Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem has at least ten times the number of really old Jewish ceremonial objects (i.e. dating back to the early 18th century or older) than the six American institutions together.
3. The selection made by Dr. Narkiss from the original 7,000 ceremonial objects turned over to JCR had left very few real museum pieces for countries outside of Israel. As a result of Dr. Narkiss' classification of objects according to museum and synagogue use, Israel received a disproportionately large share of museum objects, whereas the Western hemisphere received a disproportionately large share of synagogue objects.

116016

WJC E10

The motion introduced by Professor Baron and duly seconded, confirming the Board's decision of December 21, 1950, and moving that the whole selection be made by a representative of the American Advisory Committee who knows enough about the needs of Israel to take these into consideration, was carried -- Dr. Federbush opposing and Dr. Blattberg abstaining. Dr. Halpern of the Jewish Agency supported the motion.

A second motion unanimously adopted decided to submit this decision to all members of the Board.

Kindly cast your vote on the enclosed card.

Samuel H. Hays

June 12, 1951

WJC E10

116017

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Directors & the Advisory Committee
FROM: Hannah Arendt, Executive Secretary

July 11, 1951

Re: Mail vote on the Baltic Collection and the Frankfort Ceremonial objects.

This is to inform you of the outcome of the vote on the disposition of these two collections. In both cases the vote of the joint meeting of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee of June 4, 1951 was confirmed.

By a vote of 12 to 5 and one abstention, it was decided to distribute the Baltic Collection 40% to Israel, 40% to the Western hemisphere and 20% to all other countries.

By a vote of 11 to 6 and one abstention, it was decided to give first choice to United States museums in the selection of the ceremonial objects from the Frankfort collection. This collection is to be distributed 40% to the United States, 40% to Israel and 20% to other countries. According to a decision of the Board of Directors of December 21, 1950, special consideration should be given to Great Britain in distributing the 20%.

This decision is binding only for museum pieces in the Frankfort collection. Synagogue pieces, which at this moment are also among these items, will be subject to claim from the Frankfort Jewish community. All synagogue objects which are not claimed by the Frankfort Jewish community will be distributed among Israeli congregations.

Hannah Arendt

WJC E10

116018

September 26, 1951.

Dr. Hannah Arendt, Secretary
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
184 Broadway
New York City

Dear Dr. Arendt:

I was very glad to learn from our telephone conversation of today that there are still some books available in Germany, a portion of which can be directed to Latin America.

May I suggest that about 1,000 of these books be shipped to Chile and Brazil. The Jewish Community of Chile has not received any allocation up to date, and I think that it would therefore be fair to give them about 750 books. About 250 books should be sent to Brazil. The recipients in these two countries are as follows:

- 1) Mr. Robert Levy, Secretary General
Comite Representativo de la Colectividad Israelita
de Chile
Tarapaca 368
Santiago, Chile
- 2) Congregacion Israelita Paulista
Sao Paulo, Brazil

I would greatly appreciate your communicating with the aforementioned recipients in order to make the final arrangements.

With kindest regards and best wishes for a very happy new year,
I am

Sincerely yours,

Wolf Hattberg

WB/HJK

WPC E10

116019

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Members of the Corporation

Agudas Israel World Organization
 Alliance Israelite Universelle
 American Jewish Committee
 American Jewish Joint
 Distribution Committee
 Anglo-Jewish Association
 Board of Deputies of British Jews

Commission on European Jewish Cultural
 Reconstruction
 Committee on Restoration of Continental
 Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives
 Conseil Representatif des Juifs de France
 Council of Jews from Germany
 The Hebrew University

Interessenvertretung der jüdischen
 Gemeinden und Kultusvereinigungen
 in der US Zone
 Jewish Agency for Palestine
 Synagogue Council of America
 World Jewish Congress

President

SALO W. BARON

Chairman, Board of Directors

JEROME MICHAEL

Vice-Presidents

LEO BAECK
 SIMON FEDERBUSCH
 GERSHOM SCHOLEM
 ALAN M. STROOCK

Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

MAX GRUENEWALD

Executive Secretary

HANNAH ARENDT

August 15, 1951

Dr. Wolf Blattberg
 World Jewish Congress
 15 East 84 Street
 New York, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Blattberg:

I am sorry but the people in Cuba didn't receive any books because they didn't reply to my letter of April 26th asking them which kinds of books they would like to have. We even sent them an order form which they never returned.

I also have bad news for you concerning ceremonial objects for Mexico. We are now, at the last stage of our activities, shipping all cases abroad. I cannot include, in this last shipment, the case with ceremonial objects for Mexico because, not only did I not receive a check covering our shipping expenses, but they didn't even return the agreement to us which each institution must sign, as you know, before allocations can be made.

I am, therefore, making arrangements to have these objects distributed in the United States.

Sincerely yours,



Hannah Arendt
 Executive Secretary

ha/es

116020

WJC E10

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

MEMORANDUM

To: The Members of the Board of Directors
From: Hannah Arendt

February 8, 1952

This is to inform you that JRSO has received title to 20 paintings which formerly belonged to one of the Old Age Houses of the Rothschilds in Germany. These paintings consist of:

17 portraits of the Rothschild family or of persons connected with the Old Age Home, which should be treated as a unit.

3 paintings of religious scenes which do not belong to this collection of portraits.

Since it has been our policy to give all art collections which should be treated as a unit to Israel, I would suggest that the 17 paintings of the portrait collection be shipped to Israel, with the proviso that the collection be kept intact in one of the Israeli museums.

Jewish museums in the United States, specifically the Jewish Museum in New York and the Museum in Cincinnati, have shown great interest in and eagerness for these paintings. The Jewish Museum is especially interested in the three paintings of religious scenes.

Since Israel has already received a great number of non-Jewish paintings and will also receive this collection of portraits, I would suggest that the paintings which do not belong to the unit be transferred to the United States for distribution between the Jewish Museum in New York and the Museum in Cincinnati.

Please indicate your vote on the enclosed post card and return at your early convenience.

Signed Hannah Arendt
Executive Secretary

WJC E10

116021

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee
From: Hannah Arendt

After we closed our activities on March 15th, I prepared the enclosed statistics in order to give you an overall report of the activities of the corporation from its beginnings, in October 1947, until March 1952. The entire period, however, is covered only by the Financial Report (Sheet No. 4) because recovery and redistribution of cultural treasures did not start before 1949.

Sheet No. 1 reports the number of books recovered and redistributed. These books were distributed either directly from Germany, sometimes via Paris, or through the New York depot, which was in charge of distribution to libraries in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Africa and Australia. Most of the periodicals and rare books were shipped from New York.

The number of books distributed directly from Europe is given in the first or top figure, whereas the second figure indicates the number of items shipped from New York. The two figures together constitute the total of recovered items in each of the various categories.

Sheet No. 2 reports the distribution of books to libraries in the United States. This sheet gives a more detailed account and corresponds to the United States figure on Sheet No. 1.

Monthly or bi-monthly reports are available for the whole period and these contain similar, though slightly more detailed breakdowns into categories.

Sheet No. 3 shows the world distribution of ceremonial objects and Torah Scrolls, including scrap metal, fragments of objects and scrolls and scrolls which had to be buried.

All Torah Scrolls were distributed through the JDC offices in Paris, with the exception of 110, which came to this country. The Synagogue Council of America is in charge of their distribution.

Of the ceremonial objects, all museum objects, with the exception of those that went to Israel, were distributed by our New York depot. Synagogue objects for Western Europe were distributed by the JDC offices in Paris.

No special report for the distribution of museum and synagogue objects in the United States is included because this part of our operations was completed in 1950 and reported in the annual statement for that year.

WJC E10

116022

MEMORANDUM (CONTINUED)

Sheet No. 4 covers the financial report from October 1947 to March 15, 1952. Time periods are arranged in accordance with the Annual Meetings, at which financial reports were submitted. Figures reported under A.1. of Disbursements cover all administrative expenses; figures under A.2. include freight and insurance to New York as well as expenses incurred in connection with the handling of books and ceremonial objects in the New York depots. The insurance figures under A.4. cover insurance in New York, such as fire insurance for our book depot and workmen's compensation insurance for the New York staff.

Expenses for individual claimants and the Baltic collection are reported separately because a separate budget was allocated for this operation. This figure is not final. A final bill from the JDC offices in Paris, which were in charge of restitution and reallocation, is still outstanding.

One of the shortcomings of the enclosed statistics is that we were unable to indicate the monetary value of these treasures. We can however report the amounts for which we insured our recoveries on their trips around the world, should the Board of Directors need this information.

Hannah Arendt
Secretary

July, 1952

WJC ELO

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C9

Cult Dresden

10/23/52

Canadian Jewish Congress Puts Memorial Labels in Books Recovered from Germany

18.
(5-4)

The Canadian Jewish Congress' special committee in charge of distribution of books received from the collection which was recovered in Germany after the war has placed a label in every book to indicate its origin and also to serve as a memorial. The text on the sticker reads: "This book was once the property of a Jew, victim of the Great Massacre in Europe. The Nazis who seized this book eventually destroyed the owner. It has been recovered by the Jewish people, and reverently placed in this institution by the Canadian Jewish Congress, as a memorial to those who gave their lives for the Sanctification of the Holy Name."

WJC E10

116024

| | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Stammeskunde der Juden | Sigmund Feist | Leipzig 1925 |
| 2. Mansaryk und das Judentum | Dr.E.Rychnovsky | Prag 1931 |
| 3. Proben zur jüd. Literatur | Dr.M.Doctor | Leipzig 1919 |
| 4. Jüdischer Almanach | | |
| 5. Jüdische Geheimgesetze ? | Dr.H.L.Strack | Berlin 1920 |
| 6. Geschichte des jüd. Volkes | Dr. s.Bäck | Frankfurt 1906 |
| 7. Das Judentum | Dr.Wilh. Erbt | Detmold 1921 |
| 8. Advantspredigten | Kardinal Faulhaber | München 1933 |
| 9. Das Judentum und seine Umwelt | Prf.M.Guttman | Berlin 1927 |
| 10. Das Rassenproblem | Dr. I.Zollschau | Wien 1911 |
| 11. Die Rassenmerkmale der Juden | Dr.J.Fischberg | München 1913 |
| 12. Juden in Frankreich | H.Ballensiefer | Berlin 1939 |
| 13. Rasse und Politik | Prof.Dr.J.Goldstein | Schlüchtern 1920 |
| 14. Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt/Main, 1150-1824 | Vorst.isr.Gemeinde | Frankfurt 1927 |
| 15. Das Rätsel des jüd. Erfolges | Roderich-Stoltheim | Leipzig 1928 |
| 16. Krost für die Juden | J.F.Rutherford | 1925 |
| 17. Heine als Dichter des Judentums | Georg J.Plotke | |
| 18. Der Talmud | Jacob Fromer | Berlin 1920 |
| 19. Religiöse Strömungen | Dr.M.Cahn | Frankf. 1912 |
| 20. Israel. und jüd. Geschichte | Wellhausen | Berlin 1914 |
| 21. Die Jüdische Weltpest | Hermann Essee | München 1939 |

Forwarding above books to N.I.R. library. The books were taken from the Gestapo library in Bremen.

116025

WJCE 10

June 3, 1953

To: Dr. A. Steinberg - Buenos Aires, Argentine

From: W. Blattberg

It is now almost two years since books from the stocks rescued in Germany were sent to the Jewish communities of Latin America by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc., upon the initiative and through the efforts of our Department. These books covered all fields of Jewish literature, such as Rabbinics, secular books in Hebrew and Yiddish, Judaica in German and other European languages, rare books, and periodicals.

During all this time I was in constant communication with the recipients of the books in regard to their distribution, and, in accordance with our established policy, urged them to keep these books as a separate unit, to integrate them into Jewish libraries wherever such may exist, and to establish new libraries in those places where none existed heretofore.

I should like to supply you the following information on the final disposal of the books on the basis of reports which I received from the respective Communities. The information relates both to the countries which you are about to visit and to those not included in your itinerary:

ARGENTINE - Received over 5,000 books, among them many valuable volumes, and 121 rare books. The recipient was the DAIA. It was decided to distribute these books among those libraries and cultural institutions in that country where, in DAIA's opinion, they would prove most useful. According to information which I received recently from Dr. M. Goldmann, a public ceremony and exhibition of some specimens of the books was scheduled to be held prior to their distribution. As the ceremony was scheduled for the time when Israel's fifth anniversary was celebrated, it was postponed for a while, at the request of Israel's Minister to Argentine. I hope you will have the opportunity of taking part in the celebration and pointing out the role played by the Cultural Department in bringing about the shipment of these books to the Argentine Jewish community.

BOLIVIA - Received 1,300 books, which were shipped to the Circulo Israelita. Since the Circulo Israelita was then completing its own new building, they set aside a special room for these books, where they are kept as a community library.

WJC EK

116026

(To: Dr. A. Steinberg - Buenos Aires
(From: W. Blattberg)

June 3, 1953

BRAZIL - Received 2,500 books which were shipped to the Confederacao das Entidades Representativas da Colectividade Israelita do Brasil. The Executive of the Confederacao, at its meeting of March 4, 1953, decided to distribute the books equally between the Jewish Federation in Rio and that in Sao Paulo, with the provision that the books constitute a nucleus of a central library to be established by both Federations. The decision explicitly states that the books must be at the disposal of the entire Jewish community. Information as to the disposal of the books was sent to me by Dr. Winterstein.

CHILE - Received 1,250 books which, in agreement with the Jewish community there, were shipped to the Federacion Sionista De Chile. The reason for turning over the books to the Federacion was that they already had a library, and the new books were included therein. Besides, the cultural life of the community is concentrated in the Federacion Sionista.

COSTA RICA - Received 450 books, a number which by far exceeds their proportionate share. This was done because the Costa Rica community showed exceptional interest in the books. The shipment was addressed to the Central Israelita Sionista, and the books were placed in a special room at the Jewish Center.

ECUADOR - Received 225 books - partly in the German language - at the express wish of the community in that country. The recipient was Asocia-cion De Beneficencia Israelita in Quito.

MEXICO - Its allotment was over 800 books, but a considerable number of them are very valuable. The books were shipped to the Comite Central Israelita de Mexico, which discussed the question of their distribution at several meetings. The problem was also dealt with in the Yiddish press of Mexico. The Comite Central Israelita finally decided not to distribute the books among the existent libraries, but to establish a special community library. The Comite Central Israelita even engaged a special librarian for this purpose. This information came to me from the WJC office in Mexico City.

PERU - Received 550 books, which were shipped to the Sociedad Union Israelita Del Peru. On receipt of the books the Sociedad arranged a great public celebration.

URUGUAY - Received 1,670 books, which were sent to the Comunidad Israelita De Montevideo. The Comunidad placed the books in its existing Community Library.

116027

WJC E10

(To: Dr. A. Steinberg - Buenos Aires
From: W. Blattberg)

June 3, 1953

VENEZUELA - Received 460 books, which were sent to the Union Israelita De Caracas. The books were placed by the Union in its Peretz Library.

As is evident from the foregoing, not all Jewish communities in Latin America received books, although all of them were approached by this Department, and urged to file applications. As you well know, we felt that only those communities which showed interest in the books and gave some undertakings for their proper use should receive them. Communities from which no proper response was received had, therefore, to be omitted.

On submitting this information, I should like to request you to look into the matter of these books, their disposal and utilization in all the communities which you will visit, and to please give them such instructions and advice as you deem appropriate. Apart from their general cultural significance, the books have also a special sentimental value, inasmuch as they represent the spiritual heritage of the annihilated Jewish Communities of Europe. If properly used, the books could, undoubtedly, be a considerable cultural factor in the life of the respective communities.

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WJC E10

116028

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Members of the Corporation

Agudas Israel World Organization
Alliance Israelite Universelle
American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee
Anglo-Jewish Association
Board of Deputies of British Jews

Commission on European Jewish Cultural
Reconstruction
Committee on Restoration of Continental
Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives
Conseil Representatif des Juifs de France
Council of Jews from Germany
The Hebrew University

Interessenvertretung der jüdischen
Gemeinden und Kultusvereinigungen
in der US Zone
Jewish Agency for Palestine
Synagogue Council of America
World Jewish Congress

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING TO BE FOLLOWED BY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

SALO W. BARON

Chairman,

Board of Directors

JEROME MICHAEL

Vice-Presidents

LEO BAECK
SIMON FEDERBUSCH
MAX GRUENEWALD
GERSHOM SCHOLEM
ALAN M. STROOCK

Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

HANNAH ARENDT

When at its last Annual meeting, in December 1951, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction decided to suspend its activities, the Board of Directors foresaw the possibility that the organization might have to "be reactivated after two or three years" and that, although there was no reason at the time to keep the organization "active," it had to be kept "alive."

It seems that now the time has come to revise the decision of the Board of December 1951 because Jewish Cultural Reconstruction is likely to be called upon to render still another major service to the cultural institutions of the Jewish communities in the world.

You will remember that almost since the beginning of our activities, we deemed it essential to microfilm Hebrew manuscripts and Jewish documents in European libraries and archives, owned by Jewish and non-Jewish institutions alike. Previous attempts to get the necessary funds to carry out this project, which would include all Western European countries, had not been successful, and this was the only reason why we had to give up the project for the time being.

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction through its president and its secretary, recently applied for funds for this project to the Conference on Material Claims, and the chances that this application will be granted are good. It is for the purpose of planning and organizing the microfilming project that we are calling the Annual meeting, to be followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors.

Since the last meeting did not reelect its officers for the years of suspended activities, an election of directors and officers will be on the agenda of the Annual meeting. The chief item on the agenda of the Board of Directors' meeting, following the Annual meeting, will be discussion of the microfilm project, the formation of a new Advisory Committee for this purpose, and other matters closely connected with it.

116029

WJC E10

NOTICE OF ANNUAL AND BOARD MEETINGS (2)

Please take notice that an Annual meeting of the members of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. will take place on Monday, April 5, at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon, in the offices of Professor Salo W. Baron, Columbia University, Fayerweather Hall, room 611, New York City.

You are invited to designate your representative for next year in advance. Each member organization is entitled to be represented by two directors.

In accordance with the provisions of the By-Laws, each member of the corporation shall be deemed present if it is represented in person or by proxy by one representative.

The Annual meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the newly elected Board of Directors.

In view of the importance of the decisions to be made at this meeting, members are requested to make every effort to attend. Please return the enclosed response card upon receipt.



Hannah Arendt
Secretary.

March 10, 1954.

WSC E10

116030

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 5, 1954

Pursuant to a notice dated March 10, 1954, copy of which precedes these minutes, a meeting of the Board of Directors was held at 5:00 P.M., on April 5, 1954, at Professor Baron's office, Columbia University, New York City.

The following members were present: Dr. Wolf Blattberg, S. Cherniak, Rabbi Simon Federbush, Marcel Franco, Dr. Solomon Goldsmith, Dr. Max Gruenewald, Leo Guzik, Dr. Ben Halpern, Dr. E. Y. Kutscher (proxy for Dr. Scholem), David Rosenstein, Dr. Simon Segal, Dr. Judah J. Shapiro (proxy), Eugene Weill. Also attending: Saul Kagan of JRSO.

Professor Salo W. Baron, President, acted as Chairman and Dr. Hannah Arendt as Secretary of the meeting.

