

Training School News

DR. KOHS BECOMES ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL

On October 1, 1931, Dr. Samuel C. Kohs became associated with the Training School for Jewish Social Work, heading the newly created Department of Social Technology. A temporary arrangement with the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities continues on a limited time basis until a successor is secured. Besides giving a number of courses Dr. Kohs will also carry some of the administrative work of the School.

Dr. Kohs comes to the Training School with a varied experience in the academic as well as in the social service fields. At the present time he is Editor-in-Chief of the Jewish Social Service Quarterly.

SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

The Seventh Annual Convocation of the Training School for Jewish Social Work took place Tuesday afternoon, September 29th, in the Auditorium of the Federation Building, 71 West 47th Street, the headquarters of the School.

Felix M. Warburg, chairman of the Executive Committee of the School since its organization, eulogized Dr. Lee K. Frankel, who was a first vice-president of the School and a member of its Executive Committee since its organization. Mr. Warburg officially accepted the Lee K. Frankel Memorial Collection for the Library of the School on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Louis E. Kirstein, president of the School, was prevented from being present because of illness. He sent a telegram of welcome. Dr. Solomon Lowenstein, American member of the Jewish Agency, recently returned from a meeting of the Agency in Zurich, outlined the work of the Agency. Dr. Maurice J. Karpf, Director of the School, presided.

The Seventh Class of the Training School for Jewish Social Work, which began its studies on Wednesday, September 30th, comes from all parts of the United States. More than 30 Universities and a like number of different cities will be represented in the fifty graduate students comprising the two classes of first and second year students.

The Training School is one of the two or three largest graduate schools of social work in the country.

The School was organized in 1925 by the National Conference of Jewish Social Service as a graduate school. The course of study lasts two years. It is supported by the New York Foundation, the Nathan Hofheimer Foundation, the Federations of Jewish Charities throughout the country, and private contributions.

ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT OF GRADUATES

The following is the result of a recent analysis regarding the 74 students who have been graduated since the establishment of the School: Working in the East, 72%; Middle West, 25%; Far West, 3%.

This distribution corresponds fairly closely with the concentration of Jewish population in various sectors. The following percentages indicate the distribution of graduates by different fields of work:

Family Case Work	37%
Community Center Work	17%
Child Care Work	16%
Psychiatric Social Work	15%
Medical Social Service	7%
Federation Work	4%
Research	4%

THE LEE K. FRANKEL LIBRARY PRESENTED TO SCHOOL

What is perhaps the most valuable collection of books and pamphlets on current Jewish social problems and Jewish social service has been made available to the Training School for Jewish Social Work by the family of the late Dr. Lee K. Frankel, who was one of the founders and a vice-president of the School. This collection of over 1,000 volumes will be known as "The Lee K. Frankel Memorial Collection." These books and pamphlets, many of which are rare, represent the working library of Dr. Frankel, and are not alone indicative of his wide range of social work interests, but also reveal the quality of his analytic and creative capacities.

Jewish Social Work in the Economic Depression*

1

By MARC J. GROSSMAN

President, Jewish Social Service Bureau, Cleveland, Ohio

I SUPPOSE all of us still occasionally dream that we are taking impossible college examinations and awaken in a cold perspiration, grateful that it was only a dream. My feelings now are not much different from the terror of that nightmare, but, unhappily, I cannot awaken to find the ordeal done. For I am frankly frightened. It is no simple task for a layman to talk to a group largely composed of professionals. I cannot fail to recall the old saying that "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

I am to talk on Jewish social work in the economic depression. Obviously, I can at best hope only to touch upon what appear to me to be some of the high spots of the subject.

Perhaps at the outset it would be well, briefly, to scan the economic background during the past twenty or more years as it relates to the Jewish group. During that time we saw the development of the needle trades, which gave employment to thousands. Then came their virtual collapse and the post-war deflation period, with its demand for cheap clothing. This demand was met by machine production, and the consequent wholesale release of workers, a large proportion of whom were Jews.

Through the years we have watched the Jew through constant struggle gradually joining the ranks of the small merchant or petty tradesman, and otherwise developing various minor mercantile enterprises. Then came the day of the merger, chain store and mail order house, and the gradual elimination of the Jew from small trade.

The Jew likewise had substantially participated in the development of the jewelry trade. Then came costume jewelry, and the consequent curtailment in the former industry.

