

BOOK REVIEWS

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Gourvitch, L.: *Twenty Five Years Ose* (1912-1937), Paris, Ose, 1937, 156 p.

Of all national and international organizations in the field of Jewish welfare, perhaps the least known in this country is the OSE. (The letters OSE are the initials of three Russian words which mean "Society for the Protection of the Health of Jews."). There is a reason for it. It is the unostentatious way in which an important work is carried on—a quality rather becoming to the modest characters of Jewish medical men in Eastern Europe of a past and of the present generation. One wishes that the few American Jewish physicians in this country who have forsaken the priceless traditions of medicine would restore within themselves the coveted qualities of humbleness and non-aggressiveness, and a higher regard for ethical practices that characterized their colleagues abroad, who were and are associated with OSE.

Some twenty-five years ago a group of Russian Jewish physicians were moved to "creating a special organization for the physical rehabilitation of the Jewish people." In the year 1937, when this organization reports on a quarter of a century of untiring efforts in the field of public health among Jews, we find that in spite of its achievements and the constructiveness of its program, the health conditions of Jews in Eastern Europe have never before been so appalling and the needs for public health measures have never before been so great. This is not the fault of the OSE. The record of its health program in Russia, Poland, Roumania, Latvia, and Lithuania, as con-

tained in the book, "Twenty Five Years OSE," speaks for itself.

Of course, before the days of the OSE and during its existence, there were always found in Jewish communities small voluntary groups who were interested in Jewish health work. They were: *Linath Hatsedek*—(Night Watch of the Merciful); *Linath Cholim*—(Night Watch of the Sick); *Bikur Cholim*—(Visiting of Sick); *Tomche Cholim*—(Support of the Sick); *Esrath Cholim*—(Relief of the Sick); *Briuth*—(Health).

There was hardly a community in Eastern Europe which did not have one or more of these effective organizations. Their organizational set-up was simple, their workers were volunteers, their funds were obtained by collections, and their health programs were confined to visiting the sick, relieving the tired members of the family, furnishing medical service, food and drugs. The history of these organizations is old, and their traditions are deeply rooted in the community. They, like the synagogue, *yeshivah*, and *cheder* were part of religious and cultural Jewish life, and they were an expression of Jewish charitable impulses. Some Jewish communities also organized and maintained small hospitals and clinics.

The OSE, however, was the first Jewish organization that evolved a modern health program for Jews, and interrelated it with the social problems of the day. Its health program was a response to the health needs of the Jews in Eastern Europe. The need was unmistakable as found by the reviewer in a study of

school children in Poland in 1920, where, for example, 52% of them were found to be suffering from diseases as follows:

Scrofula	24.75%
Anemia and malnutrition	6.30%
Favus	3.35%
Tuberculosis	2.50%
Trachoma	1.10%
Other conditions such as rickets, deformities, etc.....	12.80%

In addition, there were epidemics of typhus and typhoid fever. The home and school sanitary conditions among the largest number of the Jewish population were primitive. Hospital facilities were insufficient and antiquated, and bathing facilities were inadequate and unsanitary. The ritual *Mikvah*, was a source of infection, because of its original unsanitary construction and the subsequent neglect of its physical maintenance. Water sources were contaminated, pasteurization of milk was unknown, and the usual sanitary and hygienic measures, which now form the code of all civilized governments were non-existent or, at least, not practiced. Under such conditions, the OSE undertook to do what governments of East-European countries should have done in disease prevention, and failed to do.

The World War did not permit the OSE to widen its activities in Russia, and the subsequent revolution made its continuance in that country entirely impossible. But in 1920, when the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee appeared on the scene with its Medical Commission of eighteen American physicians, it rejuvenated the activities of OSE and created a similar organization, the TOZ, (The letters TOZ are the initials of the Polish words which mean "Protection of the Health of Jews") in Poland. The activities of these two or-

ganizations were similar and interdependent. After the Joint Distribution Committee withdrew from direct health activities, it limited its interest in the health field by subsidizing existing local public health agencies. The OSE-TOZ continued with these activities.

In evolving its health program, the OSE-TOZ was appreciative and took cognizance of the caution given them in 1921 that, "a desire to promote and develop a health program for Jews must be on guard against the possible impression that the Jew is an alien in the country in which he lives or that he is physically different from his neighbors. The true impression should be created that it is the Jew's desire to serve and to meet appalling health conditions that moves him to engage in health activities; that his traditional and cultural stirrings require a cultural outlet for self-expression; that a health program developed and supported by Jews aims at coordinating and supplementing existing activities; and that the creating of new agencies are predicated on a proven need."

