by the socialist People's Relief Committee, chaired by Meyer London. Warburg became the JDC's first chairman. Eastern Europe was and has remained one of the JDC's main areas of activity.

At first, the JDC simply transferred funds to local Jewish relief organizations such as the Evreiskii Komitet Pomoshchi Zhertvam Voiny (Jewish Committee for the Relief of War Victims; EKOPO) in Russia and Das Jüdisches Hilfskomite für Polen und Litauen in Germany. By the end of 1917, the JDC had transferred 2,532,000 zloties to Poland and Lithuania, 1,532,300 to Galicia, and 76,000 to Romania.

The Joint began its work in Warsaw in 1919, first as a part of the American Relief Administration (ARA) and then independently. Boris D. Bogen organized and headed the JDC Overseas Unit in Warsaw, which was staffed by dozens of American experts. They organized urgently needed sanitary and medical aid, as well as child care. The JDC's appropriations for the relief of Polish Jewry in 1920 alone totaled almost $5 million. On 5 July 1920, during the Polish–Soviet war, two JDC emissaries, Israel Friedlaender and Bernard Cantor, were killed by the Red Army in the town of Yarmolintsy (Podolia, Ukraine) while traveling from Kamenets-Podolski to L'vov.

In Czechoslovakia, the local Jewish relief committee distributed aid from the JDC. In Hungary, a Jewish relief committee, which united Orthodox, Neolog, and Zionist Jews, was created after it was ascertained that Hungarian Jews were being discriminated against in the distribution of aid transmitted by the JDC through the ARA. During the emergency relief period of 1919–1920, the JDC expended more than $22 million for various forms of relief and rehabilitation abroad.

After July 1921, the JDC ceased giving general relief and reorganized its work on the principle of functionality. Its aim became to stimulate Jewish economic reconstruction and to strengthen local community institutions to the point at which these groups could take the care of the weak upon themselves.

Refugees and Emigrants

Military operations during World War I forced hundreds of thousands of East European Jews to leave their homes. Some were expelled eastward from the war front by the Russian Army in 1914–1915. After the war, many returned from Soviet Russia to Poland and the Baltic States. Others tried to emigrate to the United States and Western Europe.

Those hoping to reach the United States were helped by the JDC's Refugee Department, which provided aid (food, shelter, clothing, and medicine), assistance in establishing contact with relatives in America, and help in drawing up exit documents. The JDC also helped refugees returning from Russia to find work, acquire trade skills, and obtain affordable loans, whether for opening businesses or for repairing or building homes. By April 1923, the organization had helped 300,000 refugees and returnees: 185,000 in Poland and 75,000 in Lithuania. The organization also supported 7,000 Jewish students from Poland, Romania, and Hungary who were studying in Czechoslovakia, as admission of Jews into their home countries' universities was restricted.

Medicine and Sanitation

Faced with the catastrophic health and sanitary conditions in Poland, the JDC began to render emergency medical aid. Starting in 1921, its medical department developed systematic means of fighting typhus and ringworm; vaccinated 30,000 children; disinfected thousands of homes; renovated hundreds of bathhouses and medical institutions; and provided equipment and medicines to hospitals and outpatient clinics.

In 1923, a school for nurses was founded in Warsaw with JDC support. The Society for Safeguarding the Health of the Jewish Population (Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej; TOZ), formed in 1921, received financial support from the JDC and gradually built an effective system of health services for the Jewish population. By 1939, TOZ was responsible for more than 400 medical and sanitary facilities in 50 Polish cities and towns.

The medical aid rendered by the JDC to Jews in Romania, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, and Lithuania was similar to that in Poland, but on a smaller scale.