He was also engaged in the building trades. New methods gradually stifled the small operator, and from this field, too, he was being gradually eliminated.

This period for the Jew was one of great individual fortunes. Industrialization helped the few, but injured the masses. The stage had in a way been set for the present so-called major depression.

At first, the influence of unemployment was not so immediately felt by the Jewish group. The poorest jobs were hit first. Despite the previous economic developments which I have outlined, the Jewish group was still largely to be

found in the more stable industries. But gradually industrial conditions also affected their pursuits. Closer ties of relationship and affection, the result of centuries of persecution and pressure, were a resource which, for a time, postponed the need of outside aid. However, their own reserves, their savings, the resources of their friends and families were ultimately exhausted. This group which had been able to resist minor economic fluctuations could not withstand a major depression.

In the past, the Jewish relief problem had to do largely with persons mentally or physically ill, but with the depression came a new clientele, the so-called "white collar group". For the most part, these new clients were physically and mentally fit. They were merely the victims of a change in the economic structure affecting the entire population—but them in particular. And very soon the Jewish agencies came to realize that they were confronted with a special problem—the problem of unemployment of Jews, not as workers but as Jews.

Obviously, this new clientele will be the last to return to industry, even with the return of prosperity. Their very means of livelihood has been wiped out as by a hurricane. There will accordingly be a long period of economic maladjustment for the group—long days of intense mental anguish.

Never before was there a greater need for psychiatric service. Men and women discouraged and disheartened through long periods of joblessness, develop mental maladies, whose restoration to normal can be effected only through psychiatric treatment. Never was there a more real necessity for thorough research to ascertain scientifically what is happening to the Jewish group forced out of their old occupations. What has become of the storekeeper? The small builder? The real estate operator? And then must come an intensive program for vocational guidance.

It follows that our group cannot be very sanguine as to the future, even with the return of prosperity, so we must be even more foresighted than the rest. A more intense spirit of awareness must prevail.

I think that this depression brings with it many threats to social work. I fear greatly the present hysteria on the subject of material assistance. As president of a family agency, I can speak freely and without prejudice. There

* Minneapolis Sessions of the National Conference of Jewish Social Service, 1931.

seems to me to be an alarming public tendency to subordinate everything to relief, at all cost. There is little thought of the danger of neglecting character building agencies, whose work is now the more necessary because of the increased leisure occasioned by unemployment; and the consequent need of influences to counteract the sense of despair that so often seeks imagined solace through vicious outlets. There is a decreasing consideration of the health needs of children and adults who are imperiled by the curtailment of the budgets of health agencies.

I am not so much concerned with the immediate results of this attitude, disastrous as it may be. In many cases, there is no choice but to concentrate almost entirely on relief. Personalities will and perhaps must be injured and destroyed. It is the price we are now paying for our past folly. As to that, the water is already over the dam. There will be much moral and physical wreckage consequent upon the public's apathy toward all things other than relief.

My main concern is with the future. I fear there is grave danger that communities will become permanently and solely "relief minded". Even before the depression, the public did not understand social work. There was then, as now, much talk of fads, wastes, inefficiency. In family agencies, for example, the boards themselves were only just beginning to understand and appreciate the doctrine of skilled personal service. There were still board members, and long serving ones too, who, from time to time, reduced the staff and the occasional intelligent and understanding board member to fits of impotent rage by referring to the funds expended for personal service as "overhead", and demanding their reduction. This before the depression. Now, in the midst of it, we find the daily newspapers demanding a cut in the budgets of character building agencies. They say that frills are all right in prosperous times but now everything must give way to food. The cry goes the length and breadth of the land to an unenlightened public.

Unless strong measures be taken it will be years before the resistance now being built up against all efforts other than relief can be broken down. And the danger is greater because we know that for a long time after the end of the depression, relief needs will continue great. For some time then, after the return of prosperity the public will continue to concentrate its attention on relief and relief measures. Meanwhile, other needs will have been forgotten; and, of course, with forgetfulness come curtailed budgets, if not complete elimination. What, then, is to be done about it? Of course, I have no solution. Would that I had. But I think I see a weakness in our social work program, the cure for which would go far toward alleviating the situation.