Thus, Dr. M. Schwarzman, one of the founders of OSE, is appropriately quoted in this book as having said, "Jewish social medicine must not be regarded as being something isolated; it must be organically connected with all the other needs of Jewish life; . . . it must be based on the principle of widest self-help."

In his pithy presentation of twenty-five years of OSE history and activities, Dr. L. Gourvitch, the secretary of the organization, describes the origin of the OSE, its activities and difficulties in Russia during the years of war, its work among the thousands of homeless Jewish refugees and exiles, and the problems relating to the settlement of migrants. He adds to the record of Jewish history a chapter

of tragic Jewish life, that has probably not had its equal in size and suffering. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were uprooted from their homes, especially those living along the battle fronts. The social and economic problems of such large numbers made desperate by epidemics, malnutrition, exposure, and lack of clothing faced the OSE-TOZ and the American Joint Distribution Committee. How the problems were met has been, from time to time, reported by the American Joint Distribution Committee and by the OSE. This book gives a historical review of the birth, growth and service of the OSE and reads like a narrative which traces a grief-stricken people from one tragedy to another, and in no place does the writer overstate the conditions as they actually were in the days of the War, and during the years following it, nor does he exaggerate the effectiveness of the organization.

At all stages of its growth and service, the OSE laid deserving emphasis upon preventive health measures for the youth. As early as 1917, it had already organized 48 nurseries in as many cities, which served 10,000 children. The health program included school inspection of children and ambulatoria for treatment of general diseases, with especial emphasis on the control and treatment of trachoma and favus among children. The popular literature, brochures, and circulars on personal hygiene and general sanitation reached hundreds of thousands of people, and brought into their homes and lives improved hygienic conditions. All essential aspects of public health work which are possible for a non-governmental agency are included in its program, but the volume of the work in relation to the hundreds of thousands of people who should have been beneficiaries of it,

was inevitably small because of limited funds.

During the Russian Revolution, the headquarters of OSE were moved from Russia to Berlin, and with the advent of Hitler, they were moved to Paris, where they are now. Today, in union with the TOZ, it forms the largest international Jewish health organization, and is carrying on public health activities in Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Roumania, Danzig, Germany, and France. It has a branch in London, and in the United States it is represented by the American National Committee of the OSE. Since 1919, it has been receiving substantial subsidies from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Thus, Dr. L. Gourvitch presents to the public a historical account of twenty-five years of OSE activity in the field of public health for Jews of Eastern and Central Europe. The OSE deserves much more credit than one senses from reading his modestly-written story.

J. J. GOLUB

(Hospital for Joint Diseases)

Karpf, Maurice J.: *Jewish Community Organization in the United States. An Outline of Types of Organizations, Activities, and Problems*, New York, 1938, 216 p.

Not until one proceeds with the reading of Dr. Karpf's *Jewish Community Organization in the United States*, does one realize what a fascinating array of information can be covered by that title. The essay, a masterpiece of orderliness, has projected some of its own orderliness into a proverbially confused and chaotic situation. The subject becomes entrancing through the sheer system and lucidity with which it is handled.

Within approximately two hundred

pages, a complete panorama of Jewish life in America is spread out. No salient feature is omitted. Almost any question that one might ask is answered and answered correctly. Does one wish to know about Jewish health facilities in the United States? The information is here. Does one inquire about American Jewish participation in agriculture and the handicrafts? Here one has the reply. Is one interested in Jewish schools, libraries, religious factions, immigration, emigration, benevolences, local, national and foreign? Everything essential is compressed within these encyclopedic paragraphs, supported by copious reference notes and supplemented by a bibliography of 305 entries, by an index and by a summary rivaling the body of the work in its coherence, incisiveness and amplitude.

Familiar as well as unfamiliar information is imparted, but with such clarity that even the familiar exhibits unsurpassed aspects. There are no Fascist or Totalitarian groups among the Jews. Jewish Socialists, Communists and revolutionaries are vocal but not numerous. Old ideas of Americanization have yielded to new ideas more respectful of the immigrant's native culture and of its value for American adjustment. Jewish associations exist, composed of members of a given family and their relatives by marriage devoted to philanthropy, companionship, and mutual aid. The Jewish people of the United States spend on social, religious, and educational activities, a hundred million dollars a year. Various Jewish persons zealously promote Jewish communal enterprises who, paradoxically, believe at the same time, that the effacement of Jewish separateness would be wisest. There are seventy Jewish hospitals in the United States

necessitated, to some extent, by discriminations against Jewish physicians in non-Jewish hospitals; for all that, Jewish opinion is opposed to separate Jewish medical schools. As an offset to the Jewish social workers who cherish little enthusiasm for the Jewish phases of their work, another group, intrigued by the Reconstructionist philosophy, has discovered in the Jewish phases, a new vitality and meaning. These snatches will illustrate the miscellaneousness of the data, every item of which is fitted into its proper place and caption within a meticulously logical scheme.

