

Jewish Flight from Nazi Germany

An organization called HICEM was founded in 1927 to assist Jewish emigration. The name combined the acronyms of three Jewish migration agencies — HIAS (Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society) of New York, ICA (Jewish Colonization Association) of Paris, and Emigdirect of Berlin. Work of this group expanded greatly after the Nazi triumph in Germany, but Emigdirect was forced to withdraw in 1934. With the onset of war, ICA, which had registered as a British philanthropy despite its base in France, was forbidden to operate outside the Sterling currency community. Those events left the burden of assisting Jews who needed rescue to HIAS in the United States and its European affiliates. Because HIAS evaded and flouted currency regulations, it was able to help 90,000 Jews escape the Holocaust. In Poland, all Jewish emigration assistance and relief organizations joined forces in 1920 under the coordination and direction of the Central Jewish Emigration Association (JEAS).

JEAS in Warsaw, Poland, sent this envelope to HIAS in Washington, D.C., on August 30, 1937. HIAS sometimes sent letters to offices in third countries for forwarding onward as a maneuver to avoid surveillance by hostile governments; the orange coupon is a remnant of that program.