I venture to say that no one will deny that this depression

has proved, if proof were necessary, the indispensability of the professional worker. Without him we now would have chaos. To the observant board member the work of the professional staffs in this crisis has been little short of miraculous. Over-burdened for the most part, even before the depression, during the depression their strength taxed almost beyond human endurance—they have gone serenely on, radiating inspiration to their clients, and efficiently and humanely performing their Herculean duties. But in one respect I think the whole profession has failed—not individually but as a class. And I think the failure goes back many years. I have already said that, in my opinion, the public does not understand social work. Therein lies the threatening menace. And I believe that the public ignorance is chargeable to the professional social worker.

I think it can be demonstrated that the public does not refuse to follow and appreciate methods. Rather the public does not know. The talk of fads, wastes, and the like come not of enlightened criticism but of ignorance. The public must be taught and sold. The professional alone is qualified for this work.

The average lay board member is notoriously incompetent. In some quarters, membership is merely a matter of family inheritance. It is up to the professional to build up his board. The occasional professional attitude that the function of a board is merely fiscal, that lay persons are incapable of assisting in the solution of professional problems, must end. The board, by proper education, can and should think along with the staff. Professional aloofness, and the attitude of exclusiveness in the right to solve social problems, has no place in social work. The board and the community, through the board as an interpreter, must learn that in relief work a decrease in material relief, and an increase in expenditures for personal service, means real accomplishment; that the additional funds so expended are not to be termed increased overhead, as in a factory, but to be analyzed in terms of re-established families, reclaimed personalities, self-respecting citizens. The psychiatric work is not a fad or a frill, but a positive step in the procedure in adjusting the maladjusted. That recreational work is not merely an attempt to make people happier, although certainly that would be justification enough, but that the result of its curtailment must be interpreted in terms of delinquency, crime and corruption. That curtailed budgets of health agencies mean not only despair and sickness now, but that the presently neglected health needs of children spell disaster for the future adult, which, in terms of money, means ultimate burden upon burden for the community.

This process of education was always essential, and has, I think, always been neglected. Today in the depression it

must triumph, or much of social work is headed for oblivion. And along with the procedure of making the public understand the fundamentals of social work must be the campaign of convincing the public that the return of prosperity does not mean an immediately reduced volume of social work needs.

Lack of education in the past makes the process in these days the more difficult, because the needs of social work must be taught to a public inclined now only to give ear to the cause of relief and to a public which believes that the return of prosperity will be a panacea for all the troubles of society.

Under professional guidance the community must learn the tremendous need of community planning—a need now greater than ever. There must be a better inter-relationship of understanding. Each board must know and understand the function and activities of the other agencies. But there must be professional self-discipline, too. Today, only too often do professional jealousies and antagonisms result in disharmony. Now, only too frequently are board members guided by a false sense of loyalty, growing out of a proprietary attitude toward their own agencies, instead of a community point of view. There must be a unified philosophy of endeavor. In federated cities, the Federation should function not merely as a fiscal agency, but as a coordinating, planning and unifying medium for the community.

There is little of optimism that can be culled from the present situation. There are, however, some bright spots to be seen. We have learned that, despite much talk of stabilizing employment, little can be accomplished toward lessening seasonal fluctuation of production and employment, and then only in industries producing standardized goods, where the style element is unimportant. We know that there will always be shifts in demand as, for example, the collapse of the piano industry. We, therefore, know that unemployment will continue. We know that only 1% of workers are protected by any plan of voluntary protection. We know that public works, with the delay incident to architectural engineering, legal, and other problems, have helped little in this crisis. We realize that, under our present system, the only social protection consists of inadequate and often humiliating grants of charitable relief, always with the lurking threat of alms and doles. But, happily, out of all this has come the growing consciousness that some self-respecting, universal type of protection must be devised. With an understanding of the problem will come steps toward its solution. For example, the creation of the Federal Employment Stabilization Board, whose function it will be to work out six-year advance construction plans, assigning certain projects for each year, the gen-

eral business and employment situation always to be considered.

Then, too, we observe on every side intensive study and propaganda on the subject of employment insurance, and in some instances legislative action as a result.