Professor Baron opened the meeting with a report on the progress made in those matters which were left unfinished when activities were suspended in March 1952:

1. Decrees. Following negotiations by Hannah Arendt in 1952, decrees have thus far been granted by Bavaria and Wurtemberg-Baden, in addition to Hessen. Berlin, in spite of the efforts of Dr. Wormann, refused to issue a similar decree. This means that with the exception of Berlin, all Laender of the American zone in Germany have issued decrees.

In the summer of 1952 Professor Baron negotiated with the federal government and with the Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Education of the German Laender in Bonn in order to persuade them either to issue a federal law or decrees in all German Laender which should be modelled after the decrees in the American zone. Dr. Schoenfeldt of JRSO is following up these negotiations and we are still hoping for favorable results.

2. Findings. Material handed over after suspension of activities was shipped to Israel. Should more findings turn up, it may be desirable to give priority to European Jewish communities.

New findings may very well be a by-product of the work being done in connection with the microfilm project.

3. History of JCR. Professor Baron has commissioned Zvi Ankori, a student of Columbia University, to work under his and Dr. Arendt's guidance on a history of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which had been decided upon by the Board of Directors at the last meeting. It is hoped that this report will be finished during the current year.

Upon motion made by Dr. Federbush and duly seconded, it was decided to dedicate this volume to the memory of Professor Jerome Michael.

After Professor Baron's report, the following matters were discussed:

1. Since the Interessenvertretung der juedischen Gemeinden und Kultusvereinigungen in der US Zone no longer exists, it was decided to invite the Zentralrat to become a member of the corporation in its place.

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2. Professor Baron raised the question of JCR membership in the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and said that he personally would be opposed to it because all our member organizations, with the exception of the Hebrew University, are members.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, it was decided to table decision on this question.

3. Professor Baron reported on the microfilm project. He said that our application to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany calls for \$71,000 per year for a period of three years and covers all Western European countries. Two negatives, one to be deposited in the United States and the other in Israel, are contemplated.

In view of the fact that other organizations are also contemplating microfilm projects, duplication of effort must be avoided.

a. Israel Ministry of Education. In his letter to Professor Baron, Professor Scholem brought the following to the attention of the meeting: "... the Institute of Hebrew Manuscripts at the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture has operated here for several years and representatives of both the Government and the Hebrew University -- and I am among them -- serve on its Board of Directors. Since the Institute's initiation it has succeeded in making microfilms and, to a smaller extent, also photostats of Hebrew manuscripts. The Institute is headed by Dr. Nehemia Aloni who has undertaken three trips abroad and visited France, Italy, Switzerland, Western Germany, Austria and Hungary. Up to date the Institute has accumulated microfilms of 2300 codices (comprising about 6000 works and among them all important ones from Western Germany, Austria and the Vatican Libraries) and 1500 fragments. Another 4000 codices (comprising about 10,000 works) and 6000 fragments have been selected for microfilming. In accordance with the Institute's terms of reference only manuscripts proper, but no archival material, have been included. Dr. Aloni has succeeded in finding many private collections and in also persuading their owners to have their items photographed. Unfortunately the progress and the scope of the activity is hampered by lack of foreign currency. Nevertheless the work of the Institute is progressing well and it already renders valuable services to scholars. It is thus desirable or even essential that close cooperation between the Institute and J.C.R. will be established in connection with the project to photograph manuscripts. The Institute is of course ready to participate in any constructive plan."

b. Yad va-Shem and the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) are interested in the "hurban" literature. They too have submitted an application to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and will start work if and when they get funds.

c. The National Archives in Jerusalem, headed by Dr. Bein and Dr. Herlitz, are also interested in microfilming.

However, the problem should not be overrated. Not more than an estimated 20,000-30,000 pages of manuscripts out of an estimated total of one million pages of manuscripts and documents, i.e. 2%-3%, could possibly be duplicated.

Professor Scholem, pointing out that the Israeli group is "greatly interested in having the valuable collections in the United States, too, included in the project," submitted to the Board of Directors the following resolution:

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"The Board of Directors resolves that the project of microfilming of Hebrew manuscripts and Jewish documents throughout the world should be undertaken in coordination with the Institute of Hebrew Manuscripts at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Jerusalem."

It was decided that all efforts should be closely coordinated and that no photostats should be made because they are too expensive. The feeling of the Board was that, while we wish to include the whole world in our project, we must first start with Europe and may later decide to expand the work. Professor Baron pointed out that no money from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany can be used for work other than in Europe. Dr. Simon Segal pointed out that Austria too has to be left out.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the following resolution was adopted:

The project of microfilming manuscripts and documents of Jewish interest throughout the world should be undertaken in cooperation with those other organizations which are interested and working in this field.

The motion was adopted unanimously, Dr. Kutscher abstaining for technical reasons.

Dr. Kutscher proposed that rare books be included in the microfilm project. It was felt, however, that it would not be wise to include these because many organizations have applied to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany for funds to republish books that are out of print.

Professor Baron asked for and was given authority to turn down any reduced appropriation by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims, if he felt that such appropriation was too small to embark upon the work and do it properly and adequately.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the President was empowered to appoint a new Advisory Committee to assist us in carrying out the microfilm project.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Arendt
Hannah Arendt
Secretary.

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

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 Anglo-Jewish Association
 Board of Deputies of British Jews

Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
 Committee on Restoration of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives
 Conseil Representatif des Juifs de France
 Council of Jews from Germany
 The Hebrew University

Interessenvertretung der jüdischen Gemeinden und Kultusvereinigungen in der US Zone
 Jewish Agency for Palestine
 Synagogue Council of America
 World Jewish Congress

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Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

HANNAH ARENDT

September 10, 1954

Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

270 Madison Avenue

New York 16, N. Y.

Attention: Dr. J.J. Shapiro

Following a decision of the Board of Directors of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, I am resubmitting, on behalf of the Board, an application for a microfilm project, as outlined in the enclosed memorandum.

In view of recent developments and appropriations granted by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims to other organizations, we have changed our original project in the following respects:

1. We shall exclude all archival material relating to the period after 1933 on the assumption that this era will be covered by the undertaking of the Yed Veshem and YIVO.
2. We shall microfilm only such Hebrew manuscripts which will not duplicate the task undertaken by the Israeli Ministry of Education. We are prepared to microfilm Jewish manuscripts in languages other than Hebrew, such as Yiddish, Ladino, Arabic and all European languages.
3. Because of these restrictions, we were able to reduce our budget from \$213,300.00 to \$180,000.00 for a period of three years.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to reduce this budget any further because the expenses for experts as well as traveling and overhead expenses will remain almost the same and the expenses for microfilming are relatively small, especially

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September 10, 1954

Conference on Jewish Material Claims (2)

on large orders, so that even here the fact that we will micro-film a hundred thousand pages a year less will be of no great financial importance.

Neither were we able to reduce the three year period because we still have to work in all the countries of Western Europe. We contemplate working in one or two countries at a time and hope to cover all the libraries in Germany and Austria during the first year. The subsequent two years will be devoted to all other European countries west of the Iron Curtain.

Our budget of \$60,000.00 per year is based upon the expenses incurred on a pilot study covering the archives of the Jewish community of Worms as well as various bids and estimates, details of which you will find on page 10 of the enclosed memorandum.

Sincerely yours,

Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt
Secretary

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PROJECT TO MICROFILM JEWISH DOCUMENTS AND MANUSCRIPTS
IN EUROPEAN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

SUBMITTED BY

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 BROADWAY NEW YORK 23, N.Y.

DR. HANNAH ARENDT

SECRETARY.

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PROJECT TO MICROFILM JEWISH DOCUMENTS AND MANUSCRIPTS
IN EUROPEAN LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

I

The importance of microfilms which can be deposited and studied anywhere and at any time and thus eliminate the dangers of physical destruction through war and neglect has by now been sufficiently recognized not to need any further argumentation. The new dangers and the new safeguards became particularly evident in the recent losses in Germany and Austria caused by the threefold onslaught: the Nazi regime, the war and the Russian occupation. While we are without reliable information about the present state of affairs in Eastern Europe, we know that the damage to archival material in Western European countries has been much greater than the loss of the manuscript collections of the great libraries.

This project is concerned with the microfilming of Jewish documents in Western European archives from the Middle Ages to 1933 as well as manuscripts which are not covered by the project of the Israeli Ministry of Education. This may include some Hebrew manuscript collections, but it applies primarily to manuscripts in languages other than Hebrew.

The microfilming of archival collections for historical and social research is of even greater importance than the microfilming of manuscripts. Manuscripts are frequently catalogued and sometimes reproduced in offset (as in the case of the famous manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud in Munich) but documents in archives are usually given much less attention. Many of them, especially those placed in the older but impoverished Jewish communities, are constantly being lost through natural causes and human neglect.

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The difficulties of this undertaking may be illustrated by the following observations of the present status of this material in Germany and Austria. (We mention these countries because, having worked for several years on the salvage and redistribution of Jewish cultural property looted by the Nazis, we have been able to gain some pertinent information. However, the same conditions, to a lesser or greater degree, prevail also in Italy, France, Holland and other countries of Jewish settlement.) For example, for the social and cultural history of nineteenth century German Jewry the loss of the Varnhagen archives, formerly part of the manuscript division of the Prussian State Library, would be very bad. It seems that this material never was returned from its cache in Silesia. It consisted chiefly of correspondence of the Romantic period and contained a large collection of letters between Jews -- including Jewish women -- who had just succeeded in entering the mainstream of German culture and their German contemporaries. An analogous uncertainty exists with respect to the Municipal Archives in Frankfort whose documents contained the story from the thirteenth century to our own time of this important Jewish community from which the House of Rothschild eventually emerged. As a matter of fact, Frankfort once boasted of the most important sources of interest for Jewish scholarship. It was famous for both its Jewish community and municipal archives, as well as for the Hebraica and Judaica division of its municipal library, the Jewish community

library and its Jewish museum, which was the most important in Central Europe. Only small portions of the treasures which once belonged to the Jews have been found; the Hebraica division of the municipal library seems to have been entirely lost and the Judaica division severely damaged.

The whereabouts of Section "W" of the Geheime Staatsarchiv in Berlin, an equally important document collection, is likewise uncertain. The primary sources for the history of emancipation of Prussian Jewry, including the famous Emancipation Edict of 1812, as well as a great many documents bearing upon the role of the Jews in their relationship between the Prussian State and other countries were once housed there. Less important perhaps for recent history, but very valuable for the later Middle Ages, were the municipal archives of Berlin, whose oldest document was dated 1295 and which contained a list of all Jewish citizens in 1208. Even the private archives of the Hohenzollern dynasty contained much valuable material for Prussian and world Jewish history.

On the other hand, we have been informed that the Cologne Municipal Archives managed to save their documents, including the thirteenth century Papal Bulls relating to Jews and the imperial privileges granted them from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. The Bavarian State Library in Munich may have lost some of its documentary material; a recent tentative inventory yielded an estimate of approximately one hundred thousand documents relating to the history of Bavarian Jews.

Thanks to the courage of the museum's director, the entire Worms

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Jewish community archive was saved. The Jewish division of the Municipal Archives also seems intact. Like Cologne, the Worms settlement may date back to the Roman Empire and we have an unbroken record of it since the year 1,000. Until the Nazis destroyed it in 1938, Jews from all over the world used to make pilgrimages to its synagogue, whose foundation stones were laid in 1034 and where Rashi, the great theologian who influenced all of medieval rabbinic literature, lived in the eleventh century. According to an old legend, its famous prayer book of 1275 was never removed from the lectern until the two sacred volumes had to be saved from the Nazi storm troopers. Because of the special importance of Worms for Jewish history and piety, our organization has undertaken the microfilming of its archives as a kind of pilot study for the larger project we have had in mind from the beginning.

We are not yet familiar with the present situation but we have reason to hope that the important collections of municipal and state archives in Vienna dating back to 1200 have survived and are again accessible. Some of these housed in the Vienna Justizpalast were irretrievably lost in the riots of 1927 and others were doubtless destroyed during World War II, but the Haus-Hof-und-Staatsarchiv, which contained many thousands of invaluable documents pertaining to Jewish history in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and other countries, seems to have salvaged the bulk of its collection. The same seems to hold true for such important provincial archives as those in Graz and Salzburg.

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II

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., by reason of its aims, composition and experience, seems to be in an excellent position to execute the present project as a natural sequence to its past activities. Since it was organized for the purpose of salvaging and recovering the cultural heritage of European Jewry after the war, the organization's Board of Directors felt that its aims would not be achieved without this last step.

Founded in 1947, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction is an offspring of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, which began to investigate the possible restoration of losses suffered by the Nazi occupation of Europe as far back as 1945. The Commission was exclusively a research body composed of leading Jewish scholars and educators in the United States who worked in close cooperation with their colleagues at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, scholars in England and other countries. From 1945 to 1947 the Research Fellows of the Commission prepared lists, supported by documentary evidence, of the chief Jewish cultural treasures and their whereabouts in pre-Hitler Europe. Without such lists there would not have been an intelligent guide to the identification of findings and the ascertaining of leases. The Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries,* compiled by the Commission, contains a description of all collections, both in Jewish and general institutions, as they existed prior to Nazi occupation and confiscation. Geographically, the List is limited to countries overrun by the Nazis or other Axis powers. Its sources were only partly printed material; considerable information was obtained from

* This pamphlet is out of print and only one copy is attached. (Enclosure A).

systematic interviews with several hundred European rabbis, scholars, educators and community leaders who now reside in the United States. Its 704 numbers present the first readily available reliable data in this field of scholarship.

Out of the Commission ultimately emerged our organization, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., a trusteeship corporation, incorporated (in 1947) under the laws of the State of New York. In some respects it has worked independently of and in some others as the cultural agent of the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization. The member organizations of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction are enumerated in attached Enclosure 1. Our finances have largely been contributed by the two operating agents of Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the American Joint Distribution Committee. Our members organizations are represented by a Board of Directors, listed on the attached Enclosure 2. We have also enjoyed the active cooperation of an excellent Advisory Committee composed of leading Jewish scholars in the United States (Enclosure 3). However, because of the different nature of our forthcoming activities and the different type of advice we shall need for them, this Committee will have to be reconstituted. At its last meeting, held on April 5, 1954, the Board of Directors authorized the President of the organization to appoint a new Advisory Committee with special qualifications for the new job.

During the years of our operation we succeeded in salvaging and distributing throughout the world more than 400,000 books, 1,100 Scrolls of Law and some 7,000 ceremonial and artistic objects. On the average, some forty percent of all materials went to Israel, another forty percent was distributed to libraries, museums, synagogues, etc. in the Western

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hemisphere and the rest was sent to Europe, South Africa, Australia and other countries. Not only were existing collections enriched, but a fine start was made towards the formation of new libraries in Johannesburg, Latin America and even in North American and Israeli communities.

What we propose now is to continue and conclude this effort to transplant the records of a tradition of almost two thousand years from Europe to the United States, Israel and other countries. The end of this great era may become the beginning of a new one without breaking the spiritual tradition which constitutes the true identity of a people.

III

The task of microfilming existing records, documents and manuscripts would be comparatively easy if one could decide simply to microfilm all those in endangered areas. However, this would result in such an overwhelming quantity of material that the whole procedure might turn out to be self-defeating. No scholar would be able to find his way through the data and most likely such unselected material would be committed to oblivion and neglect.

The problem of selection is in fact primary as far as archival material is concerned. Even wholesale microfilming of all extant manuscripts would not overwhelm us with material. The situation, however, is entirely different as far as the microfilming of archival material is concerned. This, as far as we know, has never been done on a large scale before, probably because of the problems involved in the selection. No printed catalogues of such material exist, and even the catalogues of

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archives themselves are often faulty and always incomplete. For two years (1950-52) we have tried systematically to ascertain not only what has survived of pre-Hitler documentary material, as described in our Tentative List, but we have also tried to find out about little known important holdings we had not been able to take into account before. Thanks to these efforts, we have been able to gather photostats or typewritten copies of many archival catalogues, especially in Austria, Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg, which will be of invaluable assistance in our task of selection. From these records it has become evident that we are confronted with millions of pages of documents, of which only a fraction, an estimated 800,000, are necessary for our purposes. We assume that roughly twice this amount will be sufficient for all Western European countries outside of Germany and Austria, or approximately 2,500,000 pages in all.

This selection, as distinguished from selecting manuscripts, can be done only in the archives themselves. Several teams of two or three experts who worked in German and Austrian (later in other European) archives before the war and are familiar with the material will have to travel from place to place. Local Jewish archivists and historians will be used wherever possible. Documents are more dispersed than manuscripts. A small town may have saved a few documents of great importance from its more glorious medieval past in its municipal archives; it is not likely to have any Hebrew manuscripts.

Microfilming has become by now so familiar and welcome to Central European librarians and archivists that it will be easy to get permission to microfilm the material. To be on the safe side we discussed these matters with leading German archivists and librarians and we have also tried it practically in the instance of the Worms Jewish as well as municipal archives.

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The disposition of the microfilms in various countries and libraries is a special problem which need not be discussed in full detail. Only a few libraries or institutions of higher learning will need complete copies of all the microfilms; many, on the other hand, will want their manuscript and documents divisions to fill their lacunae or to acquire copies for special research undertakings. An informal inquiry showed a very great and very diversified interest in the outcome of our project.

Once a negative is made, positives are easily and cheaply obtainable. Of course we would follow the suggestions of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims as far as their distribution is concerned. We propose to deposit one negative and one positive in an American library, and another in the Hebrew University Library in Jerusalem. Other positives will be placed in the leading Jewish libraries in the world. These details will be worked out when the project gets under way. From our experience we have no doubt that a library which wants this kind of material will be able and willing to cover the comparatively small cost for the development of positives.

Considering the cultural importance of microfilm enterprises the costs are very low. The bids in our files vary from 2.5 cents to 4 cents per exposure, depending on the extent of the order. An exposure covers one or two pages, based on the size of the page. In Germany it might be advisable to entrust the technical part of the entire project to "Microkopie" in Hamburg, which has branches in other central German cities and is the agent of University Microfilm in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We are not sure, however, that this will be feasible because in some instances the permission to microfilm might depend on giving the order to the microfilm services of the archives and libraries themselves. This was the case in the museum in Worms, where

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we had to accept a slightly higher price for the microfilming of their Jewish archives than we might have obtained from an outside firm because it was evident that otherwise the director would have been reluctant to cooperate. Only the negatives may have to be ordered from European firms. The positives can be obtained directly from University Microfilm, Ann Arbor, which charges a minimum of one sixth cent per foot. Our enclosed budget (Enclosure 4), which estimates the annual expenses for microfilming at \$28,000, is based on approximately 800,000 pages in one negative and three positives, so that the price of each exposure will be between $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents and 5 cents. This estimate includes a margin of 5 percent to 7 percent for expenses for postage and packaging which are not usually included in the bids.

The realization of the whole project will require some three years. This estimate is based partly on the time needed by experts to prepare the material to be microfilmed. The microfilming itself, according to the information we received, will take three to five months of each year. We believe that three experts will need eight to ten months of continuous work in German and Austrian archives alone. They will need two more years to complete the work in other Western countries outside the Iron Curtain.