Not only myriads of facts but also analyses of outstanding problems appear in the course of the presentation. The author surveys the doubts and obstacles besetting Jewish social service, particularly since the governmental provisions of relief born of the depression. Whether Jewish giving, habituated to benevolence, can be diverted to other communal endeavors, is one of the issues faced. The question of Jewish membership in community chests is viewed from every angle; all of the arguments are cited both for and against. Space is likewise assigned to an illuminating discussion of the difficulties in caring for the chronically ill, as well as to some penetrating ideas on the remoter consequences of anti-Semitism. The author apprehends that the exclusion of Jews from academic positions may result in the accusation that the Jew fails to contribute to the life of the intellect; just as the debarment of Jews from agriculture during Middle Ages produced, against the Jews, the charge of commercialism.

Nor does the author withhold his personal appraisals. We learn that Jewish contributions to benevolences — even to the non-sectarian — are more liberal than

those of the non-Jews. Jewish federations have influenced community chests, the Jewish federations exhibiting, on the whole, a superior plan of organization. Until the depression which tended to erase the differences, Jewish standards of relief were distinctly higher than the non-Jewish and continue to be such in many localities. Jewish social workers were among the first to recognize the need of federal relief for the unemployed. Exceptional are the Jewish standards of child care, Jewish efforts in this field having been adopted by non-Jews as a model. In the treatment of the wayfarer, the contrast between mediaeval Jewish custom with its graciousness and England's sixteenth century Poor Law with its harshness is striking.

Of course, the author finds some imperfections. One defect is the lack of Jewish social research. Our author mentions all of the leading research organizations — among them, his own school. Still he regrets that vast sums are expended without due inquiry into needs, resources, and standards. The call arises for an improved economic distribution of the Jews; yet we remain without adequate knowledge of the existing distribution and without any clear idea what the optimum distribution would be. We comment on the waning interest in religion; yet undertake no studies to measure that decline or to devise a remedy. New ventures are inaugurated without prior investigation of their urgency. Much duplication and cross purpose are the outcome.

The author also misses a trained Jewish leadership. Leaders ascend to their position by virtue of wealth and prestige rather than because of any knowledge they might possess regarding their project. The same people, requisitioned as

leaders by numerous and divergent organizations, become so overburdened and harried that any mastery of their undertakings becomes impossible. Schooling for greater specialization and better distribution of leadership are deemed by our author imperative.

Our author doubts the wisdom of the Jewish part in the "rank and file movement," with its tactics of trade unionism, its insurgent spirit and its apathy toward Jewish values. He regards with disfavor the tendency to substitute the alignment of privileged and underprivileged for the older alignment of Jewish and non-Jewish in social welfare.

To ferret out any deficiency in this painstaking piece of work, one would have to ply a finecomb and a microscope. Perhaps members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis or of the Rabbinical Assembly of America might wish for some reference to the activities of those bodies and particularly to their cooperation with Christian bodies in movements for social justice. The statement (p. 24) that, in the year 1932, four of our state governors were Jews, becomes unacceptable if we recall that Gov. Horner and Gov. Lehman were elected in 1932 and could therefore not have been incumbent during that year. The assertion (p. 115) that the number of Jewish welfare funds is thirty, hardly comports with the list printed in the current American Jewish Year Book which mentions 105 agencies as supplying funds for non-local Jewish philanthropies; 54 of which agencies are, in the manner of welfare funds, concerned exclusively with non-local benevolences or with such plus certain special local benevolences. Probably it is a misprint (p. 127) which creates the impression that the Hebrew name for the Jewish Agency for Palestine is *Keren*

