

The Russian Jewish Congress

Future historians of Russian Jewish Community will argue about RJC role at the end of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century. RJC can be named fund, federation of communities, lobbying or social organization. Now it is difficult to separate political, social and religious parts of its work. The Congress raises money and distributes them, initiates international projects and national programs, fights against anti-Semitism and lobby interests of Russian Jews abroad, establishes informal but very effective relations between Russian Jewry (and sometimes Russia as a state) and international Jewish Diaspora and Israeli State. And it certainly participates in construction of communal institutes on local and national levels within the country.

RJC has a right to be proud about its support for Jewish organizations uniting veterans and prisoners of ghetto and concentration camps, as well as righteous men, who rescued Jews during the war. The construction of Memorial synagogue and Holocaust Museum on Poklonnaya gora was symbolic event in the Russian history after totalitarianism. Congress' contribution to the fight against current fascism and to implementation of programs on behalf of tolerance in Russian schools is a very important activity. However we know our debt to the past. Hundreds of thousands Jews, killed by fascists in Russian territory, are still not buried. Russian Jewish Congress prepared a program to make arrangements at places of mass executions and to commemorate Holocaust victims. It is to be implemented.

From the first day the Congress took care about old people turned to be outsiders, orphans and just poor men. Modern infrastructure for well-known leaders of Jewish charity such as Hama was built with a contribution of the Congress and its strategic partner American Jewish Joint Distributive Committee.

Jewish education is a future of the nation. RJC efforts allowed to organize the program for high-school education and science, starting from "studies for teachers" and initiating a process to establish relations between one of the leaders in the international education Jerusalem University and Russian Jewish high-school institutes, as well as MSU and SPHU. The Congress achieved a lot to raise scientific projects of the Jewish University in Moscow on the level of the world scientific mainstreams. Academic Hebrew studies became one of prestigious humanitarian discipline. The task for the nearest future is to raise onto the same level school education. It is based on the Congress strategy to implement modern outfits and technologies at schools and to cooperate with world leaders in the educational field such as ORT.

Juvenile programs are the subjects of special pride for the Congress. Juvenile club of the Jewish University in Moscow is one of the best in the capital and sport club Maccabi is one of few organizations in the country conserved best traditions of Soviet sport. The result is Maccabi athletes won Russian and Europe championships and received two golden medals in Sydney.

Our support for Jewish print media allowed preserving informational field in the vast territories of the country. Internet gave additional ways to conduct this activity and many of leading Internet-projects (INTERNETJEWISH CLUB, Yafa, VERO and Antisemitismu.net) are financed by the Congress.

RJC made a huge contribution to revive Jewish traditions in the whole diversity including synagogues, communities and unions of hasids, orthodoxies and reformists. Communal building means for the Congress the real building. RJC financed construction of communal centers in

Kazan, Chelyabinsk, Yaroslavl and other cities. It is not to be forgotten that the Congress had a key role in financing FJCR communal centre in Maryina Rosha and grand reconstruction of the historic Jewish centre in Moscow. The dome was set up to the synagogue in the Spasoglinishevsky lane, main communal centre in the country has been erected nearby. This cooperative project of the Congress, Moscow Jewish Community and Joint is to convert and modernize one of the most famous Jewish sections in the world.

The Congress collected and invested in Russia more than 63m \$ to create the community independent in its decisions from New York or Jerusalem. This is the solid guarantee for its future. The community is Russian Jews and it surprises foreign colleagues for many reasons. Jewry in Russian way means firstly history, culture and civilization as a whole, not religion. Jew is a nationality for us and mixed families cause assimilation into Jews and not vice versa. Israeli State is considered not so much as a "historic motherland" as a field for vital interests of each family having relatives in Israel.

Building future for ourselves and for our children we build it for the country we live in. We are glad to receive not only Jews in charitable refectories or in Jewish schools, universities, sportive and student clubs. We know not only Jews want to live in tolerant society, esteeming memory about fallen in battles. For a long time our country had historic tradition to solve global problems without thinking about small things. Today is the time to build normal life for Jews and non-Jews. Russian Jewish Congress does it.

Bureau of the Russian Jewish Congress