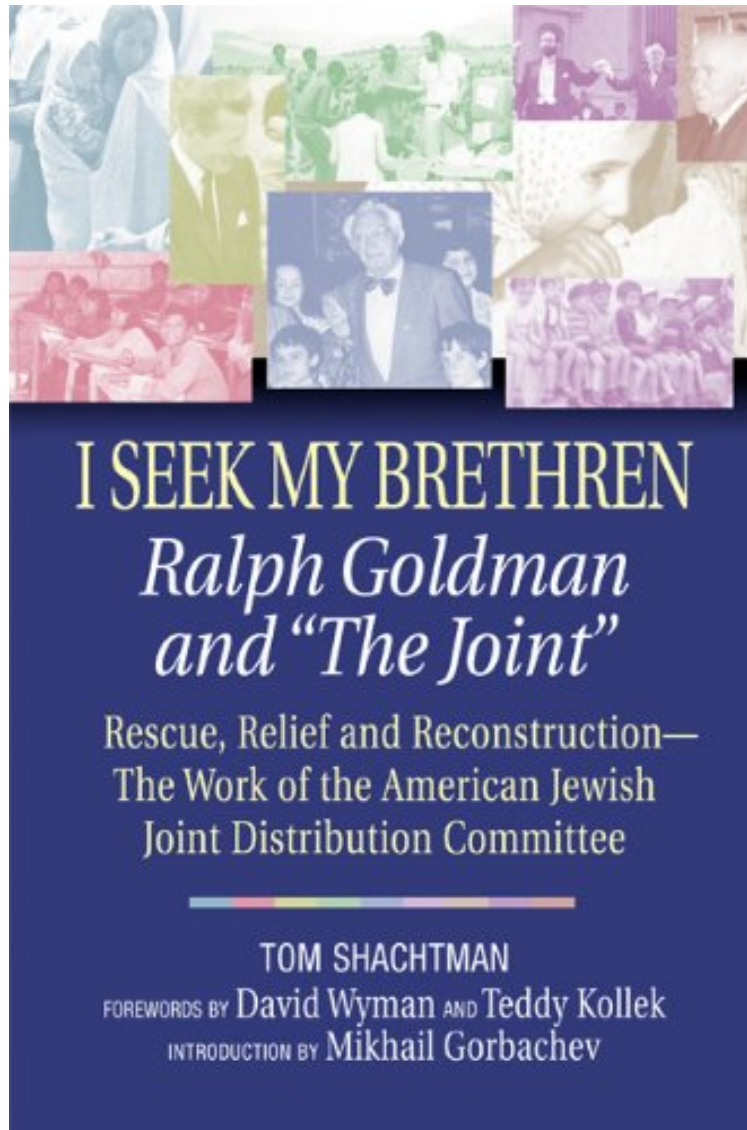


## I Seek My Brethren: Ralph Goldman and 'the Joint' : Rescue, Relief, and Reconstruction

*Tom Shachtman, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, David S. Wyman, Teddy Kollek*  
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**Tom Shachtman, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, David S. Wyman, Teddy Kollek : I Seek My Brethren: Ralph Goldman and 'the Joint' : Rescue, Relief, and Reconstruction** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Seek My Brethren: Ralph Goldman and 'the Joint' : Rescue, Relief, and

## Reconstruction:

The biography of a remarkable man driven by a simple mission to help those in need, wherever they are found and the story of an organization, which has, since 1914, sponsored rescue, relief and reconstruction programs throughout the world. Founded over 85 years ago as a response to the plight of Palestinian Jews caught up in the agony of World War I, the American Joint Distribution Committee (alternately known as the "JDC" or "The Joint") is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, apolitical, humanitarian relief agency whose work is deliberately low-profile because so much of it depends on secret negotiations with foreign governments. Its mission has taken its representatives to Western Europe after World War II ("the Jewish Marshall Plan"), to the establishment of the state of Israel, to the former Soviet Union, and to Africa and India. As an activist and leader in the organization since the 1960s, Ralph Goldman is the heart and soul of the JDC. He played a key role in Israel's formative years, and has been on the front lines of the JDC's humanitarian efforts worldwide. Currently the Honorary Executive Vice President of the JDC, Goldman still plays an active role in the organization today. Following Goldman's career, we get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the post-WWII political and social landscape, and a picture of how one man's compassion can profoundly affect the lives of many. 30 b/w photos.

From Publishers Weekly Billed as "the biography of a remarkable man" and "the story of an organization sponsoring humanitarian aid throughout the world," this is more a collection of often dry facts interspersed with a glowing and frustratingly one-sided portrait of Ralph Goldman, who was executive vice-president of the Joint Distribution Committee from 1976 to 1987. The JDC was founded in 1914, but its pre-Goldman history is skimmed briefly. Goldman, a Boston-bred social worker, comes across not so much as an administrator but as a savior, responsible for bringing disenfranchised Jews from such countries as Romania and Iran everything from a hot meal to a copy of the Talmud (the JDC helped underwrite the Hebrew edition of the Steinsaltz Talmud). Certainly, Goldman deserves credit for his work with the JDC, which included bringing the organization back into the Soviet Union in 1988, 50 years after it was expelled. But by skirting or glossing over what little controversy he bothers to mention, journalist and filmmaker Shachtman raises questions about his objectivity. More balance as well as input from the people who benefited from Goldman's work would have made this effort more interesting and, equally important, a more useful look at an organization that has long existed in the shadows of Jewish philanthropy. 30 photos. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. About the Author Tom Shachtman is the author of thirty books, including *Decade of Shocks, 1963-1974*; *Absolute Zero and the Conquest of Cold*; and *Rumspringa: To Be or Not to Be Amish*. He lives in Connecticut.