Hayesod; *Keren Hayesod* is the Hebrew for Jewish Foundation Fund. Inasmuch as the Joint Distribution Committee alone raised over thirteen million dollars in 1919 and again in 1920, the nine million dollars recently sought by the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Palestine Appeal combined hardly ranks as "The largest sum American Jewry ever contributed for overseas work during one year" (p. 128). Maimonides mentions his eight degrees of benevolence not in an ascending order (p. 70) but in a descending order. And the concern of Maimonides was more likely the good old Jewish compunction about humiliating the recipient than our modern solicitude about self-respect through self-support. Qualification is also invited by the author's roseate sketch of mediaeval Jewish hospitality (p. 72). While the picture is, on the whole valid, evidence can, nonetheless, be unearthed to show that, even in the Jew of the Middle Ages, human nature was operative. What the Dutch West Indies company stipulated might sooner be called an expectation than a "condition" (p. 74)—as if the Dutch West Indies Company had ordered that, should the Jews neglect to "care for their own," they were to be expelled. The communication to Stuyvesant merely directs that the Jews be left unmolested assuming, as a matter of course that, on the score of charitableness, the Jews would no longer prove remiss. Like everyone else, our author takes for granted the claim of certain Jewish groups that their aim is Jewish survival (pp. 41, 42). One need not be a Freudian to suspect that "Jewish survival" can be the professed object when something else—something in "the unconscious," symbolized by certain rituals or by certain studies or by the words "Jewish survival"—

can be the real object. Nor may the contention (p. 69) pass unnoticed that the traditions of Judaism regarding benevolence are still effective. The difficulty is that few Jewish layfolk, even among the Orthodox, have ever heard of those traditions. Finally, the author's splendid plea (pp. 153, 156) for criteria of communal endeavor might be countered by the observation that any criterion depends upon the aims, wishes, and purposes of the individual proposing that criterion. With the admitted diversity of aims, wishes, and purposes among the Jews, one does not readily perceive how we shall formulate a consensus. Uniform criteria may prevail in a totalitarian *milieu* but hardly in a Jewish *milieu*. These strictures, however, — even if they can be sustained — are few and inconsequential by comparison with the hundreds of statements, in this treatise, entirely immune to challenge.

Should the occasion arise, *Jewish Community Organization in the United States* could meet the demand for a text book serviceable in Temples, Schools, and Hillel Foundations — wherever companies of Jewish persons seek a precise conception of American Jewish affairs. Perhaps some enterprising teacher will edit this essay with questions and the other usual appendages, adapting it thereby to a wide pedagogical use.

ABRAHAM CRONBACH

Atwater, Pierce: *Problems of Administration in Social Work*. St. Paul, Minn. McClain and Hedman Co., 1937, 236 p.

Within the confines of what seems a comparatively limited space, Pierce Atwater manages, in this monograph to crowd a great deal of important and significant material dealing with administrative problems in social work. As one ad-

vances toward the last pages one feels, time and again, that the content of many a section could, to good advantage, have been amplified to larger proportions in order to give the beginner more of a comprehension of the principles underlying the sound generalizations which are so clearly set forth.

Atwater introduces his subject by a pithy presentation of the various community forces which influence the shape and character of community social agencies. Examples are cited to make the material more visual and concrete.

Various chapters dealing with the internal operation of social agencies and the mechanisms for developing a close relationship and contrast with strategic persons and community organizations present little new material. However, the discussions are valuable, even as reiteration, particularly because of the practical applications which illustrate basic principles. The pages are rich with examples of the weaknesses, foibles and contradictions of current practices in both the public as well as the private field of social welfare administration.

Chapter V entitled "The Social Work Administrator and Politics" will be found particularly challenging. Atwater appears to favor a direct, frontal attack or approach to the politician. There are many who may continue to argue for utilizing an indirect, a lay-group or broader community approach. However, for speed and effectiveness in securing "results" Atwater's suggestions have considerable cogency.

The chapters dealing with problems of money raising (Chapters 8 and 9) are passable as far as they go, but they omit discussion of what is perhaps the most important aspect of the entire undertak-

ing: the selection of campaign leadership on such a basis that the larger contributors cannot say "no" or refuse the contribution requested at the amount previously fixed. The technique for achieving this preliminary set-up would have been worth dwelling upon. The government's threat for failure to meet one's responsibility to underwrite public social welfare programs is a heavy fine and a jail sentence. Private social work must develop a "moral equivalent" to government pressure to achieve approximate success.

The discussion of "The Place of Research and Social Studies" (Chapter 12) should be compulsory reading for all likely to become involved in social welfare evaluation. For those still mentally constricted by a stubborn addiction to the old belief in the efficacy of "surveys" this chapter should prove a life-saving cathartic.

Those interested in the special conditions which apply to the small or "semi-rural" community will find the last chapter valuable, though comparatively limited as to material.

Atwater writes not as an academician: dealing with a theory here and with a set of abstract principles there, but draws heavily on his own personal experience and his broad knowledge of the day by day issues which an executive of a social agency has to face and to handle in a practical, realistic fashion. The monograph is a refreshing, stimulating document. The reviewer hopes that this material will soon be expanded, amplified and put in more permanent form. It should prove a valuable addition to existing published sources on this subject and as an excellent reference work for courses in social welfare administration.