Perhaps the most important lesson coming out of this emergency is the fact that an unwilling Jewish community has come to realize that relief work can, under proper safeguards, be financed by public funds without detriment to the Jewish families thus served. I cannot hope to more than touch upon the question of public relief. Even its opponents must concede that in this crisis public funds must be made available. But how to be administered is still the question. In Cleveland we have had an interesting experience. The City Outdoor Relief Division was abolished some ten years ago. And so when it became necessary to resort to public funds for family relief, the method of administering relief had to be worked out. A committee consisting for the most part of professionals, recommended that the city again create an Outdoor Relief Department, provided that it be manned by trained case workers. Happily, to my mind, the recommendation was not followed. Instead it was decided that the public funds should be administered by the two existing family case working agencies—the Associated Charities for the non-Jewish population, and the Jewish Social Service Bureau for the Jewish population. This plan is now in operation, and some \$300,000 in public funds has thus far been administered by these two agencies.

The experiment is a fascinating one, and I think Cleveland has taken a step in the right direction. Funds for relief should and, in my opinion, ultimately must be raised by taxation. But I think they should not be administered through public agencies. I have seen enough of public administration of various kinds, including the administration of justice, with which, as a lawyer, I am particularly familiar, to be entirely persuaded that social work in the hands of public officials is a danger and a menace to be avoided. Under our elective system, any public department is amenable to sinister influences of political expediency, whether directly or indirectly. The establishment of standards of training for the personnel is unavailing. We all know that the most poorly equipped persons are the ones actually drafted. If we are honest with ourselves we can recall instances of staff workers gladly released from our private agencies who found a ready berth with public agencies.

I am cognizant of the more or less accepted doctrine that relief should be the job of public agencies, and prevention the work of private agencies. To this theory I cannot subscribe. I believe that actual experience points to the

fact that the ineffectual administration of relief by public agencies is not only unsuccessful but actually harmful; that as a result of improper methods the problems of the private agency in preventive work have been and will be immeasurably increased. And so I think Cleveland's experiment in the private administration of public funds bears close watching. If nothing more, it has proved a public confidence shared in by public officials in the effectiveness and integrity of professionally manned private case-working agencies.

I have already spoken of the heroic service of social workers in the depression. Dog-tired after days, despairing even to the most seasoned of them, I have been dismayed to learn that more of their leisure hours than even before have been devoted to study and reading. This period has been a real challenge to their skill. They have had to marshal every resource at their command. Great has been the physical and mental burden of these days, but immeasurable will be their individual personal gain, and the gain to their profession. For already have new techniques

grown out of this depression just as grew out of the war. A new type of clientele demands the best possible case work methods, and out of this technique a new and closer relationship has arisen between the client, the worker and the agency. No longer is the objective merely that the client take the worker into his confidence, but now the client is taken into the confidence of the worker and of the agency. There is a new approach. The client, for example, is advised of the heart-breaking difficulty in raising funds. He is told how much worse off is one of his neighbors, and he is asked what he will give up to help. The arrangement is rather that of a partnership. Even in these desperate times there are few disgruntled clients. In short, the depression has demanded and produced the finest kind of case worker.

I realize that in this paper I have said nothing new or original. The professionals among you will doubtless see in many of my statements either lay platitudes—or, even worse, inaccuracies and errors. But what matter? The important thing is to stimulate public thinking. If my paper provokes discussion it has served its purpose.

Jewish Social Work in the Economic Depression

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By SOLOMON LOWENSTEIN

Executive Director, Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies of New York City

As we have been going through this very stringent and strenuous period since the stock market collapse of October and November, 1929 heralded the depression, which a good many feared might come, but for which nobody was actually prepared when it did come, there has been naturally a great deal of thinking and discussion of this subject among social workers of all groups, and, of course, among our Jewish group.

We have had discussion not only in the Jewish Social Service Quarterly, and in other publications, but also at several meetings which have resulted in pronouncements, or declarations of principles or what you will, of a group of executives in the federation field, in the family case work field, in the child welfare field, and in the Jewish religious educational groups, and in the Jewish center groups.

In the June, 1931 issue of the Jewish Social Service Quarterly there is a beginning of a Symposium, The Present Status of Jewish Social Work.

Mr. Lurie, of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research,

our chairman this morning, and Dr. Kohs, of the Editorial Board of the Quarterly, are the authors. If you have not read those articles yet I think you will find them stimulating, and suggestive, and because of these and the wealth of other material already published, I am forbearing this morning in the quotation of any statistics or in making any attempt to dissect them and analyze them. You will find that very well done in these published documents and you will be able to ascertain at your leisure whether you agree or not, or, perhaps substitute your own interpretation for these statistics.