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ENCLOSURE 1

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- American Jewish Committee
- American Joint Distribution Committee
- Anglo-Jewish Association
- Board of Deputies of British Jews
- Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
- Committee on Restoration of Continental Jewish Museums,
Libraries and Archives
- Conseil Representatif des Juifs de France
- Council of Jews from Germany
- The Hebrew University
- Jewish Agency for Palestine
- Synagogue Council of America
- World Jewish Congress

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ENCLOSURE 2

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

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Leo Baeck, Vice-President
Simon Federbusch, Vice-President
Max Gruenewald, Vice-President
Gershom Scholem, Vice-President
Alan M. Strock, Vice-President
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Bernard Heller
Barnett Janmer
E. Y. Kutscher
Isaac Lewin
Joseph H. Lookstein
Max Ogust
Oskar Rabinowicz
Cecil Roth
Alfred Rubens
Simon Segal
Eugène Weill
Jonah B. Wise

New York City
London
New York City
Milburn, N. J.
Jerusalem
New York City
New York City
New York City

Oxford, England
New York City
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New York City
London
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New York City
New York City
New York City
London
Oxford, England
Westminster, England
New York City
Paris
New York City

ENCLOSURE 3

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

OLD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Prof. Alexander Marx, Chairman

Dr. Samuel Belkin

Dr. Joshua Bloch

Mr. Abraham G. Duker

Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman

Dr. Louis Finkelstein

Dr. Nelson Glueck

Dr. Stephen S. Kayser

Dr. I. Edward Kiev, Secretary

Dr. Franz Landsberger

Rabbi Michael Munk

Dr. Abraham A. Neuman

Dr. David de Sola Pool

Dr. A. L. Sachar

Dr. Guido Schoenberger

Dr. Rachel Wischnitzer

Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

Yeshivah University, New York

New York Public Library

Yiddish Scientific Institute

Hebrew Theological College, Chicago

Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati

Jewish Museum, New York

Jewish Institute of Religion, New York

Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati

New York

Dropsie College, Philadelphia

New York

Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.

New York University

New York

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ENCLOSURE 4

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

TENTATIVE ANNUAL BUDGET

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Cost of Microfilming 800,000 Manuscript and Document Pages | \$28,000.00 |
| Salaries for Three Experts | 17,500.00 |
| Traveling Expenses | 7,500.00 |
| Clerical and Office Expenses | <u>7,000.00</u> |
| TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET | \$60,000.00 |

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

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GERSHOM SCHOLEM

ALAN M. STROOCK

Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

HANNAH ARENDT

September 10, 1954

Dear Board Member:

I am enclosing a copy of the application for the micro-film project which we are resubmitting to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. This is in accordance with the decision of the Board members, the overwhelming majority of whom voted in favor of this step.

The text is substantially the same as in the original application, although somewhat abbreviated. There are a few important changes regarding the material to be micro-filmed and the budget, and these are summarized in the covering letter.

Unfortunately I was unable to submit to you the application in advance for your consideration because the deadline is September 15th and I just returned to New York and only now learned of the decision of the Board. However, we may be able to amend the text later, so that if you have any important changes, please let me hear from you at your early convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt
Secretary.

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Please return

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

LIST OF RECIPIENT LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Libraries

- ✓ American Jewish Historical Society, New York City
 - ✓ Baltimore Hebrew College
 - ✓ Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.
 - ✓ College of the City of New York
 - ✓ College of Jewish Studies, Chicago, Ill.
 - ✓ Columbia University, New York City
 - ✓ Dropsie College, Philadelphia, Pa.
 - ✓ Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
 - ✓ Hebrew Teachers College, Roxbury, Mass.
 - ✓ Hebrew Theological College, Chicago, Ill. (*Clifton Ave.*)
 - ✓ Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio
 - 01 ✓ Herzliah Hebrew Teachers Institute, New York City
 - Iowa University, Iowa City
 - 4 ✓ Jewish Community Library, Los Angeles, Cal.
 - 4 ✓ Jewish Institute of Religion, New York City *40 W 68*
 - 2 ✓ Jewish Teachers Seminary and People's University, New York City *122 1/2 Broadway*
 - 2 ✓ Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City
 - Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
 - Joint University, Nashville, Tenn.
 - Library of Congress
 - Mirrer Yeshiva, New York City
 - Ner Israel Rabbinical College, Baltimore, Md.
 - New York Public Library, New York City
 - New York University, New York City
 - Rabbinical College of Telshe, Cleveland, Ohio
 - 01 ✓ Rabbi Schneersohn Library of Lubawitz, Brooklyn, N.Y. *Bedford*
 - University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
 - University of Texas, Austin, Texas
 - Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
 - 4) ✓ Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, Brooklyn, N.Y. *186 1/2 Avenue*
 - 4) ✓ Yeshiva University, New York City *135 W 123*
 - 5) ✓ Yeshivath Torah Vodaath, Brooklyn, N.Y. *41 1/2 42*
 - 9) ✓ Yiddish Scientific Institute, New York City
 - 9) ✓ Zionist Archives, New York City
- ~~And others~~

In addition, about 40 Jewish parochial high schools and colleges received religious books necessary for their studies.

Ames & W. J.C.

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORSJANUARY 28, 1948

Pursuant to a notice dated January 21, 1948, a copy of which precedes the minutes of this meeting, a special meeting of the Board of Directors of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., was held on Wednesday afternoon, January 28, 1948, at the office of Professor S. W. Baron, 611 Fayerweather Hall, Columbia University. The following directors were present at the meeting: Messrs. Salo W. Baron, Jerome Michael, Ahron Opher, and Eugene Untermeyer. There were also present Messrs: Wolf Blattberg, Arthur A. C. Liverhant and Joshua Starr.

Mr. Michael, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, acted as chairman of the meeting and Mr. Starr acted as secretary of the meeting.

A quorum of the Board being present, the chairman called the meeting to order at 4:50 P. M.

The minutes of the last special preceding meeting of the Board of Directors, held on October 7, 1947, having been previously circulated among the Directors, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the reading of the minutes of that meeting was dispensed with, and they were approved as circulated.

At the chairman's request, Dr. Baron, the President of the Corporation, reported that applications for membership had been received from two organizations. Dr. Baron presented a letter, dated October 22, 1947, signed by Jacob Rosenheim, President of Agudas Israel World Organization, which reads as follows: " We beg to propose the inclusion of our organization into the membership of your commission, as we also belong to the Jewish Restitution Commission, and are co-signers of their memorandum of October 15th to General Clay."

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board adopted a resolution admitting the Agudas Israel World Organization as a member of the Corporation. The Executive Secretary was directed to inform the Agudas Israel of this action and to advise them of the understanding that members shall conduct all activities falling within the program of the Corporation through the latter.

Dr. Baron then presented the application of the Restoration Committee of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives of London. He briefly reviewed the history and activities of this Committee.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board adopted a resolution admitting the Restoration Committee of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries and Archives of London to membership in the Corporation. The Executive Secretary was directed to notify the Committee of this action.

At the chairman's request, Mr. Liverhant reported on the work and the problems of the Jewish Restitution Commission. The Commission had proceeded on the understanding that General Clay would permit that organization to work in Germany if it were approved by the Departments of State and the Army. The Restitution Law for the U. S. Zone in Germany was promulgated last November. Although the law does not name the successor agency to heirless and unidentifiable Jewish property, there was

reason to expect that the Jewish Restitution Commission would be recognized as the successor organization by the implementing regulations. However, objections to the recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission had been raised by the Department of the Army, and efforts were still in progress with a view to achieving recognition. The chairman asked whether in view of the opposition to the Commission it might not be advisable for Jewish Cultural Reconstruction to proceed independently with respect to cultural treasures. He requested that the Jewish Restitution Commission bear this possibility in mind.

The chairman called upon Dr. Baron to report on the prospects of sending a mission to Europe. Dr. Baron reported that pursuant to action taken at a prior meeting of the Board, the special committee on mission personnel had met. The sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Baron, Michael and Schwarz, had discussed the personnel that would be needed following the recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission. In view of the delay, it seemed advisable first to arrange for a military permit for Mr. Starr as the first member of the mission. The JDC had undertaken to obtain the permit. Dr. Baron further reported that a preliminary draft of the terms of reference of the mission had been drawn up, and read the draft. Dr. Baron's report was approved by the meeting, and upon motion duly made and seconded, the aforementioned sub-committee was empowered to fix the terms of reference of the mission as well as to appoint the necessary personnel at the proper time.

In the course of the discussion regarding the contacts to be established by the members of the mission, Rabbi Opher informed the meeting that the Synagogue Council had a representative who was stationed in Germany serving as liaison between the resident communities and AMG. Mr. Blattberg stated that the World Jewish Congress maintained a representative in Paris accredited to UNESCO.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was duly adjourned at 5:40 P. M.

Joshua Starr
Executive Secretary

116055

January 30, 1948

To: *S. K. Bowditch*

From: Dr. Blattberg

Re: A meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.,
held on January 28, 1948.

At the meeting it was decided to admit as members of the corporation - 1. The Agudah 2. The Restoration Committee of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries, and Archives in London, an affiliate of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Society. The admission of this organization was deemed useful with a view to extending the work of the corporation to the British zone. During the discussion the question was raised whether, in view of the deadlock of the Restitution Commission in its efforts to obtain official recognition, it would not be advisable to start independent action by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. I was strongly in favor of such a turn in our policy.

Since without recognition no mission can be sent to Germany, and it is generally felt that something should be done, it was decided to send, now, Dr. Starr for exploratory work and also, as far as possible, for contacting governmental agencies and Jewish communities. Dr. Starr will go under the auspices of the Joint Distribution Committee which already applied for a military permit for him. It is hoped that he will be able to proceed shortly to Germany.

WJC E 10

Cul. Dept - Jew Cult Records to [unclear]

MEMO:

February 4, 1948

To: Members of Office Committee
From: Dr. Federbush

Re Conference with Dr. ^{Card} Joshua Starr of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Commission Inc. on February 2, 1948

At a conference held in my office with Dr. Joshua Starr prior to his departure for Germany on behalf of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc., we discussed matters connected with his mission to Germany.

During the discussion, it became obvious that speedy action is imperative in order to save the cultural treasures now stored in Germany. We also agreed that it will be necessary to proceed with the legal recognition and formation of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. should the recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission be further delayed.

In view of General Clay's favorable attitude towards the recovery of Jewish cultural property, I advised Dr. Starr to make all the necessary arrangements for immediately taking possession of part of the books and other cultural objects even before the formal recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission.

We discussed also the question of the Jewish library from Italy which has not yet been returned. According to Rabbi Prato, in a letter to us, these books are indispensable for the normal work of the Rabbinical College in Rome. Dr. Starr promised to make every effort to speed up the shipment of these books to Italy.

Finally, Dr. Starr was also requested to prepare the ground for the arrival of at least two more members of the mission, one of whom should be Dr. Seeligmann, librarian of the Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam, on behalf of the W. J. C., as I previously proposed, and one delegate to be appointed by the Hebrew University. This delegation should be joined by a team of people on the spot who will assist them in their work.

3944/2-4-48/30
Cul. 5087/WB:FS

116056

WSC E10

2 / 5 / 1948

About the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.

4.
(3-3) At a meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. on January 28, at which Dr. Blattberg represented the WJC, it was decided to admit two new members, the Agudah and the Restoration Committee of Continental Jewish Museums, Libraries, and Archives of London. The membership of the latter organization may be useful in case the work of the corporation is to be extended to the British Zone.

The WJC Office Committee, at its session of January 28, decided to advocate that separate recognition by the American Administration be sought by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. if no decision concerning the recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission should be obtained by February 15.

116057

WJC E10

2/13/1948

Emissary of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. Confers with Dr. Federbush before his Departure

4.
(3-3) On February 2, Dr. Federbush conferred with Dr. Joshua Starr prior to the latter's departure for Germany on behalf of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. It was agreed that speedy action was imperative to save the cultural treasures now in Germany. In view of General Clay's favourable attitude toward the recovery of Jewish cultural property, Dr. Federbush advised Dr. Starr to make all necessary arrangements for immediately taking possession of part of the books and other cultural objects even before the formal recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission. It was also agreed that Dr. Starr would make every effort to speed up the shipment of the books of the Italian Jewish libraries back to Italy. Dr. Starr will prepare the ground for the arrival of two more members of the mission, one of whom will be Dr. Seeligmann, librarian of the Rosentaliana Library in Amsterdam for the WJC.

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WJC E10

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 5-7826

American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Conference
American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee

Members of the Corporation

Board of Deputies of British Jews
Commission on European Jewish
Cultural Reconstruction
Council for the Protection of Rights and
Interests of Jews from Germany

The Hebrew University
Jewish Agency for Palestine
Synagogue Council of America
World Jewish Congress

President

SALD W. BARON

Chairman, Board of Directors

JEROME MICHAEL

Vice-Presidents

LEO BAECK
SIMON FEDERBUSCH
JUDAH L. MAGNES
ALAN M. STROOCK

Treasurer

DAVID ROSENSTEIN

Secretary

AHRON OPHER

Board of Directors

SALD W. BARON
RUDOLF CALLMANN
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A. LEDN KUBOWITZKI
LOUIS LIPSKY
JEROME MICHAEL
AHRON OPHER
WILLIAM F. ROSENBLUM
LEO W. SCHWARZ
JOHN SLAWSON
ALAN M. STROOCK
EUGENE UNTERMYER

Executive Secretary

JOSHUA STARR

May 10, 1948

Notice of a Meeting of the Board of Directors

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. will be
held:

Date: Tuesday, May 18, 1948

Time: 4:15 P. M.

Place: 611-Fayerweather Hall
Columbia University
117th St. & Amsterdam Avenue

It is to be hoped that Drs. Judah Magnes and Leo
Meyer of the Hebrew University, and Mr. A. G.
Brotman of the Board of Deputies of British
Jews will be present.

Since important decisions will have to be taken,
please make every effort to attend and so indicate
on the enclosed card.

RABBI AHRON OPHER
SECRETARY

Enc: rmc

116059
WSC ELO

May 20, 1948

Mrs. Knopfmacher

TO: Members of the Office Committee
From: Dr. Blattberg

Re: Meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.
held on May 18

1. Besides representatives of the member organizations, there participated in this meeting as guests, Prof. L. Mayer of the Hebrew University, Mr. A. G. Brotman, and Mrs. B. Janner, M. P. of Great Britain.

Prof. Baron reported that Dr. Starr, the delegate of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction to Germany, is still in Paris, and would be able to proceed to Germany only after the final recognition of the Restitution Commission as a successor corporation. The act of recognition might provide for the creation of a subsidiary of the Jewish Restitution Commission in Germany (subject to German law) but only with regard to immovable property. It is therefore expected that, with regard to books and other cultural treasures, the Jewish Restitution Commission, or its agency in cultural matters, the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., will be able to assume direct charge in Germany shortly. (After the meeting word was received to the effect that designation of the J. R. C. as a successor corporation had already been approved by the State Department, and General Clay advised accordingly.)

2. Mr. Brotman stated that the formation of a Restitution Commission here had accelerated, to some extent, the handling of the restitution problem in the British Zone. According to information that he had received in London only last week, the Foreign Office was now preparing a draft law of restitution which, while it would not go as far as recognizing a Jewish body as the successor organization, would nevertheless safeguard Jewish claims. The Jewish Central Fund in Great Britain might, according to this draft law, act in the British Zone as an operating agency.
3. According to information received from Mr. Starr, the first consignment of books from Czechoslovakia, destined for the Hebrew University, and comprising 70 cases weighing about 14 tons, has arrived in Antwerp, and is stored there for the time being in a JDC warehouse. It will be transhipped to Palestine as soon as conditions permit. If it should prove necessary to keep the books in Antwerp for a longer time, they may be sorted out and evaluated there. Prof. L. Mayer agreed to this at the meeting, provided it was done under the supervision of experts.
4. Approximately 100,000 books were shipped recently from Poland to Palestine, with the full consent of the Polish Government, with a view to serve primarily the needs of the Chair for the history of Jews and Jewish culture in Poland to be established at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Polish Government is greatly interested in the establishment of this Chair, which might become the nucleus of a larger Institute. According to information from J. D. C. quarters, the Polish Government is ready to establish an endowment of \$600,000 for such an Institute, provided 25% of this amount will be contributed by the J. D. C.

4218/5-20-48/20
CUL.5092/NB-RK

116060
WTC E10

May 20, 1948

MEMO

To: Dr. A. L. Kubowitzki
From: Dr. W. Blattberg

Attached, please find a report on the meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. Since the final recognition of the Jewish Restitution Commission as a successor organization is already in sight, work in Germany, at least with regard to recovery of cultural property, will in all likelihood start soon. Of course it would be very useful if a representative of the Congress could join the mission to Germany and stay there for a while. I believe that the Second Session would be a good opportunity to send one of our people to Germany directly from Montreux. In this case, the person should be designated beforehand and efforts started to secure an entry permit for him.

At the meeting it was agreed that Dr. Seeligman of the Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam should join the mission. As you may remember, we suggested Dr. Seeligman to Prof. Baron last year. However, the main point is that a Congress man should be at hand.

I was not too delighted with the idea that the books in the J.D.C. storagehouse in Antwerp should be searched and sorted. However, since Prof. Mayer agreed to the proposal, I could not help it.

WB:FS
Encl.

116061
WSC E10

May 20, 1948

TO: Members of the Office Committee
FROM: Dr. Blattberg

Re: Meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.
held on May 18

1. Besides representatives of the member organizations, there participated in this meeting as guests, Prof. L. Mayer of the Hebrew University, Mr. A. G. Brotman, and Mrs. B. Janner, M.P. of Great Britain.

Prof. Baron reported that Dr. Starr, the delegate of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction to Germany, is still in Paris, and would be able to proceed to Germany only after the final recognition of the Restitution Commission as a successor corporation. The act of recognition might provide for the creation of a subsidiary of the Jewish Restitution Commission in Germany (subject to German law) but only with regard to immovable property. It is therefore expected that with regard to books and other cultural treasures, the Jewish Restitution Commission, or its agency in cultural matters, the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., will be able to assume direct charge in Germany shortly. (After the meeting word was received to the effect that designation of the J.R.C. as a successor corporation had already been approved by the State Department, and General Clay advised accordingly.)

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3. According to information received from Mr. Starr, the first consignment of books from Czechoslovakia, destined for the Hebrew University, and comprising 70 cases weighing about 14 tons, has arrived in Antwerp, and is stored there for the time being in a JDC warehouse. It will be transhipped to Palestine as soon as conditions permit. If it should prove necessary to keep the books in Antwerp for a longer time, they may be sorted out and evaluated there. Prof. L. Mayer agreed to this at the meeting, provided it was done under the supervision of experts.
4. Approximately 100,000 books were shipped recently from Poland to Palestine, with the full consent of the Polish Government, with a view to serve primarily the needs of the Chair for the history of Jews and Jewish culture in Poland to be established at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Polish Government is greatly interested in the establishment of this Chair, which might become the nucleus of a larger Institute. According to information from J.D.C. quarters, the Polish Government is ready to establish an endowment of \$600,000 for such an Institute, provided 25% of this amount will be contributed by the J.D.C.

4218/5-20-48/20
CUL.5092/WB-RK

WJC E10

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JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.
1841 Broadway, New York 23

C O N F I D E N T I A L

EXCERPTS FROM DR. JOSHUA STARR'S REPORT DATED FRANKFURT, JUNE 2, 1948 *read*

Dear Doctor Baron,

I set out from Paris with a permit valid until June 9 --(extended to July 9) -- and Major Hyman is requesting an extension for a fortnight. This is as far as he can go as long as JCR is not formally recognized. In the course of my first week I spent two fine days at Offenbach, and the other days and evenings in making numerous contacts in Frankfurt, Munich and Wiesbaden. Everybody has been most cordial and cooperative, halevai veiter. My chief handicap is the lack of secretarial assistance -- almost every contact needs to be followed by correspondence -- but in that respect I am in the best company in the Zone.