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REFERENCE BOOKS

Marcus, Jacob R., and Bilgray, Albert: *An Index to Jewish Festschriften*, Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, 1937, 154 p. (mimeographed). This very valuable volume fills a long-felt need in Jewish Bibliography. The *Festschriften* (jubilee and memorial volumes) contain much material that is not very accessible to the scholar. The 4000 entries in this index will lighten considerably the tasks of the students and scholars in the field of Jewish learning.

JEWS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Jews In Poland. Monthly Bulletin. Issued by The Federation of Polish Jews in America. New York. The issue of March 1, 1938 is numbered Volume 1, Number 5.

Rosenberg, Louis: *Economic Problems Facing Canadian Jewry*, Winnipeg, The Jewish Post, 1936, 15 p. is a thorough summary of the information on the economic structure of Canadian Jewry.

World Jewish Congress. Economic Bureau: *The Economic Destruction of German Jewry by the Nazi Regime 1933-1937.* New York, American Jewish Congress, November, 1937, 66 p., is the English edition of a pamphlet published both in German and French (cf. "Bibliographical Notes," III, p. 437, IV, 283).

World Jewish Congress. Economic Bureau: *La Situation Economique des Juifs dans la Monde. Volume I. La Situation Economique des Minorites Juives.* Premiere partie. Paris, 1938, 325 p. This first part of the first volume of a projected series of publications deals with the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Danzig, Estonia, Greece, Upper Silesia, Hungary, Iraq, Latvia, Poland, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. The information collected is up to date and is presented in a popular manner. The publishers also promise additional English and German translations of the series. Brief summaries of the articles on some of the countries have appeared in the recent issues of the *Congress Bulletin* of the American Jewish Congress.

World Jewish Congress: *La Situation des Juifs en Roumanie. Petition du Comite Executif du Congress Juif Mondial Soumise au Conseil de la Societe des Nations.* Geneva, 1938, 93 p., consists of the petition proper, a memorandum concerning the number of Jews in Roumania, the declarations of the King, Goga and Micescu as reported in the press, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency dispatches and news items from the French, German and English press.

World Jewish Congress: *La Situation des*

Juifs en Roumanie. Supplement a la Petition du Comite Executif du Congress Juif Mondial Soumise au Conseil de la Societe des Nations, Geneva, 1938, 51 p., contains additional material to item listed above.

JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT

Ben-Shalom, Avraham: *Deep Furrows. Pioneer Life in the Collective in Palestine.* Translated by Frances Burnce, New York, Hashomer Hatzair Organization, 303 p. The volume deals with the social psychology of post-war East European Jewish youth and of the individual in collective society. It also is a very important contribution to the history of one of the Marxist wings in Zionism, the *Hashomer Hatzair*, and to the study of Jewish youth movements. Exceptionally interesting is the description of the life in a Palestinian commune. The author's style is lucid. His presentation is autobiographical and of the "human interest" variety.

Cronbach, Abraham: *Labor in Bible Times and Now for Discussion Groups. Experimental Edition.* Cincinnati, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, (1938), 45 p. (mimeographed). The three chapters in this publication constitute a continuation of the series on "Modern Social Problems in the Light of the Bible" (edited by Emanuel Gamoran, cf. p. 346). This book deals with "The Rights of Labor in the Bible," "The Plight of Labor Today" and "The Hope of Labor Today." Only the first chapter is of specifically Jewish interest. Bibliographies, questions for discussion and on information, as well as projects and topics for debate are included.

Dvar Ovdei Ha-Refuah (The Word of the Medical Workers) is a new publication by the Trade Union of Medical Workers, a part of the Histadruth—The General Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine. The first issue is dated August, 1937, at Tel-Aviv.

Gordon, A. D.: *Selected Essays*, translated by Frances Burnce, Ph.D., from the Hebrew Edition by N. Teradyon and A. Shohat, with a Biographical Sketch by Dr. E. Silberschlag, New York, The League for Labor Palestine, 1938, p. 303. This is the first English edition of the selected works of the leader in Labor-Zionist theory and practice. This publication supplies a long-felt want in a field singularly devoid of publications in the English language.

Histadruth Olamith shel Noar Tzofi-Halutzi "Hashomer-Hatzair" (The World Organization of the Scout-Halutz Youth "Hashomer Hatzair"): *Kovetz Teudoth* (a Collection of