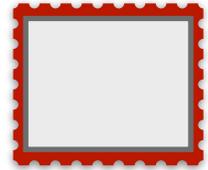


Sending for Help | Letter 9



This letter was posted eight years after the Nazis come to power
... two years after Kristallnacht
... a year and half after the war began in Europe.

Dear Miss Tewel,

We have your postcard of March 29th, and in reply we regret to state that we are not in possession of exact information regarding emigration of Polish citizens from German-occupied Poland.[...] Statements which you will find below are based only on such meagre information as we have been able to gather from various individuals who have consulted with us during the recent past. [...]

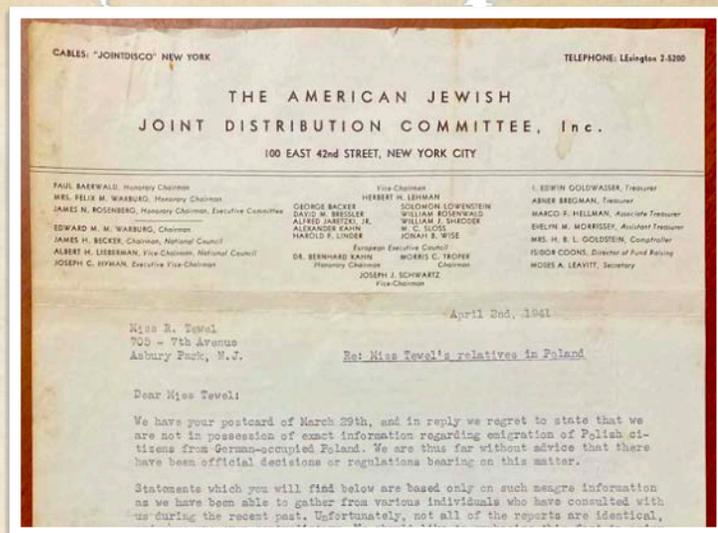
Up to the present time, we have not heard of any concrete case of completed emigration involving Polish citizens from German-occupied Poland. On the other hand, we know of quite a few cases where the American Consul in Berlin has invited applicants living in Poland to appear in Berlin for the normal visa examination. However, the persons in question were unable to take advantage of this invitation, since they could not secure the necessary permit from the authorities of the Gouvernement General. [...]

It might be advisable, after the affidavit has been sent to the American Consul in Berlin, to inform your relatives accordingly and to suggest that they get in touch with one of the above named travel agencies in Warsaw, indicating that their relatives in the U.S. sent affidavits on their behalf to the Consulate in Berlin and that they are prepared to pay all necessary transportation expenses from Poland to the U.S. at the same time the prospective emigrants should request the travel agency to inform their relatives as to the amount required to cover the cost of transportation. This amount can then be paid to the North German Lloyd of the to Hamburg-American Line in New York.

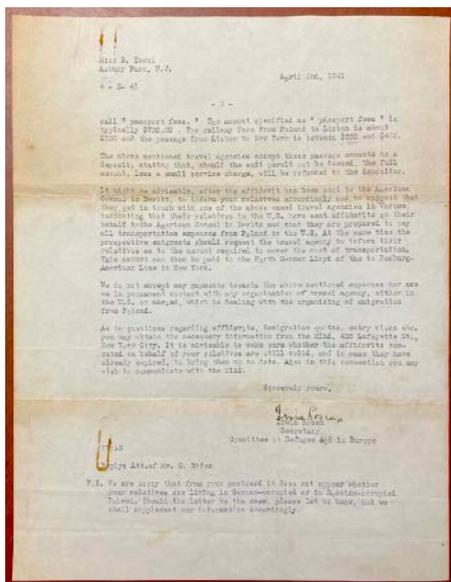
[...] It is advisable to make sure whether the affidavits executed on behalf of your relatives are still valid, and in the case that they have already expired, bring them up to date. Also in this connection you may wish to communicate with the HIAS.

Sincerely yours,

Irwin Rosen [Secretary for Committee on Refugee aid in Europe]



Discussing the Letter



Page two of letter to Rose,
dated April 2, 1941

This letter, addressed to Minnie's sister Rose, details immigration information as far as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is aware. In previous letters, the Baums were attempting to retrieve the Landsmanns from Germany and Poland, but now all the Landsmanns reside in Poland, causing even more obstacles to immigration than before. Unfortunately, the Committee has not heard any reports of people in the Landsmanns' position successfully immigrating out of Occupied Poland.

As previously discussed, this is one of many organizations that the Baums maintained contact with while trying to bring their family members to America. Minnie and her sister Rose both seem to receive the same information time and time again, all of which seems to circle back to maintaining valid affidavits and keep trying to arrange both visa appointments at various consulates and begin to prepare the travel arrangements for the visas once they are issued.

Key Themes:

*US Consulate, Emigration, Procedures, Ship Travel,
The JDC/ "Joint", HIAS, Jewish Aid Organizations*



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Discussion Questions:

1. What is "the Joint," or the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee?
2. Is the JDC *any* Polish Jews who managed to emigrate from Occupied Poland? What does this tell us?
3. American Consul suggests (in 1941) that Polish Jews travel to Berlin In order to complete their emigration process. This obviously brings up several issues. Name and discuss them.
4. What does the JDC suggests the Landsmanns do in the last two paragraphs? Can you sketch this to-do list and its viability?

Production credit — Grace Shaffer and Chad Gibbs