After some indoctrination by Haber and Hyman, I called at the JDC office, and was greeted by Abraham Cohen, with whom I shall be working closely. He introduced me to Dr. Markus of the legal staff of the Jewish Agency, from whom I learned of a meeting of the Gemeinde of Germany as a whole, scheduled for Sunday. Since this meeting did not deal with U. S. Zone business in particular, the question of affiliation with JCR could not be placed on the agenda.

On Monday afternoon I had a friendly talk with a committee of four, including Ph. Auerbach and Rabbi Aaron Orenstein. It was agreed that we would cooperate, and that the Interessenvertretung would be represented in N. Y. by Dr. Leo Baerwald, formerly rabbi of Munich. The latter step was taken at my suggestion, and the next meeting of the I. V. will designate two directors. In the meantime, I trust that you will be able to write to Auerbach, informing him that the organization has become a member. For the record I will indicate that Auerbach is Staatskommissar fur rassisch, religios und politisch Verfolgte in the Bayerisches Staatsministerium des Innern. He is president of the Bavarian Gemeindeverband, and there are two other federations for Hesse and Wurttemberg (in the U. S. zone). Despite the fact that the I. V. is an informal body, it is preferable to have one rather than three affiliates. I told the committee that decisions regarding the disposal of cultural property would be communicated to the I. V. before being carried out, and that their recommendations would be welcomed, but they did not ask for veto power, and needless to say, I did not promise it to them. Auerbach talked about his achievement in locating and turning over to AMG Jewish-owned cultural property, and promised me a list, which I shall endeavor to get from him.

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Before leaving Munich I had an opportunity to talk with Sam Haber, JDC Zone Director, whom I had met in Paris, and with his brother William, and we parted with a clear understanding as to cooperation and common problems. I also made the acquaintance of the appropriate members of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews.

On Saturday, May 29, I spoke on the telephone with Irwin Mason, who startled me by raising a problem, which to my knowledge was settled months ago. Mason said he had cabled N. Y. because the draft of the designating ordinance did not mention JCR! I do hope that this can be rectified in time.

In regard to the Offenbach depot, I must first assure you that the installation is entirely in good order. The director Joseph A. Horne is not only a marvellously competent person, but entirely on our side. The two of us became good friends almost at first sight. The depot contains about a million items, apart from Synagogue property, and probably less than half of the material is of Jewish content. It will not be possible to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the greater part of the collection was taken from Jewish owners, but if all the unidentifiable and heirless property is ever entrusted to JCR, we shall need a much more substantial budget than we ever contemplated. Horne tells me that about two-thirds of the collection has been catalogued, but I have in hand only certain partial lists, which will be forwarded to you in a few days. I have also asked for a list of institutions and individuals to whom restitution has been made. Identifiable property of East European origin is frozen; no restitution is scheduled until further notice. Prior to Horne's arrival in January 1947, by a mischance, documents relating to the confiscation of cultural property were turned over to the Soviet officials. I was happy to learn that the library of the Collegio Rabbinico has been returned to Rome, after a delay caused by the claim of the Spanish Government!

There have been counted thus far 150,000 Hebrew and Yiddish items and 72,000 Judaica in other languages. In addition, there are 1000 cases to be examined, which I judge, are not included in these totals. The rare book and ms. collection contains some 1500 items, Jewish and other, of which 500 have been catalogued. You will have a copy of this catalogue, and I shall also send you the list of the 600 books found at the Sturmer Verlag (Nuremberg). I am also going to make a microfilm of the album of some 600 ex libris stamps, which Horne has prepared.

Horne is the only American at the depot, and works with a professional staff of 12 and 20 laborers. In recent weeks he obtained the services of two Jewish volunteers, both yeshivah-trained. One is a student at the local university, and the other is occupied as a leather-worker. They give whatever time they can spare, and it is no easy matter to make them accept payment with a view to converting them into real staff members. I am getting a JDC 'category' for them, but they want something more substantial. As I gain their confidence, I will ascertain whether books and commodities from abroad will make them happy. I am doing my best

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to recruit personnel, the difficulty of which is exemplified by the fact that Philipp Friedman was unable to find a single man for me. My most promising prospect is Rabbi Mordecai Gladstein, a former student at the Warsaw Institute for Jewish Studies. Gladstein is now on the staff of the JDC at Munich, which has many advantages over Offenbach, and has a pregnant wife to support.

The depot has just received a carload of silver synagogue and home ornaments from Salzburg. This is the material found in the Hungarian gold train about which I corresponded with Eli Rock, and its delivery, I judge, comes as a result of the recommendation made by Abba Schwartz of IRO. You can imagine the feelings aroused by the sight of these mute witnesses, but our job is to take stock. In other words, the depot needs a curator who can catalogue such items, which have inscriptions and a somewhat tricky nomenclature. Unless I can find a person to fill this vacancy, I may have to try to handle the problem myself. At all events, we need a handbook or museum catalogue to guide us in this phase of the work, and I hope you can find one for us.

It is impossible to evaluate the Offenbach collection until books suited for libraries are completely separated from other categories (Talmud, Shulhan Aruk, Bible, popular writings). This operation coincides with the task of filling requests received from DP groups, for which the procedure has been worked out. It must be acknowledged that although the texts shipped to the study groups are issued on loan, the possibility of their being returned is quite remote. No text of more than routine value is included in these shipments, insofar as it is humanly possible to keep check.

There is a serious physical difficulty: there are not enough shelves and not enough floor space on the three floors to place all the books at one time. Assuming that we recruit some workers, I propose to reserve the available shelves for library books, and to keep the others, properly sorted, in boxes. This in itself might require several weeks' work. This description is not intended as more than a superficial account of the depot. I expect to prepare a systematic report toward the end of the month.

Outside of Offenbach we shall be faced with a very elaborate operation. Horne has a list of over 200 smaller depositories which remain to be examined. Working alone and with inadequate transportation, he will not get very far with this problem. In addition, there is Austria, which is within Horne's province also, but which seems to have remained unexplored. As far as the British Zone is concerned, I have been informed that nothing has come to light. My informant is Dr. E. G. Lowenthal, a native of Germany, now serving as senior field representative of the Jewish Relief Unit, and a member of the London Committee affiliated with JCR.

The first time I visited Offenbach, I had a talk with Horne's superior, Wm. Rule, chief of the Property Division of AMG, Hesse.

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He advised me to present myself at his office in Wiesbaden so that he could inform Gen. Hayes, deputy to Clay, as to my presence and intentions. When I made the trip to Wiesbaden, I was interviewed by John R. Cain, chief of the Property Control Branch, who seemed to be rather green in the field of our work, but it is not yet clear whether I shall need to make the trip to Berlin to appear in Hayes' office.

It will interest you to know that the State Department's concern about placing JCR within the framework of the Restitution Commission is not warranted by the administrative pattern of AMG. There is a clear distinction in the Property Division between economic and cultural property.

I hope to receive the minutes of the May 18 meeting soon, and look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially yours,

(SIGNED)

Joshua Starr

116066

WJC E10

JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION, INC.

116067

J. STARR

Field Report No. 3

Sept. 4, 1948

VISIT TO VIENNA

Inasmuch as no information was available regarding the fate of Jewish cultural property in Austria, I readily accepted an invitation extended by the JDC director, Harold L. Trobe. During my visit, August 24-31, I examined the collections recovered by the Vienna Community, gathered various relevant documents of the Nazi period, and talked with several communal workers about the prospects of recovering property still missing.

The Community Library is housed in a reconstructed synagogue building on Seitenstettenstr., occupying portions of two floors. Although fair progress has been made toward reorganizing the material recovered, less than half of the books have been shelved, and no comprehensive survey will be possible for months to come. The Library has received 8 cases from Offenbach, several hundred Hebraica from the Oriental Institute of the Vienna University, and 56 cases from Czechoslovakia. A considerable number have been returned by the National Library, where I was shown several thousand additional volumes awaiting transfer. The library of Dr. Marmorstein, rabbi under the Nazis, is shelved in a separate room of the same building.

The bulk of the books shelved are not of Jewish content, but comprise German and Hungarian literature, together with a relatively large collection of medical books. A large part of these books were formerly in the possession of the Jewish Hospital. The collection of the Theological Seminary, which was transferred to Theresienstadt, is presumably still packed in the cases sent from Czechoslovakia, which I was unable to examine. The Hebraica on the shelves were sufficiently few for me to examine in the space of a few hours. They comprise rabbinic works of a routine type, except for two 16th century editions: Landau, Sefer Agur; Bachrach, Sefer Ha-Shani; and a few dozen modern items published in Palestine. The Judaica had not yet been systematically shelved, but I noticed a fair number of duplicates, particularly of the works of the late Bernard Wachstein. Although I failed to find any indications of ownership, other than the Jewish Hospital, I was informed that the Hebraica include the property of the rabbi of Graz. These books were seized in November 1938, and turned up at the Oriental Institute of the Vienna University, where Kurt Schubert, a member of the staff, arranged for their transfer. Among the books I found one stamped by the censor of the Oberbefehlshaber of Ostmark: Zur Verbreitung von Gebiete des Oberbefehlshabers Ost. and zur Zensur zugelassen. Buchprüfungsamt Ob. Ost.

No archive material or museum property has been recovered. As for the mss., there were two unimportant items on the shelf, and third, a 17th century ms. of the Vienna Hevrah Kadisha, is in the keeping of a communal official, Dr. Feldsberg. An extensive catalogue of the mss., prepared by Wachstein, was in proof in 1938, but the printer reports that not a single copy has survived. It is suspected that some of monasteries have "inherited" various mss., but no investigation has been attempted; this search can only be conducted by representatives of the Vienna Community. It is further believed that the museum at Eisenstadt (Soviet Zone) possesses cultural property left behind by Jews, who fled the Burgenland in 1939, but this area is off limits to foreigners.

The Community Library functions only as a circulating library, while the energies of the staff are almost completely absorbed by the task of sorting and shelving the books recovered. This prevents the Library from providing current publications, and, in general, from attracting a larger number of readers. While it is clear that at least three-quarters of the holdings are of no interest to the present-day Jewry of Vienna, the Community proceeds on the assumption that it is dealing with a permanent collection, and receives a subsidy from the JDC for this purpose. I have, accordingly, proposed to Mr. Trobe to offer the following plan to the Community: a selection should be made of books to be retained; the surplus non-Jewish material should be offered to the Hebrew University; the surplus Jewish material should be entrusted to JCR. In this last category there would be included the Marmorstein library, the owner of which has disappeared. Although he may still be alive, his record as a tool of the Nazis absolves the Community from any moral responsibility for guarding his property.

At the office of the Jüdische Historische Dokumentation I obtained a copy of an official inventory of confiscated synagogue and museum material, comprising about 1,000 items, none of which has been recovered. Some of these were on exhibition in October 1944 at the Naturhistorische Museum. Although the Community is cognizant of the necessity of tracing this property, this document is known only to the Historische Dokumentation staff, which works independently and does not deal with restitution questions. I have called this matter to the attention of Mr. Trobe, and I trust that some action will follow.

WJC E10

C.D.

September 22, 1948

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. Representative Reports on Recovery
Situation in Vienna

9.
(3-3) The Department of Culture and Education has received a report from Dr. J. Starr, now on a mission to Austria on behalf of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc., of which the WJC is a member. So far, eight cases of books of the Offenbach collection, several hundred Hebraica from the Oriental Institute of the Vienna University, and 56 cases from Czechoslovakia have been recovered. All the books are stored in the community library. The bulk of them are not of Jewish but of general content. No archival material or museum property has been recovered.

In accordance with instructions he received from the JCR, Dr. Starr submitted the following suggestions to the Vienna Jewish Community: that they select the books to be retained by the Community and that the surplus of non-Jewish material be offered to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, while the surplus of Jewish material should be entrusted to the JCR.

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WJC E10

C.D.

November 12, 1948

Meeting of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.

6.
(6-23)

At a meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. which took place on November 4 and was attended by Dr. Blattberg for the WJC, Dr. W. Senator reported on the movement of cultural treasures from Czechoslovakia and Poland to Israel. The Hebrew University will turn over books it can dispense with to other cultural institutions in Israel. Final recognition of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. by the American authorities is expected in the near future. In the meantime, claims are being filed for the JCR by the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, of which it is a member. The meeting accepted the Anglo-Jewish Association as a new member of the JCR.

116069

WJC E10

November 30, 1948

Dr. Joshua Starr, Executive Secretary
Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.
1841 Broadway
New York 23, New York

Dear Dr. Starr:

I have your letter of November 29th addressed to Dr. Federbush.

I am glad that you are back, and that we will soon have an opportunity to hear about your work in Germany.

Dr. Federbush is now on a World Jewish Congress mission in Mexico, and will not be back in time to attend the meeting of the Allocation Committee on December 7th. However, I may attend on his behalf as an alternate.

I am sure he will send you a reply as to his membership in the Allocation Committee as soon as possible after his arrival.

Sincerely yours,

Wolf Blattberg

WB:bg

WJC E10

116070

December 9, 1948

To: Mrs. Beigel

From: W. Blattberg

Re: Meeting of Allocation Committee of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., held on December 7th.

Dr. Starr, the delegate of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., who recently returned from Germany, reported that about 2,000 cases, with a total of over 300,000 items, are now stored in Offenbach. There is a considerable number of rare books among them, and very rich collections of rabbinic literature. A full catalogue of the books is now being prepared on the spot. The work is now so advanced that it might be possible to start shipment of the books of the Offenbach depot to their destination in the very near future.

In the light of this report, the Allocation Committee had to consider, at yesterday's meeting, plans for distribution of the books. After a lengthy discussion, the following principles were adopted:

1. Priority should be given to the National Library in Jerusalem, which should send one or two delegates to Offenbach to select the books useful for that library.
2. Allotments should be made to the Jewish communities in Germany in order to meet their cultural needs.
3. The balance of the books should be distributed to various Jewish libraries and cultural institutions throughout the world, according to their needs and their importance in Jewish cultural life.

A committee of scientific advisers, composed of librarians and representatives of rabbinical seminaries and of the main Jewish cultural institutions in the U.S.A., was appointed in order to advise the Allocation Committee on the proper distribution. On the basis of their opinion, suggestions as to distribution will be made by the Allocation Committee to the J.C.R. for final approval.

Professor Selig Brodetsky of the Board of Deputies of British Jews attended the meeting.

WJC E10

116071

12/17/1948

- 5 -

Distribution Scheme for Books Retrieved in Germany Adopted by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.

11.
(3-3)

At a meeting of the Allocation Committee of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. (of which the WJC is a member) held on December 7, Dr. Starr reported on the results of his mission to Germany. There are now 2,000 cases of books stored in Offenbach with a total of over 300,000 items, among them a great number of rare books and rich collections of rabbinical literature. A catalogue of books is being prepared on the spot. The meeting adopted the following plans for the allocation of the books: Priority is to be given to the National Library in Jerusalem; allotments are also to be made to the Jewish communities in Germany in order to assist in their cultural rehabilitation; and the rest is to be distributed to various Jewish libraries and cultural institutions throughout the world. A committee of scientific advisors was appointed in order to advise the Allocation Committee on the proper distribution.

WJC E10

116072

Mrs. Reigel
94

January 12, 1949

To: Dr. Marcus
From: W. Blattberg

Report on Meeting of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., which took place on January 11, 1949.

The meeting considered recommendations submitted by the Advisory Committee regarding the allocation of the property stored at the Offenbach depot. The priority of the Jewish National and University Library was approved. Communities in Western Germany shall receive allocations consisting primarily of German Judaica. Allocations to institutions in other countries shall be determined on the basis of a questionnaire. Outside of the United States, negotiations should be conducted with the central Jewish organizations.

As to procedure, it was agreed that each beneficiary institution shall place at the disposal of the J.C.R. duplicates of publications in its library, shall furnish the J.C.R. with an itemized receipt listing authors and short titles, and finally that no material received from the JCR may be sold or otherwise disposed of.

Dr. Starr, as well as Dr. Bernard Heller, who was appointed Field Director, will leave shortly for Germany in order to take over, in accordance with the advice of the State Department to ONGUS, the books of the Offenbach depot which originated in Germany. It is believed that of the estimated 350,000 volumes at the depot, about 300,000 are of German origin.

The Hebrew University appointed as its representative in Offenbach Dr. Shunami, author of "Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies."

The \$21,000 budget of the J.C.R. for the period January 1 to July 1, 1949, has already been approved by the Jewish Agency and the J.D.C.

The suggestion of the Hebrew University to appoint Prof. Gershon Scholem as Vice-President of the J.C.R. in place of the late Dr. Magnes was approved, and Prof. Scholem was so appointed.

WJC E10

116073

C.D.

January 14, 1949

Meeting of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. Decides on Allocation of Books

11.
(3-3)

A meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., which took place on January 11, 1949, and which Dr. Blattberg attended on behalf of the WJC, approved the allocation of the cultural properties stored at the Offenbach depot as proposed by the Advisory Committee of Experts. Priority is accorded to the Hebrew University Library, while Jewish communities in Western Germany are to receive allocations consisting primarily of German Judaica. Allocations to institutions in other countries will be determined on the basis of a questionnaire.

Dr. Stahl as well as Dr. B. Heller will leave shortly for Germany to take over the three hundred volumes of the Offenbach depot which are of German origin.

116074

WJC E10

Will type New York Record

Apart from the Offenbach collection of books, there is a collection of silver and other objects at Wiesbaden numbering about 6,000, all of non-German origin. There are also about 600 Sifre Torah at Offenbach. The Advisory Committee of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., recommended that the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem be entitled to first priority in the distribution of art objects, and that its representative be invited to come to Wiesbaden to select items which represent styles now lacking in the Bezalel Collection. The rest of this category should be shared among all Jewish museums. As to the distribution of the ceremonial objects, it is recommended by the Committee to distribute one-third to synagogues in Israel, one-third to the U.S., and one-third to all the other countries. The scrolls should be deposited in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem until final decision on distribution has been made.

Finally, there was prepared by the Committee a list of Jewish libraries to benefit from the Offenbach book collection. Amendments to these recommendations and to the way of distributing the ceremonial objects were submitted by the Dept. of Culture and Education. The recommendations of the Advisory Board as well as the amendments of the Department of Culture and Education will be discussed at the next meeting of the Board of Directors of JCR, where a final decision will be taken.

116075

WJC E10

March 9, 1949

Memo to: Dr. Marcus, Dr. Robinson

From: Dr. Blattberg

Re: Disposition of ceremonial objects by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.

The Advisory Committee of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., proposed that the collection of silver and other objects which are at Wiesbaden, numbering about 6,000, all of non-German origin, should first be divided into the categories of art objects suitable for museums; and other ceremonial objects, which should be available for presentation to synagogues in various countries. The committee recommended that the Bezalel Museum (Jerusalem) be entitled to first priority in the distribution of art objects; and that its representative be invited to come to Wiesbaden to select items which represent styles now lacking in the Bezalel collection. The rest of this category should be shared among all Jewish museums, namely, Tel Aviv, Prague, Budapest, London, New York and Cincinnati; other applications may be considered by JCR. (In agreement with Dr. Hellmann, I am proposing to the JCR also the Jewish Museum in Buenos Aires.)