But the one question I find myself asking continually, that I have asked many of you, and my colleagues in New York and elsewhere, is, how did we manage to come through this past winter particularly, with so little trouble?

I can understand our getting through the winter of 1929 and 1930, without great difficulty, because we had just finished a period of great prosperity, and rather full employment. But how did we come through this winter of 1930 and 1931 as easily, comparatively, as we did?

How was it that there was not a much greater measure of suffering and a much greater measure of public expression and reaction to that suffering, expressing itself perhaps through violence, or very violent outbursts of speech if not actual physical violence?

Nowhere that I have gone has there been any report of such manifestations on the part of those who have presumably undergone great privation. Nor has there even been report of excessive suffering of any kind.

We know that there have been extraordinary efforts made both by public and voluntary agencies to meet the needs of the situation as they presented themselves to these agencies, and yet, measured in terms of the actual loss of wages, due to the great volume of unemployment, the amount of money that was spent from all sources, public, quasi-public, voluntary alike, as compared with the normal expenditures of the year, certainly made up for but a very slight percentage of such wage loss.

Probably there were much greater reserves than any of us anticipated in the way of savings, accumulations on life insurance, possibly credit, help from relatives and friends, than we have ever deemed to exist.

We ask ourselves in the face of such a situation, do those reserves still exist for another winter to come, which all of us view with apprehension and with no expectation of a decided improvement? Or, shall we find ourselves facing much greater need, much more serious difficulty than we have hitherto experienced, serious as we think our situation has been?

Naturally, all of us feel as the chairman indicated in his introductory remarks, and as Mr. Grossman indicated in the beginning of his paper that we are in all likelihood in the midst of a comprehensive, fundamental thoroughgoing, economic and social readjustment that has been in process for many years without our noticing it.

Perhaps, when we were so much interested in the tremendous rises in the stock market figures, when people were estimating the values of securities not on the basis of actual earnings, or productive power, but what they thought was to be the future development of the United States, we were too careless of the future. Many perhaps foresaw that such a situation was dangerous, critical, could not last, but, as I said a few moments ago, no one was prepared for the sudden collapse.

Perhaps, because of this highly speculative state of mind, people were not fully aware of the process that had been going on for a long time, developing silently, and then, accentuated by the war faced us with a picture of a complete reorganization of our system of finance and manufacture and merchandising. We had perhaps become aware in a way of this process because we used to talk

somewhat vaguely of technological unemployment. We used to think a little about the chain stores and bank mergers, and all that sort of thing, and then came the war and reorganized and reconstructed and reconstituted the entire financial and economic and social and industrial structure of the countries of Europe, and no one could have imagined that that process was not going to affect us in large degree, and in similar way.

Now no one can foresee what is going to be the outcome of that.

We are at last, at least aware of it, and we are trying to understand something of its significance.

It is well that we should be aware that we not only share, as we always do, in every kind of general movement, of whatever nature it may be, but that we have our special problems brought upon us by reason of this present development and because of the fact that for the most part our Jews in this and other countries have been engaged in occupations that are going to be very seriously affected by these momentous changes that are going on.

It would be extremely interesting to speculate about these matters, but, unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for the temper and time of this audience, these matters are so obscure, and so hidden in their workings, and so far beyond the control that any individual or group can exercise, that it would probably be futile to attempt any further discussion about them.

But I do want to direct myself primarily to what the chairman indicated should be the second phase of this discussion this morning, namely, to our immediate future program with reference to our present forms of communal organization, and the effects of this depression upon those forms of organization, and the possible changes that may result from it.

Fundamentally, of course, there is involved the question of finances. I do not mean to ignore the questions of program, and of development of a philosophy, or other highly important matters. I am sure, we all will recognize very clearly what those things imply, and I hope to have time to give some passing reference at least to them.

But primarily the thing that we have to face at once is the question of financing, the question of the raising and of the expenditure of those funds which we do raise.

How is that fundamental situation going to be affected by this present crisis? How has it been affected to date? Without going into any of the statistical data, I think it may generally be said that, speaking of the Jewish group specifically, apart from its relations to others, the result has not been highly satisfactory; that there has been, as was to be expected, a falling off, generally in income throughout the country.