The committee recommended that the distribution of the ceremonial objects be governed by the following ratio: 1/3 to synagogues in Israel, 1/3 to the U.S., and 1/3 to other countries. In Israel the Ministry of Religious Affairs would be the appropriate distributing agency. In other countries, it was proposed by the committee to invite the cooperation of the JDC in designating the synagogues which are to receive ceremonial objects. However, we are strongly opposed to this suggestion, and on our part submitted that the Jewish representative bodies in the respective countries assume this task, in the same way as they are supposed to do with regard to the distribution of the books.

As to the 600 Sifre Torah at Offenbach, the Advisory Committee recommended to entrust all of them to the JDC offices in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and to postpone the question of distribution until such time when it will be known how many ark scrolls fit for synagogues will be available. We are also against this proposal, and suggested that both the Jewish Agency and the JDC be designated as trustees.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of JCR will be held on Monday, March 14. Should you have any suggestions, please communicate with me.

WJC E10

116076

C.D.

March 9, 1949

Cult. Dept. Jewish Cult. Reconstr.

Distribution Proposals for Recovered Cultural Property

8.
(3-3)

The Advisory Committee of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., of which the WJC is a member, has made recommendations as to the allocation of art and ceremonial objects apart from the Offenbach collection of books (see Congress Digest #345, item 3). There is a collection of silver and other objects at Wiesbaden, numbering about 6,000, all of non-German origin; and there are also about 600 Sifre Torah at Offenbach. In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem should be given priority in the distribution of art objects, while the rest should be shared among all Jewish museums. The committee further recommends that the distribution of ceremonial objects be made in the following way: one-third to synagogues in Israel; one-third to the United States; and one-third to all other countries. As to the Sifre Torah, it is proposed depositing them for the time being in Israel. Finally, the Advisory Committee has prepared a list of Jewish libraries which are to benefit from the Offenbach book collection. Amendments to these recommendations and to the list of libraries have been submitted by the WJC Cultural Department, and a decision will be taken at the next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.

116077

WJC E10

March 15, 1949

Memo to: Dr. Marcus, Dr. Robinson
From: Dr. Blattberg

On March 14th there was a meeting of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. at which the World Jewish Congress was represented by Dr. Federbush and myself.

The proposals of the Advisory Committee as to the distribution of the art and ceremonial objects were taken up, and after a lengthy discussion it was decided to change the proposals as follows:

40% should be allocated to Israel; 40% to other countries; and 20% to the U.S.A. It is understood that the objects to be allocated to American museums and synagogues are mainly of sentimental value.

Professor Baron informed the meeting that YIVO maintains claims to a number of periodicals still in the Offenbach collection. In this connection, several members present pointed out that in the large transport of books YIVO had already received, there were many not belonging to YIVO, and in particular, that almost the entire stock of the Strashun Library in Vilna had been transferred to YIVO. It was decided to notify YIVO that any YIVO-owned periodicals to be found in Offenbach would be returned to them, but that, on the other hand, the J.C.R. reserves the right to claim books of other ownership sent to YIVO from Offenbach.

Another point of discussion was whether to allocate the books to be distributed in the U.S. to Jewish libraries only, or whether general libraries with Judaica collections should be included as well. The opinion of the majority was to include libraries of the latter category, since their Judaica collections are used mainly by Jews.

The American Military Government wants to have the Offenbach depot emptied by the end of May. In that case, the costs of the transportation to the border will be borne by the Military Government.

There were present at the meeting Professor Cecil Roth, of London, and Professor Gerhart Scholem, of the Hebrew University.

116078

WJC BLO

C.D.

March 16, 1941

Cult. sep - Jew. Cult. Account.

Distribution Key for Art and Ceremonial Objects Changed by Meeting of JCR

12,
(3-3)

On March 14, a meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. took place at which the WJC was represented by Drs. Federbush and Blattberg. After a lengthy discussion, the proposals of the Advisory Committee as to the distribution of art and ceremonial objects were changed as follows: 40% to be allocated to Israel, 40% to other countries, and 20% to the United States.

Decisions were also taken with regard to YIVO-owned periodicals still in the Offenbach collection and with regard to the allocation of books to general libraries with Judaica collections in this country. As regards the latter point, it was the opinion of the majority that general libraries should also get allocations, since their Judaica collections are mainly used by Jews.

116079

WJC E10

C.D

2

May 9, 1949

Meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. Hears Report of Dr. Starr

12.
(3-3)

On May 5, 1949, a meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. took place which Dr. Blattberg attended on behalf of the WJC. Dr. Joshua Starr reported on the progress made by the JCR in the taking over and shipping of the books and other cultural objects now in the depots in Offenbach and Wiesbaden. During Dr. Starr's absence from Germany, Dr. Heller, Field Director of the JCR in Germany, is in charge. Besides, there are two delegates of Israel now in Germany, Dr. Shunami on behalf of the National Library, and Dr. Narkiss on behalf of the Bezalel Museum. The Bezalel Museum has a priority in the selection of museum pieces and Dr. Narkiss is now making the selection. He will also select other items for Israel.

Dr. Starr reported also on his brief visit to Berlin, where he received first-hand information on the "Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden" which is now in the Soviet Zone. According to existing records, 1,712 packages of documents have been salvaged.

116080

WJC 710

NEWS

from

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

1834 BROADWAY NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

Circle 7-2917

New Synagogues in Israel
To Get Torahs from Germany

At the request of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, the World Jewish Congress is working on a program to assure that a substantial part of the Torah scrolls and other religious objects found in the Offenbach Depot in Germany be distributed among newly-established synagogues in Israel.

Dr. Wolf Blattberg, WJC representative, took up this problem at recent meetings of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., the agency set up jointly by a number of Jewish organizations to conserve Jewish cultural and religious treasures.

It was decided that after examination by experts, the bulk of the scrolls will be shipped to Israel for the benefit of the new synagogues, including 59 established in cooperation with the Jewish Agency during the last 18 months. The Ministry of Religious Affairs will act as a distributing office for the ceremonial objects in Israel.

J. Cult. Reconstr.
File 5255 7/19/49

116081

WJC ELO

MEMO

January 18, 1946.

TO: DR. J. ROBINSON
FROM: ZORACH WARHAFTIG

CC: Rabbi Federbush, Dr. Kubowitzki.

During my trip in Germany, I visited the Rothschild Library in Frankfurt (Unter dem Mainker 15) where Jewish books and documents seized by the Nazis, particularly those in possession of the anti-Jewish Institute, are being collected, segregated, and preserved under the supervision of the American authorities until a further decision is taken.

The larger part of the books is still in Hungen, about 70 miles from Frankfurt. Whither they are brought in trucks.

According to Mr. Goodman, an American Gentile, who is in charge of the library, there are in Frankfurt and Hungen from two to five million volumes, many of them of extreme importance. There are Jewish books, as well as books on Jewish subjects, from public and private Jewish libraries from all over Europe. There are also hundreds of Torah scrolls.

The books are now being sorted and put in order on the premises of the former Rothschild Library, but I can hardly believe that there is enough space there for all the books.

Attached please find a provisional list of the libraries whose books are now in the Frankfurt collection. This list contains the names of only those libraries whose name is found inscribed in the book in Latin letters. There is not a single person on Goodman's staff who can read Hebrew and Yiddish and can complete the list. Until September one Jew, Azoni of New York, worked there, but he has already left for the States.

The general supervision of the library is in the hands of Captain Beckman.

There is so far no definite plan for the future of this great Jewish cultural treasure. Only one thing is certain: the Americans are ready to give the books back to their owners if ownership is proved. And indeed, in Paris I was told by Rabbi Liber, Director of the Ecole Rabinique, that he was supposed to proceed to Frankfurt to get back the libraries of the Ecole Rabinique, the Consistoires, the Alliance Israelite, and his own private collection.

Meanwhile there is a great danger that many of the books, particularly the rare ones, will get lost. The Jewish DP's are urging, and perhaps rightly so, that books should be given to them for study; of course, they ask for simple, not rare copies or editions, but due to the lack of Jewish knowledge on the part of the librarian and his staff, mistakes may be made. Recently Rabbi Rosenberg, representative of the J.D.C., was promised 25,000 books for the DP's; one can imagine how many valuable books will be among these volumes.

It should be added that Jewish books are scattered not only in Frankfurt, but all over Germany, particularly in Munich, among them valuable volumes from known Jewish libraries.

May I add that in the Frankfurt depot, namely in Hungen, there are the archives of the Nazi anti-Jewish Institute. Mr. Goodman promised me to give or send to our Institute/Jewish Affairs the manuscripts of many unpublished materials of the Nazi Institute.

Something should be done to secure the Frankfurt library and all other Jewish books in Germany for the Jewish people.

1114-1/29/46-75-2W/hsh
CUL 5012.

116082

WJC E10

March 5, 1946.

MEMO

FROM: Dr. Federbush
TO: All Office Committee Members

Please find attached an interesting report about looted books in Frankfort. The author, Mr. A. Aaroni, worked in the Rothschild Library in Frankfort for many months, assorting these books. He stresses the necessity of our sending an experienced scholar to salvage these books.

Herewith is also attached a report about 425,000 volumes of Jewish literature found in Berlin. Dr. Zuckerman, head of the mission of the United States Library of Congress emphasized the urgent need for saving of these books by Jewish organizations. In this connection I would also like to quote the following cable received from Judge Rifkind:

"Suggest you arrange with one of voluntary agencies already accredited this theatre preferably Jewish Agency for Palestine to call forward your representative. Stop That would simplify procedure and operation. Stop If suggestion not agreeable please apply Washington for permission usual manner"

The question of sending an expert on behalf of the WJC will be discussed at one of the next Office Committee meetings.

1286 - 3/5/46 - 35 SF:hsh
CUL 5022

116083

WJC E10

March 4, 1946

MEMORANDUM
SUBMITTED TO DR. FEDERBUSCH
by A. AARONI

(Assigned by the U.S. Army in the Rothchild Library
in Frankfurt, Germany)

Regarding Looted Jewish Books, Archives and Religious Articles
now in the Vicinity of Frankfurt a/m Germany

I. Recommendations:

Because these books and documents enumerated below are all that remain of the vast collections on the continent of Europe, they must be saved and the following steps should immediately be taken:

1. Send a Hebrew scholar, preferably a librarian and archivist who would organize a staff of workers to sort the books as to ownership and subjects and then supervise their partial cataloguing wherever possible.

This recommendation is to take precedence over all others. There was not a single person (as late as October 16, 1945) with the knowledge of Hebrew letters helping with this work. A person who would devote himself solely to this work, could find among the present Jewish population in Germany enough people with a sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to help him in this work.

2. Wherever definite institutional ownership can be established, the books should be returned to the proper owners through accepted governmental channels.
3. Minor, unimportant works and duplicates should be used immediately to replenish the libraries of Jewish reconstructed institutions.
4. It is estimated that the ownership of about 60% of the books and documents cannot be established. The more important of these books should be sent to the Hebrew University Library in Jerusalem.

II. History:

It was Alfred Rosenberg's idea to organize in Nazi Germany and in Nazi Europe a sort of super university with institutes in all branches of human knowledge. One of these institutes was the Institute for Research in the Jewish Problem (Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage) with headquarters in Frankfurt. Government archives, public libraries and private collections were looted in all invaded countries and their contents transported into Germany with the hope of establishing a "super library" of Judaica and Hebraica. The two main collecting points for this looted wealth were Berlin and Frankfurt.

When allied heavy bombardments of cities started, most of these books and other articles were removed from the large centers to rural communities. The Berlin collection was thus moved to Bohemia, probably to Castle Neufalkenberg in Deutsch Gabel. The Frankfurt collection was moved to

116084

WJC E10

Hungen, Kreis Giesen. To the best of my knowledge, the American authorities in Germany have no information about the former collection. The latter, however, is in the American zone of occupation.

III. The Recent Status of the Frankfort Collections.

Part of this collection was first found in June 1945 in the basement of 78 Bockenheimerlandstrasse in Frankfort. The collection was definitely endangered by the atmospheric conditions of a subbasement completely lacking ventilation. Late in July the 150,000 volumes found there were finally removed to the renovated Rothschild Library at 15 Mainerkai where they were being sorted according to previous ownership, cleaned, disinfected and partly catalogued. This work was being done under the supervision of Captain Julius H. Buchman, Fine Arts, Monuments and Archives Officer of Military Government Detachment No. 6, Frankfort.

These 150,000 volumes were but a minute fraction of the bulk of the collection that had been removed to Hungen. This collection required thirty eight (38) freight cars to move it from Frankfort. My estimate is that it consists of more than 1,000,000 volumes. As of October 16, 1945, in spite of promises by high military authorities, and in spite of the earnest and wholehearted effort of Captain Buchman, the collection was still in Hungen scattered in nine different places; a large shed, a former office building, a castle, and five or six basements all over the town. It was planned to transport them from Hungen and house them in an I.G. Farben plant in Offenbach near Frankfort. However, as of October 16, 1945, that removal had not yet been started. In Hungen these precious books, documents, religious articles and archives are in danger of complete loss.

IV. Some Elements of the Collection:

A superficial examination of this collection revealed definitely and beyond any doubt parts of the following collections:

1. Rosenthalians of Amsterdam
2. Alliance Israélite of Paris (valuable 15th and 18th century manuscripts.)
3. Strashun Library of Vilna
4. Rothschild collection of Paris
5. Sephardic Community Archives of Amsterdam
6. Archives of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs of Lithuania
7. Librairie Lipschitz Paris
8. Kiev Jewish Public Library
9. Judische Gemeinde - Riga
10. Rabbinical Seminary of Breslau
11. Mainz archives (birth records, etc.)
12. Frankfort a/m archives
13. About 300 Torah scrolls and innumerable Megilloth and literally dozens of other public and private collections of great historic value.

Addenda:

1. About the Berlin collection consult, Dr. Ernst Gramach, 54 Schlutterstrasse, Charlottenburg - Berlin.
2. About Military Government phases of the work, consult Sgt. Child, Fine Arts, Monuments and Archives Division, Office of Military Government, APO 742, PM New York (Berlin). Also Captain Julius H. Huchman, Mil. Gov. Det. #6, APO 757, PM New York, (Frankfort).

116086

WSC E10

U.S. MISSION FINDS 425,000 JEWISH BOOKS

Berlin. - A special mission of the United States Library of Congress has discovered two storehouses jammed with more than 425,000 volumes of Jewish literature, which had been seized by the Gestapo all over Europe and sent there.

Twenty-five thousand books were found in a basement of the former Orthodox Synagogue, which is again being used as a house of worship, despite extensive damage. The volumes, which included prayer books, literature and old Jewish newspapers, were in poor condition.

At the former Free Mason's lodge, which had apparently been the main Gestapo collection center, over 400,000 volumes were discovered. Included among these documents and books were collections stolen from the libraries of Andre Maurois, noted Jewish author; Artur Rubinstein, world renowned Jewish concert pianist, and many famous private and public collections of Jewish books.

Dr. J. Zuckerman, who heads the mission, urged the formation of a Jewish committee to claim the books. He declared that the books should be kept intact and used to establish a special Judaica library, or be given to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

#1286 - 2/26/46 - 25-SF:pn
Cul 5022

116087

WJC E10

To: Dr. Kubowitzki
c.c. Dr. Federbush
From: Dr. Karbach

March 5, 1946

Re: Commission of Jewish European Cultural
Reconstruction

In connection with the attached clipping from The Day regarding the Tentative List, you requested me to give you a report on the proceedings of the last plenary meeting of the Commission which I attended. The main points were preparations for dispatching a mixed Commission of prominent scholars to Germany to take care of the books, scrolls, objects of art and other cultural treasures which were found, and are now under the supervision of the occupation authorities. It is intended that each of the three countries, United States, Palestine and Great Britain be represented by six scholars.

As far as I learned payment for the expenses of the American participants will be available, and it is assumed that the delegation from Great Britain will be able to pay for their expenses. On the other hand, the Palestine delegation seems to be a difficult problem from the financial point of view, but they are trying to find a solution, possibly by cutting down the number of delegates from each country to four.

The scholars will stay quite a considerable time, about six months.

Regarding the "Tentative List" a copy of which I'll receive very soon, I only had the opportunity of looking it over for one or two minutes and immediately found a few serious mistakes which could easily be corrected from information available in New York. The list is beautifully printed as a supplement to "Jewish Social Studies" and as far as I know, edited by Dr. Ahrendt.

There was also a discussion regarding the financial situation of the Commission which is not too rosy and so they expect subsidies from various big Jewish organizations, among them the World Jewish Congress.

Prof. Baron, who was in the chair stressed the fact that the Commission is restricting itself to purely scholarly work and that their findings must be realized by appropriate action on the part of other organizations, and he again mentioned the World Jewish Congress in this connection.

116088

WJC E10

During a discussion of similar projects for adoption of Jewish schools and other cultural institutions by corresponding bodies abroad, I mentioned the fact that according to reports from the other side there are still surviving children and young people who have no schooling at all today. [↑] Former inmates of concentration camps, and, for instance, children in the Jewish community of Vienna have had no education at all for seven years. It is well-known that the Nazis did not permit instruction of any kind for Jewish youngsters, even at home.

This information was accepted with interest, and for the third time the WJC was mentioned as one of the large organizations which should interest itself in finding out how many Jewish children are without educational facilities. If special Jewish schools cannot be opened, the WJC should urge the Governments to take appropriate steps for immediately admitting such children to public schools and for providing them with special instruction if they cannot join classes owing to their lack of former training.

The legal subcommittee of the Commission, of which I am also a member will employ a new research assistant after the former one resigns.

Mun. Kropfma...

March 8, 1946

MEMO

To: The Members of the Office Committee
The Assistants

From: Dr. Blattberg

You will find below a memo on the Historical Commission of Liberated Jews in Bavaria in the American zone, which may be of interest to you.

According to information received, a Historical Commission has been set up in the Central Committee of Liberated Jews of Bavaria, with branches in some of the large camps. The object of this commission is to collect:

1. German documents in regard to the Jews, such as, orders, prescriptions as well as anti-Jewish pamphlets and literature.
2. Jewish documents, pictures, mimeographs, cartoons and drawings pertaining to Jewish life in the ghettos and to the final destruction of the Jewish communities.
3. Statistical and other data on:
 - a. economic life in the ghettos, workshops, work for the Nazis inside and outside the ghettos, food situation, hunger.
 - b. illegal activities of the Jewish parties, illegal schools, secret press and publications, secret libraries, meeting places.
 - c. contacts with non-Jewish groups and parties in the outside world, resistance movements in the ghettos, individually or in groups, contacts with non-Jewish resistance movements.
 - d. data on the religious life in the ghettos, influence of religion on the people, mystical trends.
 - e. moral conditions, nervousness, despondency, panic, hysteria, suicide waves, belief in the mystical and in miracles.
4. Details regarding mistreatment and torture, names of executioners, relations with people of other nationalities in the concentration camps.
5. Information on the folklore developed in the ghettos, in the forests, and other hiding places, among the partisan groups and in the concentration camps (proverbs, satires, jokes, parodies, idiomatic expressions and terms), legends and tales, legends on the end of Hitler and the day of judgment, miraculous and mystical tales, dreams, songs and poetry on the tragedy of the ghettos and on the heroism of the resistance groups.

Furthermore, material is being gathered about the "Bunkers" and the life of the people there. The Historical Commission also traces libraries in Germany and looks for material available in German institutions.

The Commission requests everyone who can be helpful in the tracing of material, or otherwise willing to cooperate, to contact it through the Central Committee of Liberated Jews of Bavaria, in Munich, Germany.

B47-3/8/46/WB:j1-75
CUL 5023

116090

WJC EIO

COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

Cultural Department

affiliated with

CONFERENCE ON JEWISH RELATIONS, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 5-7826

Chairman

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Secretaries

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KOPPEL S. FINSON

Committee on Cooperation

HORACE M. KALLEN
Chairman

Committee on Legal Problems

JEROME MICHAEL
Chairman

Committee on Research

ALEXANDER MARX
Chairman

May 23, 1946

Dear Dr. Federbusch:

This is an addition to my letter to you of May 21.

I forgot to tell you that an important collection of periodicals which had been assembled in Berlin from many Jewish libraries (probably from the Berlin Community Library and the G. V. Library, among others) were also shipped to Theresienstadt and are probably now in Prague.

Parts of the Strashun Library from Vilna must also be there, although the main body of the collection is in Offenbach.

Cordially yours,

Hannah Arendt
Hannah Arendt

Dr. Simon Federbusch
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York, N. Y.

HA:GP

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WJC E10

116091

MEMO

May 24, 1946

To: Members of the Office Committee

From: Dr. Federbush

REPORT ON MY VISIT TO WASHINGTON ON MAY 20th

Last week I submitted a detailed report on the recent developments of the problem of recovery of large Jewish libraries in Germany. After a thorough discussion at two meetings of the Office Committee, the following was decided:

- a. - The WJC agrees to the appointment of the Congress Library as the trustee of the Jewish books found in Germany.
- b. - The Congress Library should be approached in order that, in the disposition of the books, first consideration should be given to the request of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.
- c. - The WJC should ask for representation in the Advisory Committee which will decide on the final disposition of the books, and in the court of claims which is to be established.
- d. - The Congress Library should be asked that in its delegation to Germany for the recovery of cultural property, there should also be included one delegate of the WJC and one delegate of the Commission on Research of the Conference on Jewish Relations.

Conference with Mr. Hemmendinger of the State Department

In connection with the above problems, I saw Mr. Hemmendinger of the State Department and explained to him the attitude of the Committee of Recovery, sponsored by the WJC, that the libraries looted from the Jewish community actually represents cultural property of the Jewish people. We would agree that the Jewish books found in the American zone should be transferred to the United States and that the Congress Library should be entrusted with the final disposition of these books under the conditions: that a Jewish committee should be formed to advise the Congress Library as to what Jewish institutions the books should be restored; that chief consideration should be given to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; and that the WJC should be represented in such a committee. Mr. Hemmendinger expressed his opinion that if the Congress Library should make such a suggestion to the State Department, he does not see any reason why it would be opposed since the representatives of the Jewish organizations agree to such a solution. He would be ready to forward such a proposal from the Congress Library with the endorsement of the WJC to the military occupation authorities of the American zone. The only objection to this solution which could be raised, according to Mr. Hemmendinger, would be that of the Polish Government, since Poland is an Allied Nation and would be entitled to claim the restoration of the Jewish books looted from Poland. He advised me to take up this question with the representative of the Polish Government here. I promised to do so, and expressed my belief that

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I would meet no obstacles from the Poles in this matter. Mr. Hemmendinger thought that in this case it could be expected that the Congress Library's suggestion will be accepted.

Conference with Dr. Evans, Head of the Congress Library

Accompanied by Mr. I. Dwork, I visited Mr. Evans, Head of the Congress Library. I presented to him the viewpoint of the WJC in regard to the restoration of Jewish libraries in Germany, and expressed our thanks for his interest in this matter. I stressed that our main concern is the restoration of the Jewish books to Jewish institutions, and primarily to the Hebrew University, as cultural property of the Jewish people. Dr. Evans told me that it is not his intention that the Congress Library should benefit in any way from the looted Jewish libraries. The Congress Library is sufficiently equipped with means of purchasing any books it needs; the Jewish libraries should be distributed to the Hebrew University and eventually to other Jewish institutions which are certainly in need of them. He expressed great satisfaction that the WJC had consented to his suggestion and that all Jewish groups are now endorsing his project. Dr. Evans will submit his proposal to the State Department in the next few days, and asked us to write him a letter stating that the WJC agrees to his proposals, in order that he may attach it to his memorandum to the State Department. He also agreed to my request that in the delegation to be sent by the Congress Library to Germany, there should also be included a delegate of the WJC and of Barons Research Committee, which suggestion he will recommend to the State Department. In conclusion, he declared that the real jurisdiction in the disposition of the books will lie in the hands of the Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of Jewish organizations, and that the WJC as spokesman of the various Jewries should be properly represented in this body.

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WJC EIO

116094

June 24, 1946

MEMO

To: Dr. Beer
From: Dr. Blattberg

I. Recovery of Jewish cultural treasures:

A memorandum to the Department of State on the safeguarding of Jewish cultural treasures looted by the Germans and on their final disposition was submitted by the Department of Culture and Education of the World Jewish Congress. In this memorandum it is suggested that the authorities that objects owned by individuals should be restored to their former owners or to their legal heirs upon satisfactory proof of ownership.

Objects formerly owned by Jewish communities, especially in Germany, Austria and Poland should be restored to the communities, to the extent of its actual cultural needs, provided that a substantial percentage of its former Jewish population survives.

Objects which are ownerless or unclaimed or the conditions of whose restitution are not satisfied, should be turned over to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem as to the highest Jewish institution of learning in the world and partly to other Jewish religious and cultural institutions. A body should be created to act as Trustee for the former owners of the Jewish cultural treasures and for the Jewish people. A Board of Advisors should be appointed by the Trustee on recommendation of the World Jewish Congress and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This board is to assist the Trustee in the performance of its task and advise it on the conditions and cultural needs of the Jewish communities in Europe as well as on the nature and value of the looted Jewish cultural property and on its ultimate disposition.

II. Cultural Delegation:

The members of the cultural delegation, Mr. H. Leivick and Dr. Israel Efros, after arriving in New York gave a full report on the conditions in the camps and on the relations of the UNRRA authorities to the inmates of the DP camps at the press conference held on June 19th, at which about 70 people of all the Yiddish and English Jewish papers were present. An internal report was given by Professor Efros at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress held on June 20th.

On June 24th a massmeeting for the public was arranged at which both Dr. Efros and Mr. Leivick informed the public about their impressions and the life of our people in the camps.

Resolutions calling for the immediate transfer of the DP's to Palestine were adopted.

III. Book Drive:

During the month of June the following shipments were made:

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1. 5 cases containing books and 9 Torah scrolls to Holland
2. 4 cases of valuable textbooks for children and adults to the DP camps in Germany. This shipment was made through the services of the UNRRA Headquarters in Washington.
3. 10 cases of Yiddish and Hebrew literature and textbooks to Poland. This shipment was arranged through the courtesy of the Committee for Rehabilitation of Polish Science and Culture, Inc. in New York.
4. 8 cases to Chaplain Klausner and 9 cartons through the courtesy of Dr. Maier.
5. 3 cases to Bergen-Belsen.
6. 10 cases to chaplains and social workers.

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Summary of a report written by Prof. G. Scholem, of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, on his mission to Europe in summer, 1946.

The object of Prof. Scholem's mission was to gather all available information on the Jewish libraries and archives, to examine the collections and contact Jewish institutions concerned about them.

The central institution where the Jewish cultural treasures, looted during the war, were accumulated was "Eichsicherheits Hauptamt in Berlin. When the heavy air raids began, these huge stores of books were sent to various places, among them to Frankfurt where the "Frankfurt Collection" was stored. However, it was established that the most precious books were sent to Czechoslovakia to the Castle of Niemes. The Niemes collection consisted, inter alia, of the following libraries: (1) Berlin Jewish Community, (2) Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, (3) Central Verein in Berlin, and (4) a great library containing books of Jewish writers in various fields of science, excluding Jewish sciences. Prof. Scholem estimates the Niemes collection at a quarter of a million volumes. This collection was still in Niemes after the liberation, but its later whereabouts have not yet been established. Prof. Scholem's idea was that a Jewish Commission should make further investigations, with the consent of the Czech authorities, as to the fate of the Niemes collection. For this purpose he contacted, inter alia, Dr. Scharp, representative of the WJC in Prague at the time of his visit.

Another part of the books, much smaller and probably less important, was sent to Theresienstadt. This collection (about 50-60,000) was later transported to Prague and handed over by the Czech Government as a temporary deposit to the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia, and that Council decided to turn over the Theresienstadt collection to the Hebrew University as a trustee, provided that the Czech Govt. agreed to it.

Prof. Scholem then gives a review of the Offenbach Depot, which contains the data already known and which is along the same lines as the report submitted to us by Captain Emerants. According to Prof. Scholem, the Offenbach Depot is somewhat disappointing insofar as the search for cultural treasures (rare books, important manuscripts or precious archival material) is concerned. (The number of manuscripts in the Offenbach Depot amounts to approximately 600).

Prof. Scholem, in his discussions about the Offenbach Depot with the heads of the Commission for the Preservation of Artistic and Historical Monuments of OMNUS, found them responsive to the idea of turning over the collections to the Hebrew University, but they were dominated by legalistic principles and abhorred even the slightest encroachment on private property.

Prof. Scholem did not find any important collection in the American zone outside of the Offenbach Depot. He was informed that the "Gesamtsarchiv der Deutscher Juden" had been preserved, and that these are now in the Russian zone. Prof. Scholem was not in the British zone, and believes there is nothing of importance in that area.

Judaica and Hebraica of the German Public Libraries were not remembered by the Nazis. In most cities (Berlin, Hamburg, Munich) these collections as well as the Hebrew manuscripts had been preserved. At present it is difficult to ascertain to what extent such collections had been destroyed by air raids. Prof. Scholem entered into negotiations with the Director of Public Libraries of the State of Hesse, regarding the voluntary renunciation of parts of these collections for the benefit of the Jewish people. Prof. Scholem believes that it would be possible, on the basis of half moral half political negotiations, to get some of the manuscripts.

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Prof. Scholem stresses the danger of any delay in taking the books out of Germany. The principal step is to take now whatever can be had, and the question whether, is only of secondary importance.

There are 8 appendices attached to the report.

June 10, 1947
WB, RK

WJC EIO

116098

MEMO

To: The Office Committee

July 17, 1946

From: Dr. Federbusch

We have just received the following letter from our Dr. Dwork in Washington regarding the recovery of the Jewish looted books in Germany:

"Dear Rabbi Federbusch:

I wish to inform you that I have just had lunch with Mr. Hemmendinger of the State Department and that I believe most of your fears are unjustified.

First, the State Department has not yet given its approval to the formation of the Jewish trusteeship for heirless books. Hemmendinger is somewhat in favor of the plan and has cabled to the military authorities in Germany for their reaction. Should they approve, it will probably go through, but Hemmendinger foresees great technical difficulties. To help carry out this project he earnestly recommends that we seek to have a top-flight economic expert appointed to the staff of Rabbi Bernstein. Hemmendinger has made the same recommendation to Col. Barnstein and even suggested Max Lowenthal for the position.

As regards the choice of trustees, the State Department most definitely will not turn over the entire matter to Baron's Committee. Mr. Hemmendinger made it clear that no single organization will be given the task, but that the State Department would be willing to turn over the trusteeship to a group of suitable individuals. In view of our connection with the entire matter, you can be certain that Mr. Hemmendinger will not approve any group of trustees in which we are not adequately represented.

Let me assure you that I have been following this entire matter with close interest and shall continue to see that our aims are achieved."

September 23, 1946

MEMO

To: Dr. Beer
From: Dr. Blattberg

Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property

Pursuant to conversations with Staff members of the Department of State, and in view of more accurate information regarding the contents of the Offenbach archive and depot, new proposals were set forth to the State Department relative to the custody and ultimate disposition of the books and other Jewish religious and cultural objects now under ~~the~~ the care of the Office of the Military Government in the United States zone of occupation of Germany.

These proposals provide for establishment of a corporation under the laws of the State of New York which should ~~be transferred~~ all Hebraica and Judaica and all other Jewish religious and cultural objects in the American zone. The corporation to be established should include representatives of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and of a few national Jewish organizations in America.

The corporation, after it shall have been constituted as trustee of the Hebraica and Judaica for their former Jewish communities and for the Jewish people, should send a technical mission which shall examine and classify the religious and cultural objects, ascertain what Hebraica and Judaica are owned by or in the possession of German state, municipal or other publicly owned libraries, archives, museums etc. and from time to time report the results of its activities.

We were properly informed that the American Government is sympathetic to the objectives of our proposals and believe that they are generally accepted.

Cultural and Educational program
in Latin America

A program of cultural activities to be carried out in the near future in the Latin American countries was worked out by the Department of Culture and Education. The program provides the initiation of subsidizing of a seminary for the training of Jewish teachers in one of the Latin American countries outside the Argentine.

A new publishing Co. for Jewish Spanish textbooks is planned. The work of organizing Jewish students is being continued recently. An organization of Jewish students in Columbia was established and joined the ranks of the Union.

Bookdrive

During the months of September the following shipments were made:

five
To Germany: ~~one~~ cases of books
To India: ~~50~~ ~~Manuscript~~ and 10 Jewish calendars
To Sweden: 1 carton of Yiddish books and Hebrew literature
To Austria: 1 case of religious books
To Italy: 1 case of Yiddish books
To Hungary: 1 case of textbooks

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WJC E10

October 3, 1946

MEMO

To: Mr. Caplan
From: Dr. Blattberg

You may have read in the Tuesday October 1st Post a United Press dispatch from Washington to the effect that the State and War Departments approved of the idea of establishment of a corporation under the laws of the State of New York as advanced to the Department of State, in memoranda drafted by the World Jewish Congress and the Commission on European Jewish Reconstruction.

~~The corporation to be established will have the right to take over the looted Jewish cultural treasures (books, religious and artistic objects) now in Germany and to make the arrangements necessary as to their final disposition.~~

May I ask you to give a proper place in Congress Weekly to this item and, for your information, as to the negotiations I would like to add the following: after certain conversations of Dr. S. Federbush with the proper officials in the State and War Departments in Washington, it was agreed upon that we should submit a memorandum outlining the composition and the rights of the corporation to be formed.

Accordingly, we presented a memorandum on August 30th, copy of which I am attaching hereto. In reply to this memorandum we received a letter from Assistant Secretary of State, John H. Hildring, dated September 18 in which it is stated: "This Government is sympathetic to the objectives of your proposals and believes that they are generally acceptable. In view of the fact that their execution requires the support and cooperation of the US Forces in Germany and Austria, the War Department has been requested to forward a synopsis of the proposals to the U.S. Commanders for their detailed comment.

When replies are received I shall communicate with you further."

A similar letter was also addressed to the Commission.

The United Press dispatch apparently derives from the same source.

WJC #10

116101

Dr. Rubowitzki

Cultural - Committee

November 8, 1946

TO: The members of the Office Committee

FROM: Dr. Federbush

Report on my conference at the State Department, Washington, On November 5, 1946, on recovery of Jewish cultural property in Europe.

Present: World Jewish Congress - Dr. Federbush accompanied by Dr. Dwerk; Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction - Prof. Jerome Michael; Advisor to General Clay in Germany - Mr. Max Löwenthal; State Department - Messrs. Hemendinger, Tobb, Mason, Kiefer.

The conference lasted two hours.

Prof. Michael and I ask the representatives of the State Department to obtain as soon as possible the consent of the State Department and OMGUS for the formation of a Jewish Corporation to which Jewish libraries found in Germany and Austria should be turned over for distribution among the appropriate Jewish institutions.

Mr. Löwenthal points out that General Clay is in favor of the suggestions submitted by the World Jewish Congress, but he has some objections as to the legal aspect of this problem. He considers it essential that the Corporation should not be merely an American body, but it should represent the Jewish communities abroad. The final draft of a bill on restoration of property in Germany is now in preparation and General Clay deems it desirable that the provisions for the recovery of Jewish cultural property should be in conformity with the principles of this bill.

Dr. Federbush then explains that the World Jewish Congress, which represents Jewish communities in approximately fifty countries all over the world, will be a member of the Corporation to be established. Therefore the Corporation will represent not only American Jewry, but also the Jewish communities of Europe, in accordance with General Clay's wishes.

Mr. Löwenthal agrees with my explanation and states that in a letter which he addressed to General Clay he advised him that since the World Jewish Congress would participate, the Corporation would bear an international character.

Mr. Hemendinger believes that these explanations are quite ~~sufficient~~ satisfactory and therefore no objection is to be expected. He further states that the State Department fully agrees with our objectives and recommends to OMGUS the plan of a Jewish trusteeship for the recovery of cultural property.

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Mr. Tobb declares that the State Department, and particularly General Hildring, is ready to cooperate with us in arriving at a speedy settlement of this problem.

We point out:

(1) The necessity of undelayed action, because the books already found are getting spoiled, and the opportunity to locate hitherto unrevealed looted libraries may be lost.

(2) While the restoration law provides for jurisdiction to be entrusted to the German Courts, we must make every effort to exclude the recovery of Jewish cultural property from the provision, because it would hurt Jewish feeling to turn over the question of Jewish cultural property looted by the Germans to German authorities.

At this point Mr. Hemendinger informs us that Col. Bernstein of the American Jewish Conference proposes that the recovery of Jewish cultural property should be part and parcel of the general problem of restoration of property.

Prof. Michael explains the inadvisability of tying the problem of Jewish cultural property with that of restoration of property in general, in view of the fact that the promulgation of the law pertaining to restoration of property will take a considerably long time, and will be under the jurisdiction of the German authorities as mentioned above.

All present agree that we should endeavor to separate the problem of Jewish cultural property from the general question of restoration.

It is decided that the representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the Commission should see General Clay who is expected to arrive in the U.S.A. some time next week, and discuss with him the entire problem.

Our suggestions to him should be as follows:

- (1) The earliest formation of a Jewish trusteeship.
- (2) All books that cannot be identified, as well as books owned by Jewish communities and institutions which no longer exist or which have no more need for the books, due to the decrease of their membership, should be turned over to Jewish trusteeship.
- (3) In the event that the recovery of Jewish cultural property cannot be excluded from the provision of the draft law of the restitution, we should prepare amendments to that law which would enable the formation of the Jewish trusteeship and the speedy recovery of the Jewish libraries within the frame of the general restoration law.

In our negotiations with the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, in which Dr. Kubowitzki took part on behalf of the World Jewish Congress, it was agreed that in the Jewish Corporation for Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property we should be represented by one member on behalf of the World Jewish Congress, one member on behalf of the Committee for Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property in Europe, sponsored by the World Jewish Congress, one member on behalf of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, and instead of a representative of the American Federation of Jews from Central Europe, previously suggested by the Commission, it should be Council for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany, which ~~is affiliated with us.~~

Apart from these 4 representatives, there should be one member from each of the following bodies:

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem
Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
American Jewish Conference
American Jewish Committee
Synagogue Council of America

SF, RK

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WJC EIO

November 22, 1946

Dr. Max Gruenewald
100 Millburn Ave
Millburn, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Gruenewald:

I should like to express my personal satisfaction that, in connection with the settlement of the problem of the recovery of Jewish cultural treasures in Germany, it has been decided to invite the Council for the Protection of Rights and Interests of Jews from Germany to join the ranks of the charter members of the corporation which will probably be in charge of taking over and redistributing these treasures.

You may know that it was the World Jewish Congress that claimed representation for the Council and was instrumental in having the invitation extended to the Council.

I am writing to tell you that the WJC would regard your presence, dear Dr. Gruenewald, among the Directors of the Board of the new corporation on behalf of the Council as an essential contribution to the success of what is a unique and highly important experiment. If you accept, as I hope you will, we will ask the Council to appoint you as their representative.

I trust that we will have the pleasure of working together with you on the Board of Directors of the new corporation; that this important undertaking, which can now be realized through the understanding and assistance of the American authorities, will have the benefit of your great authority and experience.

I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki

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COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION
affiliated with
Conference on Jewish Relations, Inc.
1841 Broadway, New York 23, N.Y.

April 28, 1946

Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York 23, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Kubowitzki

You are undoubtedly familiar with the work of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. Organized under the auspices of the Conference on Jewish Relations and sustained by grants from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Committee, the American Association for Jewish Education, and the Conference on Jewish Relations, the Commission has recently issued its first work entitled, "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries." This important inventory was executed by the Research Staff of the Commission, comprising such outstanding scholars as Dr. Hannah Arendt, Dr. Adolf Kober, Dr. Raphael Mahler and Dr. Jacob Shatzky, working under the direction of a Research Committee headed by Professors Marx, Freimann and others.

The Staff of the Commission has also accumulated much material concerning the present whereabouts of these cultural treasures. The Commission is really in a position to serve as a focal agency in located and salvaging Jewish cultural treasures in war-ravaged Europe. It has, for example, established contacts with chaplains of all faiths and with general relief and service organizations to enlist their support in tracking down and preserving the remains of Jewish culture in Europe.

The Commission is also engaged in an extensive program of research concerning the pre-war status of the Jewish schools, seminaries and yeshivoth in Axis-occupied Europe, and in the present status of the newly reestablished schools, to ascertain their needs, and determine what types of assistance can be extended to them through the United States. Another sub-committee of the Commission, headed by Professor Jerome Michael of the Columbia Law School, and aided by a full-time Research Fellow, is engaged in clarifying the legal and political issues involved in the difficult problems of restitution, reparations, and redistribution of Jewish cultural and religious treasures.

Moreover, the Commission is planning to extend its activities. At the last meeting of the Commission it was decided to accept a suggestion from the Jewish Historical Society of England that a delegation of experts be sent from America, England and Palestine, to visit the various European countries to help locate the cultural property and assist in its redistribution, advise the communities

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there on cultural and religious programs, etc. It is contemplated that six scholars each be sent from the three countries, the delegation then dividing itself into smaller teams of two or three to visit individual sections in Europe and reconvening at a central point for purposes of final deliberation and decision. Some of the cultural treasures may ultimately be transferred to Palestine, the United States or other countries.

In order to be able to go ahead with our program, it is necessary for us to raise an additional \$15,000 at least. As a central organization in Jewish life, the World Jewish Congress would undoubtedly wish to assist the work of the Commission, which at this juncture we believe to be of decisive importance for the welfare and perpetuation of our people. We therefore invite you to contribute the sum of \$5,000 to the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction thereby matching the grants of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Committee, and the Conference on Jewish Relations to the Commission.

I shall be delighted to answer any questions that you might wish to raise about the program and activity of the Commission. We are very eager to enlist your support so that all the major Jewish organizations may be united behind the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction.

Very truly yours,

(signed) Salo W. Baron
Chairman

P.S. Under separate cover we are sending you a copy of the first publication by the Commission entitled, "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-occupied countries".

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WJC #10

COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

affiliated with

CONFERENCE ON JEWISH RELATIONS, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 5-7826

Chairman

SALO W. BARON

Secretaries

URIAH Z. ENGELMAN
KOPPEL S. PINSON

Committee on Coöperation

HORACE M. KALLEN,
Chairman

Committee on Legal Problems

JEROME MICHAEL,
Chairman

Committee on Research

ALEXANDER MARX,
Chairman

Research Department

HANNAH ARENDT,
Chairman

ADOLF KOBER
ERNEST MUNZ

June 18, 1946

Dear Dr. Kubowitzki:

Thank you for your letter of June 14 (file ref. ALK:fh) in which I learn with regret that because of what you refer to as the recent extension of the scope of the Commission's activities, the Congress will not assist the Commission financially.

While I do not question the decision of your Executive in this regard, I think that in the interest of accuracy I ought to correct an error in your letter. It is incorrect to say that the Commission has only recently begun to frame and pursue general policies, thereby entering a field previously covered by the Congress and its Department of Culture and Education. It is true that the Commission, like the Conference on Jewish Relations by which it was organized, was originally intended to do research only, and to put the fruits of its research at the disposal of political organizations, including your own. However, a year ago, we discovered that no steps whatever were being taken to rescue Jewish cultural objects in Germany and the occupied countries. We also learned that these objects were in grave danger of physical deterioration and dispersion. Because of the inertia of other organizations, it seemed necessary to us, as you put it, to frame and pursue general policy. However, we acted at all times in consultation with members of other organizations including your own. Indeed, until, for the reasons set forth in a letter which I wrote to Dr. Federbush on June 10 and of which I enclose a copy, we regretfully reached the conclusion that we could not name the Congress as one of the organizations which, according to our plan, will nominate the Advisors to the Trustee, we were working in complete harmony with Dr. Federbush, who had agreed that the Congress would make proposals to the State Department identical with our own.

Some weeks ago, after a conference with Dr. Evans of the Library of Congress, we evolved a plan according to which the Library of Congress was to be made the Trustee of these Jewish cultural objects and to which Dr. Federbush agreed. However, after further conferences with Dr. Evans and conferences with representatives of the State Department, we

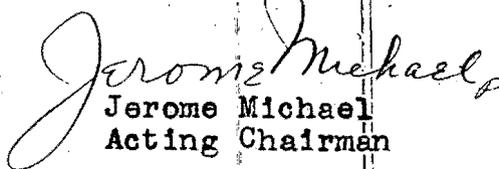
WJC E10

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thought it necessary to abandon that proposal. I am, therefore, all the more disturbed to learn from the June 1946 issue of your Information Bulletin that your Department of Culture and Education is apparently still adhering to this abandoned plan, which is inconsistent with the one which on June 5, 1946 we submitted to the State Department and to which, with the one exception to which I have referred, Dr. Federbush agreed. May I say also that it seems to be very unfortunate that while these proposals are being considered in the State Department they should be publicized. It will surely make the work of the State Department more difficult.

You may, of course, rest assured that whatever the outcome of this unfortunate difference of opinion, the Commission will cooperate with the Congress in every possible way in an effort to attain our common goal.

Sincerely yours,


Jerome Michael
Acting Chairman

Dr. A. Leon Kubowitzki
Secretary General
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York 23, N. Y.

encl.

JM:GP

WJC E10

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COMMISSION ON EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION

affiliated with

CONFERENCE ON JEWISH RELATIONS, INC.

1841 Broadway, New York 23, N. Y.

Telephone: Circle 5-7826

Chairman

SALO W. BARON

Secretaries

URIAH Z. ENGELMAN
KOPPEL S. PINSON

Committee on Cooperation

HORACE M. KALLEN,
Chairman

Committee on Legal Problems

JEROME MICHAEL,
Chairman

Committee on Research

ALEXANDER MARX,
Chairman

Research Department

HANNAH ARENDT,
Chairman

ADOLF KOBER
ERNEST MUNZ

July 29, 1946

Dr. A. Leon Kubowitski
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York 23, New York

Dear Dr. Kubowitski:

Please forgive my delay in replying to your letter of July 12th, which has been due to a series of misadventures.

I very much regret that you did not find my letter of June 18th persuasive. It is quite true that friendly co-operation does not imply the grant of a subsidy, and we have not sought a grant from the Congress on that hypothesis. We have sought it because we have done indispensable research the fruits of which have been useful to and utilized by the Congress and which the Congress would have had to do had we not done it. You deny us aid on the ground that we also entered a field which the Congress had somehow managed to preempt, although when we entered it it had the appearance of a vacuum. This suggests that we are being denied aid as a punitive measure, and, for my part, I think that the punishment hardly fits the crime.

I had not been aware that, as you put it, during the last weeks the whole problem of safeguarding our cultural treasures has again been shelved. The fact is that we have been awaiting action upon the plan which we submitted to the State Department and which the Congress endorsed with some qualifications. In the interval there has been very little which could be done by us or, as far as I can see, by anyone else. In any case, Dr. Federbusch has not yet seen fit to discuss the matter with me.

Sincerely yours,


Jerome Michael

JM:mjm

116111

WJC E10

(Copy was sent to AAK)

July 12, 1946

Prof. Jerome Michael, Acting Chairman
Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
1841 Broadway
New York, 23, N.Y.

Dear Prof. Michael:

The unparalleled pressure of work during these hectic days has, to my sincere regret, prevented me from answering your letter of June 18th sooner.

I understand that you have meanwhile had an exchange of communications with Dr. N. Goldmann, and that Dr. Federtusch has also written to you.

I have given careful consideration to the contents of your letter, but I must say that I can't find that it basically contradicts what I wrote to you. The fact that the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction extended the scope of its activities is also acknowledged by you, and as far as I am informed the World Jewish Congress was not consulted as to the advisability of such an enlargement of the Commission's activities. Friendly co-operation which we are surely anxious to see established and maintained, doesn't necessarily imply the granting of financial subsidies.

The question of the publication of the Library of Congress' scheme by the Information Bulletin of our Department of Culture and Education is today no longer significant. I am not familiar enough with developments to be in a position to evaluate Washington's strange change of attitude as well as its motives. The Bulletin referred to the plan as it existed before it was abandoned by your Commission as well as by the World Jewish Congress.

WJC E10

116113

Prof. Jerome Michael

-2-

July 12, 1946

It seems, unfortunately, that during the last few weeks the whole problem of safeguarding our cultural treasures has again been shelved. I understand that Dr. Federbusch intends to discuss with you this very disturbing situation.

Sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki

ALK/SS

116114

WJC E10

Memo

To: Dr. Kubowitzki
From: Dr. Karbach

July 5, 1946

During the last few days I urged the Department for Culture and Education at least three times to give me the opportunity to discuss with them the answer to be given to the attached letter from Prof. Michael. Finally, on Wednesday, I insisted on getting back the letter which was still in their files and only then was I told by Dr. Blattberg that the whole situation has meanwhile assumed a new character, as Prof. Michael addressed I think two letters to Prof. Goldmann and Dr. Goldmann answered that in due time he will personally take up the matter of a subsidy for the Baron Commission.

I don't know whether you have been kept informed about these developments but I was certainly not familiar with them. Dr. Blattberg was good enough to show me copies of Dr. Goldmann's answer to Prof. Michael.

Under these conditions it seems that Prof. Michael's letter should go into the files.

116115

WJC E10

June 14, 1946

**Professor Jerome Michael, Chairman, Committee on Legal Problems
Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
1641 Broadway
New York 23, N.Y.**

Dear Professor Michael:

Let me begin by apologizing for the unavoidable delay in my reply to the request of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction for a contribution of \$5,000.

We are pleased to hear that your Commission has succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of an impressive number of eminent Jewish scholars in this country; and we scanned with much interest the "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries," which no doubt is a very valuable piece of research work.

However, as you are aware, the World Jewish Congress, by the creation of its Department of Culture and Education headed by Rabbi Simon Federbusch, a member of our Executive, has long since established the necessary machinery to make its own contribution to the paramount cause of Jewish cultural reconstruction on the war-ravaged continent of Europe.

During the last few months your Commission has greatly extended the scope of its activity. Originally intended to put the expert knowledge of a group of scholars at the disposal of the Jewish people, the Commission has recently begun to frame and pursue general policies, thereby entering a field previously covered by the World Jewish Congress and its Department of Culture and Education.

Today the World Jewish Congress is called upon by your Commission to subsidize activities which the Congress has itself been carrying on for a long time now. Our Executive, having carefully considered your request, regretfully states that there is no possibility of making World Jewish Congress funds available to the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction.

It is obvious that other organizations mentioned in your communication are in quite a different position.

I trust that you and the members of your Commission will understand the difference in the approach of the World Jewish Congress, and that the cooperation between our organizations will proceed in such a way as to assure efficient work on the basis of the new proposals for the safeguarding and eventual redistribution of the Jewish cultural treasures in Europe.

Sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki
Secretary General

ALK:fh

116116

WJC E10

June 14, 1946

Professor Jerome Michael, Chairman, Committee on Legal Problems
Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
1841 Broadway
New York 23, N.Y.

Dear Professor Michael:

Let me begin by apologizing for the unavoidable delay in my reply to the request of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction for a contribution of \$5,000.

We are pleased to hear that your Commission has succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of an impressive number of eminent Jewish scholars in this country; and we scanned with much interest the "Tentative List of Jewish Cultural Treasures in Axis-Occupied Countries," which no doubt is a very valuable piece of research work.

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Sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki
Secretary General

ALK: fh

WSC E10

116117

July 12, 1946

Prof. Jerome Michael, Acting Chairman
Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction
1841 Broadway
New York, 23, N.Y.

Dear Prof. Michael:

The unparalleled pressure of work during these hectic days has, to my sincere regret, prevented me from answering your letter of June 18th sooner.

I understand that you have meanwhile had an exchange of communications with Dr. N. Goldmann, and that Dr. Federbusch has also written to you.

I have given careful consideration to the contents of your letter, but I must say that I can't find that it basically contradicts what I wrote to you. The fact that the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction extended the scope of its activities is also acknowledged by you, and as far as I am informed the World Jewish Congress was not consulted as to the advisability of such an enlargement of the Commission's activities. Friendly co-operation which we are surely anxious to see established and maintained, doesn't necessarily imply the granting of financial subsidies.

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116118

WJC E10

Prof. Jerome Michael

-2-

July 12, 1946

It seems, unfortunately, that during the last few weeks the whole problem of safeguarding our cultural treasures has again been shelved. I understand that Dr. Federtusch intends to discuss with you this very disturbing situation.

Sincerely yours,

A. Leon Kubowitzki

ALX/ss

WJC E10

116119

MEM O

To: Dr. Federbusch
From: Dr. Karbach

May 13, 1946

I want to report that at yesterday's plenary meeting of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, I acted in strict accordance with the decisions which we reached at the meeting held Friday afternoon, under your chairmanship.

I informed yesterday's meeting along the following lines:

- 1) Those members of the Baron Commission who are connected with the WJC met (with the exception of Prof. Pekelis) and considered the conditions under which we would be ready to recommend, to the Executive of the WJC, the submission of a memorandum along the lines of that which the Baron Commission will draft.
- 2) I made it clear that only the Executive of the WJC can determine the policies of this organization.
- 3) As a result of Friday's deliberations, we agreed that the following points be additionally stressed in such a WJC memorandum:
 - a) If ^{10N} a delegate of the Library of Congress should go to Germany, it should include one delegate assigned by the WJC who would have the necessary qualifications and would be an American citizen.
 - b) If the trusteeship on masterless cultural property should be transferred to the Library of Congress, this trusteeship should be exercised in cooperation with representatives of the Baron Commission and the WJC.
 - c) If ultimate disposal of books and other cultural objects should be made by the Library of Congress, it should be made in cooperation with representatives of the Baron Commission and the WJC.
 - d) The Library of Congress shall agree that in disposing of the books and other objects, first consideration should be given to the request of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

I have already reported to you that other aspects have meanwhile arisen, which we will have to duly take into consideration.

116120

WJC E10

memo

from

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

WASHINGTON OFFICE

To— Dr. Leon Kubowitzki

September 23rd, 1946

From— G. Irving Dwork

Subject— Cultural Property

I have just had lunch with Mr. Noel Hemmendinger, of the State Department, during which we discussed the current situation regarding the "hairless books". A strong letter has gone from Washington to the Theatre, stating that both the War Department and the State Department strongly recommended the plan submitted by the W.J.C. and the Baron Group. As yet, there has been no reply from the Theatre.

Hemmendinger maintains that even should the books be given to the Germans during the interim, this will occasion no difficulties in the carrying out of the plan.

WJC E10

116121

Dr. Kurbach

To: Dr. Federbusch
From: Dr. Kurbach

October 3, 1946

Yesterday you requested me to make suggestions for the utilization of the big success you have achieved regarding the re-acquisition of the cultural treasures looted by the Nazis, and their ultimate re-distribution. As I already pointed out, we are taking for granted the fact that everybody is as familiar with our large network of constituencies as we are. It would, therefore, be advisable to mobilize and to once again demonstrate in an impressive way, the forces behind the World Jewish Congress.

Some of our constituencies which have to be carefully selected should, therefore, be approached immediately with the view to their cooperation along the following lines:

1- They have to be informed not only of the results achieved, but at least of some of the great difficulties which you had to overcome to achieve the favorable result and to ensure to the WJC its appropriate position within the whole plan.

2- These constituencies should be requested to express their thanks in a fitting way for the attitude, understanding and assistance rendered and promised for the future by the appropriate authorities of the U.S. These messages could perhaps be addressed directly to the Department of State in the same way as we urged our constituencies to approach Mr. Bevin directly several months ago.

3- It goes without saying that these messages should convey to the State Department the impression that the constituencies regard the WJC - and the WJC only - as their legitimate spokesman and as the guardian of their interests as far as the whole scheme of re-acquisition and re-distribution of the cultural treasures is concerned.

4- I don't think that such an appeal should be addressed to all our constituencies, with no exceptions, because those of them whose remnants will be practically put in the position of expropriated parties should not be included. On the other hand, a mobilization of all constituencies outside of Europe and of a selected number in Europe ought to be approached.

5- Perhaps it would be advisable to ask the constituencies at the same time to forward their needs to us as far as the ultimate re-distribution of the cultural treasures is concerned.

I should like to add that attention should be given, in time, to the legal problems involved in the redistribution of books: particularly as far as smaller institutions of learning are concerned - which, of course, doesn't include the Hebrew University, etc. - certain guarantees will be necessary to prohibit cultural treasures assigned to them from being re-sold. But this will probably be taken up in cooperation with the Commission.

116122

WJC E10

Dr. Rudolph

TO: The Members of the Office Committee

FROM: Dr.S.Federbush

Following is the copy of a letter received from the Assistant Secretary of State, which may interest you.

C
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P
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 18, 1946

Dr.Simon Federbush
Dr.Arieh Tartakower,
World Jewish Congress,
1834 Broadway,
New York City, 23, New York.

Dear Sirs:

I have your joint letter of August 30, 1946 modifying your earlier proposals relative to the custody and ultimate disposition of Jewish religious and cultural objects in Germany and Austria.

As I have informed Professor Michael who, by letter of August 26, 1946 made similar proposals on behalf of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, this Government is sympathetic to the objectives of your proposals and believes that they are generally acceptable. In view of the fact that their execution requires the support and cooperation of the US Forces in Germany and Austria, the War Department has been requested to forward a synopsis of the proposals to the US Commanders for their detailed comment.

When replies are received I shall communicate with you further.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) J.H.Hilldring
Assistant Secretary

116123

WJC E10

January 31, 1947

MEMO

TO: Office Committee

FROM: Dr. Federbush

Conference on Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property
Held on January 30, 1947

Present: For W.J.C. - Dr. Simon Federbush, Dr. Wolf
Blattberg
For the Commission on European Jewish Cultural
Reconstruction - Professors Salo W. Baron
and Jerome Michael

Professor Michael entered into private conversations with Mr. Hemendinger of the State Department and as a result of these discussions he expects the State Department to approve in general the competence of the trusteeship as outlined by representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the Commission during the conference with General Clay. It is understood that this competence should remain the same regardless of whether a joint trusteeship or a separate one for cultural property would be formed.

During the discussion, Professors Baron and Michael were in favor of a single trusteeship and gave as their motives financial, as well as organizational reasons.

I pointed out that a separate trusteeship is preferable because of the danger to which the books in Germany would be exposed in case of further delay. Some of the precious book collections may disappear or be greatly damaged by the time the joint trusteeship will be able to start functioning. I also stressed the fact that in the meantime UNESCO may put forward claims to the cultural treasures now stored in Germany, as I was informed lately by our observers in UNESCO, Mrs. Klausner and Dr. Steinberg of our London office. I further explained to them that a joint trusteeship can be taken into consideration only under the following conditions, according to the decisions of our Office Committee:

1. That it will be formed in the very nearest future.
2. That its activities will be restricted to Germany.
3. That the operating agency should not be named in the by-laws of the trusteeship but that their nomination be reserved for the board of directors.

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116124

MEMO

January 31, 1947

4. That a special status with regard to cultural property should be guaranteed for those members of the trusteeship who have dealt with cultural recovery until now (World Jewish Congress, Hebrew University, Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction).

Professors Baron and Michael agreed to support the incorporation of the latter point into the by-laws.

During the discussion it was agreed according to our suggestion, to take up with the State Department the question of having an advisor with OMGUS for Jewish cultural matters.

It was finally agreed that the letter from the State Department (General Hildring) should be addressed both to the World Jewish Congress and the Commission.

June 18, 1946

Hon. John H. Hildring
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

on

THE RESTITUTION OF LOOTED JEWISH CULTURAL PROPERTY IN EUROPE

submitted by the

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

and the

COMMITTEE FOR RECOVERY OF JEWISH CULTURAL PROPERTY

I

In all European countries formerly under Nazi rule, Jewish libraries, archives, museums, and other repositories of Jewish cultural treasures were ruthlessly looted by the Germans. These vast cultural assets constituted the richest and most valuable part of the Jewish spiritual heritage, since for more than 1,000 years Europe was the main center of Jewish learning and culture.

The Germans placed all the stolen Jewish cultural property in a few "clearing houses" and so-called Institutes for the Study of Jewish Problems, the largest of which was situated in Frankfort on Main. The bulk of the unearthed treasures is now stored in Offenbach and held under the custody of the American Military Government.

In order to trace the whereabouts of the plundered Jewish treasures and to make representations to the proper authorities about the ultimate disposition of the salvaged books and other precious objects, a Committee on Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property, sponsored by the World Jewish Congress and comprising representatives of the foremost Jewish communities and institutions in America, Europe, and Palestine, was formed as soon as the war was over and some information concerning such property had become available.

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The World Jewish Congress, representing the great majority of Jewries the world over, and the aforesaid Committee, the composition of which is shown in the attached folder, hereby respectfully submit certain principles by which the ultimate disposition of Jewish cultural treasures in Europe should be governed.

II

Owing to the destruction of great Jewish communities and the extermination of about 6,000,000 Jews in Europe, there is a great disparity between the actual number of Jewish survivors in Central and East European countries and the number of Jewish cultural treasures existing there. These treasures by far exceed the present cultural needs of the pitifully small remnants of European Jewry. This is particularly true of Germany, Austria, and Poland, where only about 2 or 3 percent of the pre-war Jewish population is now living. To some extent this is also true of Hungary and Rumania.

This annihilation of large Jewish communities in Europe has resulted in a radical transformation of Jewish life on that continent. Europe is no longer, and probably will never be again, the center of Jewish religious and cultural activities. This center has shifted to Palestine and the United States. These two countries contain the principal institutions of Jewish learning and culture. In these countries the vast majority of those who escaped the Nazi and Fascist inferno in Europe have found refuge.

This is a major factor that should be given prime consideration in deciding on the final disposition of the Jewish cultural treasures now under American control. These treasures were formerly owned by individuals, various institutions, and Jewish communities. The communities in which these treasures were situated, or which formerly owned them, may now be destroyed altogether or reduced to negligible numbers. In no way could libraries or museums, if located in these communities, perform the main task to which they were formerly dedicated. Therefore, even if these communities have legal title, the salvaged Jewish cultural treasures should not be restored to them. The restoration of Jewish cultural objects should be determined not merely by principles of legality but by broader considerations of equity, which requires that they be placed where they may best serve the purpose for which they were so diligently collected and so lovingly preserved for generations.

Accordingly, we suggest that the following rules be applied in the restitution of looted Jewish cultural property in Europe, with special reference to Germany, Austria, and Poland:

- (a) Objects which unquestionably were owned by individuals should be restored to their former owners or to their legal successors upon satisfactory proof of ownership.
- (b) Objects formerly owned by a Jewish community, especially in Germany, Austria or Poland, should be restored to the

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extent of its actual cultural needs, provided a substantial percentage of its former Jewish population survives.

- (c) objects formerly owned by Jewish philanthropic or cultural institutions, especially in Germany, Austria, or Poland, should be restored to said institutions upon satisfactory proof of evidence, in accordance with their actual philanthropic or cultural needs.
- (d) All objects not falling within any of the foregoing categories, as well as those which are ownerless or unclaimed, or the conditions of whose restitution are not satisfied, should be turned over to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to other Jewish religious and cultural institutions upon and in accordance with the recommendations of the Board of Advisors to be established, which Board would be guided in its recommendations by the religious and cultural needs of the Jewish people as well as of the surviving victims of Nazi persecution.

As for the attitude of the Polish Government in the matter of restitution, we have communicated with the Central Jewish Committee of Warsaw, which is the official representative body of Polish Jewry, and in their opinion, no objections to the principles of restitution proposed by us are to be expected from the Polish Government.

III

After consultation with our constituencies, representing the Jewries of about forty countries in all parts of the world, as well as with the Director of the Library of Congress, we beg to submit the following proposals as to how the foregoing principles of restitution are to be effectuated.

1. A body should be created to act as Trustee for the former owners of the Jewish cultural treasures and for the Jewish people. This body should consist partly of members appointed by the SWN Coordinating Committee upon nomination by the Library of Congress, the World Jewish Congress, the Committee on Recovery of Jewish Cultural Property, and the Hebrew University, and partly of members appointed directly by the SWN Coordinating Committee.

2. A Board of Advisors should be appointed by the Trustee on recommendation of the World Jewish Congress and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This Board is to assist the Trustee in the performance of its task and advise it on the conditions and cultural needs of the Jewish communities in Europe, as well as on the nature and value of the looted Jewish cultural property and on its ultimate disposition.

3. The Trustee, assisted by the Board of Advisors, should ascertain what Jewish cultural property seized by the Germans has been lost, destroyed, or irreparably damaged. This property should be replaced by similar objects of comparable value found in German or Austrian libraries, archives, and museums.

4. The ultimate disposition of this cultural property should be made by the Trustee in cooperation with the Board of Advisors.

In line with the principles set forth in this Memorandum, first consideration in the final disposition of the Jewish books and other cultural treasures should be given to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This University is the highest Jewish institution of learning in the world, recognized and respected everywhere as a great Jewish cultural center that has served the needs of all Israel. Both its faculty and student body are drawn from all countries of Jewish settlement. Moreover, it should be remembered that Palestine gave refuge in the years preceding and during the war to a very large number of Jews who managed to escape the horrors of Nazi Europe. Hence the Jewish cultural treasures, if turned over to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, would serve a large proportion of former members of the European Jewish communities which originally owned them. Finally, it would be the most fitting tribute paid to the memory of the millions of slaughtered Jews of Europe if this Jewish cultural heritage of many lands and generations should be deposited at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which is looked upon by the Jews of the world as a great Jewish cultural shrine.

September 11, 1946

MEMO

To: The Members of the Office Committee
From: Dr. Federbush

Attached you will find a second memorandum submitted to the Department of State on the formation of a corporation for the rescue of Jewish looted books in Germany.

This memorandum was drafted after consultation with proper officials of the Department of State in accordance with their advice.

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116100

September 6, 1946

MEMO

To: The Members of the Office Committee
From: Dr. S. Federbush

August 30, 1946

Hon. John H. Hildring
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Pursuant to the conversation of our representatives with members of your staff, and in view of more accurate information regarding the contents of the Offenbach Archival Depot, we take liberty of modifying the proposals set forth in our memorandum of June 18, 1946, relative to the custody and ultimate disposition of the books and other Jewish religious and cultural objects which are now in or may hereafter come into the Office of Military Government of the United States.

I. We, who represent Jewish communities and organizations in over 40 countries the world over, are forming a membership corporation under the laws of the State of New York, of which we intend to invite representatives of the following organizations to serve as initial members:

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
The American Jewish Conference
The American Jewish Committee
The American Joint Distribution Committee
The Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

Provision will be made in its certificate of incorporation and by-laws for the enlargement of its membership and inclusion of representatives from other bodies. The representative character of the corporation's membership warrants that it will possess the moral as well as the legal authority and the human and material resources necessary for the performance of its statutory functions.

II. When the Corporation shall have been organized and its initial membership constituted as above set forth, the commanding general of the United States forces in Germany and the commanding general of the United States in Austria or other appropriate agencies of the United States shall transfer to the Corporation, as trustee for their former Jewish owners and for the Jewish people, all Hebraica and Judaica and all other Jewish religious and cultural objects in the American zone of occupation, of whatsoever nature and in whosever possession, which are included in any of the following categories:

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A. Those formerly owned by individual German or Austrian Jews, or by German or Austrian Jewish communities, or by German or Austrian philanthropic or cultural institutions.

B. Those which the German armies or other agencies of the German Reich or the Nazi party removed (1) from countries to which the United States is not required to return them by virtue of any existing arrangements to which the United States is a party or (2) from countries to which the United States is required to return them by virtue of such arrangements if claimed by such countries but which are not claimed by them within a reasonable time.

C. Those which cannot be identified or included within either of the first two categories.

D. Those which are now owned by or in the possession of German and Austrian state, municipal and other publicly owned or maintained libraries, archives, museums and similar institutions, whenever and however they were acquired by such institutions, except such as the United States is required by existing international arrangements to which it is a party to dispose of otherwise.

Only a small fraction of cultural treasures necessary to meet the actual needs of the remaining Jewish population should be restored even to countries with which there exist restitution agreements, due to the small number of Jewish survivors.

Among the countries included in existing restitution agreements Czechoslovakia is a special case. According to reliable information, in Theresienstadt and in other places in that country, some very valuable and even rare Jewish religious and cultural objects were stored by the Germans. Neither the Government of Czechoslovakia nor Czechoslovakian Jews have any legal or moral right to retain these objects. We urgently request that the Government of the United States enter into negotiations with the Czechoslovakian Government to the end that these objects shall be returned to the American Zone of Occupation.

III. When the corporation shall have been constituted trustee as aforesaid, it shall send a technical mission into the American Zone of Occupation which shall:

A. Examine and classify Jewish religious and cultural objects which are now in or may hereafter come into the possession of the office of Military Government according to the following scheme:

1. Objects which were formerly owned by individual German or Austrian Jews, or by German or Austrian Jewish communities, or by German or Austrian Jewish philanthropic and cultural institutions.

2. Objects which were removed from countries to which the United States is not required by arrangements to return them.

3. Objects which were removed from countries to which the United States is required by existing arrangements to return them.

4. Objects which cannot be identified or included within any of the first three categories.

B. Endeavor to find and to assist the Office of Military Government in finding Jewish religious and cultural objects of the above sorts which have not yet come into, or have been improperly taken from, the possession of the United States Forces for Germany and Austria.

C. Ascertain what Hebraica and Judaica and what other Jewish religious or cultural objects are owned by or in the possession of German and Austrian state, municipal or other publicly owned or maintained libraries, archives, museums and similar institutions in the American Zone of Occupation, regardless of whenever and how-ever they were acquired by such institutions.

D. From time to time report the results of its activities in the performance of the foregoing functions to the commanding generals of the United States forces for Germany and Austria, or to their respective agents. The commanding generals of the United States forces in Germany and Austria will on their part:

x. Admit the Corporation's mission into the American Zone of Occupation, give its members free access to all places in which cultural and religious objects are stored and, in general, freedom of movement throughout the American Zone of Occupation, and provide them with quarters, food, and such clerical and other assistance and such transportation and other facilities as are reasonably necessary to enable them to perform their functions.

y. Seize and take into its possession Jewish religious and cultural objects included within any of the above categories, which may from time to time be discovered by the Corporation's mission.

z. Seize and take to their possession all Hebraica, Judaica and other Jewish religious and cultural objects which are owned by or in the possession of German and Austrian state, municipal and other publicly owned or maintained libraries, archives, museums, and similar institutions.

IV. The Corporation, as trustee of the Jewish religious and cultural objects which shall be transferred to it, shall have the following powers, duties and functions:

a. The Corporation may take possession of, and remove to any place in or outside Germany, the Jewish religious and cultural objects which are transferred to it as trustee, at such time or times and in such lots as it may deem advisable.

b. The Corporation shall dispose of such objects in the following manner:

(1) Objects which unquestionably were owned by individuals will be restored to their former owners or to their legal successors upon satisfactory proof of ownership.

(ii) Objects formerly owned by a Jewish community, especially in Germany, Austria or Poland, will be restored to the extent of its actual cultural needs, provided a substantial percentage of its former Jewish population survives.

(iii) Objects formerly owned by Jewish philanthropic or cultural institutions, especially in Germany, Austria or Poland, will be restored to said institutions upon satisfactory proof of evidence, in accordance with their actual philanthropic or cultural needs.

(iv) All objects not falling within any of the foregoing categories, as well as those which are ownerless or unclaimed, or the conditions of whose restitution are not satisfied, will be turned over to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to other Jewish religious and cultural institutions in the United States of America and abroad, with the provision that the Corporation shall be guided in its recommendations by the religious and cultural needs of the Jewish people as well as of the surviving victims of Nazi persecution.

5. The Corporation shall have such further powers as are necessary, appropriate or convenient for the execution of its trust.

E. In order to assist and facilitate the execution of the Corporation's trust, the Office of Military Government of the United States will:

1. Take and retain possession of and safeguard the Jewish religious and cultural objects transferred to the Corporation as trustee until, as provided in paragraph IVa above, the Corporation shall elect to take possession thereof.

2. At the expense of the Treasury of the German Reich or of the German Laender, pack and transport to points within Germany and Austria such of the Jewish religious and cultural objects transferred to the Corporation as trustee as the Corporation shall allot to German or Austrian Jewish communities or institutions, and to the German or Austrian border such of these objects as the Corporation shall elect to remove from Germany or Austria, as the case may be.

3. Render such other services, and provide the Corporation with such other facilities, as may be necessary to enable it to execute its trust.

TO: The Members of the Office Committee
FROM: Dr.S.Federbush

Following is the copy of a letter received from the Assistant Secretary of State, which may interest you.

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 18, 1946

Dr. Simon Federbush
Dr. Arish Tartakower,
World Jewish Congress,
1854 Broadway,
New York City, 23, New York.

Dear Sirs:

I have your joint letter of August 30, 1946 modifying your earlier proposals relative to the custody and ultimate disposition of Jewish religious and cultural objects in Germany and Austria.

As I have informed Professor Michael who, by letter of August 26, 1946 made similar proposals on behalf of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, this Government is sympathetic to the objectives of your proposals and believes that they are generally acceptable. In view of the fact that their execution requires the support and cooperation of the US Forces in Germany and Austria, the War Department has been requested to forward a synopsis of the proposals to the US Commanders for their detailed comment.

When replies are received I shall communicate with you further.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) J. N. Hilldring
Assistant Secretary

WJC E10

116135

New York, New York

November 25, 1947

Mr. C. Oberlander
45 West 81 Street
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Oberlander:

In reply to your letter of November 19, 1947, I regret to say that we have no list of Jewish property housed at the Museum in Prague. I would suggest that you write to the Council of Jewish Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, whose address you will find below, and they will probably be able to give you the information you are interested in.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. W. Blattberg
Department of Culture & Education

Rada Židovských Náboženských Obcí
v Zemích Česka a Moravskoslezsko
Malslova 18
Praha V (Czechoslovakia)

RK

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Cult. Aff.
Recovery of Cult. Property

minutes of O. C.

12/10/47

3. Cultural property in Germany and Hebrew University - The question of distribution having been raised again recently, Dr. Federbush suggests that the OC confirm that our policy with regard to heirless cultural property in Germany has been and is that the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has first right to the properties, which do not belong to or are not claimed by existing Jewish communities and/or institutions in Europe, the remainder to be used for the cultural rehabilitation of surviving Jewish communities in Europe and destitute Jewish communities outside Europe. The OC confirms this policy.

116137

WJC E10

May 20, 1948

John

TO: Members of the Office Committee
FROM: Dr. Blattberg

Re: Meeting of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc.
held on May 18

1. Besides representatives of the member organizations, there participated in this meeting as guests, Prof. L. Mayer of the Hebrew University, Mr. A. G. Brotman, and Mrs. B. Janner, M. P. of Great Britain.

Prof. Baron reported that Dr. Starr, the delegate of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction to Germany, is still in Paris, and would be able to proceed to Germany only after the final recognition of the Restitution Commission as a successor corporation. The act of recognition might provide for the creation of a subsidiary of the Jewish Restitution Commission in Germany (subject to German law) but only with regard to immovable property. It is therefore expected that with regard to books and other cultural treasures, the Jewish Restitution Commission, or its agency in cultural matters, the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., will be able to assume direct charge in Germany shortly. (After the meeting word was received to the effect that designation of the J.R.C. as a successor corporation had already been approved by the State Department, and General Clay advised accordingly.)

2. Mr. Brotman stated that the formation of a Restitution Commission here had accelerated, to some extent, the handling of the restitution problem in the British Zone. According to information that he had received in London only last week, the Foreign Office was now preparing a draft law of restitution which, while it would not go as far as recognizing a Jewish body as the successor organization, would nevertheless safeguard Jewish claims. The Jewish Central Fund in Great Britain might, according to this draft law, act in the British Zone as an operating agency.
3. According to information received from Mr. Starr, the first consignment of books from Czechoslovakia, destined for the Hebrew University, and comprising 70 cases weighing about 14 tons, has arrived in Antwerp, and is stored there for the time being in a JDC warehouse. It will be transhipped to Palestine as soon as conditions permit. If it should prove necessary to keep the books in Antwerp for a longer time, they may be sorted out and evaluated there. Prof. L. Mayer agreed to this at the meeting, provided it was done under the supervision of experts.
4. Approximately 100,000 books were shipped recently from Poland to Palestine, with the full consent of the Polish Government, with a view to serve primarily the needs of the Chair for the history of Jews and Jewish culture in Poland to be established at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Polish Government is greatly interested in the establishment of this Chair, which might become the nucleus of a larger Institute. According to information from J.D.C. quarters, the Polish Government is ready to establish an endowment of \$600,000 for such an Institute, provided 25% of this amount will be contributed by the J.D.C.

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