

EUROPEAN TOUR PLANNED FOR AMERICAN SOCIAL WORKERS BY COMMITTEE ON CONTACTS WITH EUROPEAN JEWISH COMMUNAL WORK

Social Workers and their friends who are planning to attend the International Conference of Social Work and the International Conference of Jewish Social Work now being projected, to be held at Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, early in July 1932, will be interested to learn that Mr. M. J. Karpf, President of the National Conference of Jewish Social Service, has appointed a Committee on Contacts with European Jewish Communal Work. The Committee, of which Mr. Charles Zunser is chairman, and on which the following have indicated their willingness to serve: Miss Lotta Marcuse, Boston, Miss Cecelia Razovsky, New York, Morris D. Waldman, New York, Dr. Louis Wirth, Chicago, Dr. Samuel C. Kohs, Brooklyn, Michael Freund, New York, Isidore Hershfield, Washington, and William Hirsch, Philadelphia, has been charged with the task of planning and organizing an inexpensive cooperative tour of interest to Jewish Social Workers visiting the Conference.

The tentative itinerary, as approved by the Committee, plans for sailing on a one cabin steamer to Plymouth; thence to London; to Zeebrugge (Belgium), where motor cars will convey the party to Bruges, Ghent and Brussels; then to Amsterdam, with side trips to Marken and Vollen-dam; thence to Cologne; an all day trip down the Rhine to Wiesbaden; thence to Frankfurt where the conference takes place. Thereafter we visit Rothenburg and Tauber, quaint survival of a mediæval walled city; thence to Nuren-berg, Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, Innsbruck, in the Austrian Tyrol; Lucerne Lake, Switzerland; Rigi-Kulm mountain; Geneva; thence to Paris and home. This completes the tour, including steamer, good clean hotels, all railroad fares, first-class river, lake and channel boats, transportation of baggage and passengers. All meals, the services of a conductor, all tips and taxes for a party of 50 will cost at the rate of \$398.00 for a 51-day trip.

An alternate tour will proceed with the party as far as Nurenberg and thence will proceed to Prague, Warsaw and Cracow (Poland), Biolstock, Vilna, Minsk (Soviet Russia), Moscow, Berlin, Antwerp and will meet the main party and return on the same one class steamer.

For those able to stay away a shorter time arrangements will be made for their departure, following the close of the conference, for Paris, where they will remain five days and leave via Cherbourg on the S. S. Olympic. This tour, all inclusive, will cost \$328.00 for a minimum party of 25.

● All those interested in securing further details will kindly communicate with the chairman, MR. CHARLES ZUNSER 71 WEST 47th ST., NEW YORK

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Wanted—A Return to Basic Values

By MAURICE J. KARPf

No one who has observed the situation in which Jewish social work finds itself at present can fail to be impressed with the fact that it is facing a very serious crisis. This crisis is not limited to the financial difficulties which the agencies are facing. It is, in reality, much more fundamental than that. It goes to the very heart of the future of Jewish social work and Jewish community organization in America. It was in the hope of focusing the attention of some of the leaders of Jewish social work on the dangers in the situation that this article was written.

I

It is natural that at a time like this, when funds are obtained only with great difficulty, if at all, that professional and lay leaders of social agencies should cast about for other resources. With a heightened social consciousness on the part of governmental agencies, with a constantly developing appreciation on the part of citizens of the principle that the State must bear a large portion of, if not the entire responsibility for individual and group adjustment in normal as well as abnormal times, and with ever increasing funds becoming available for out-door and in-door relief purposes from taxation, it is to be expected that Jewish communities will turn to public funds as additional resources in their endeavors to lighten their own burdens.

Nor is there anything inherently wrong or undesirable in Jewish communities seeking their due share of public funds. Hence it is not surprising that the movement to turn over certain types of Jewish problems to public welfare departments is gaining impetus. It appeals to one's sense

of belonging to the larger group, it appeals to one's sense of justice, it certainly appeals to the giving group in the community because it lightens their burdens, and it is an outlet for our desire to tell the world that we are as good as our neighbors. The dangers inhere rather in the quality of the work which many public agencies are doing, the conditions under which assistance is granted, the position of the Jew in American life, and the degree of cohesiveness thus far achieved in the Jewish community.

Much has been made in recent years of a pledge which the first Jewish settlers to these shores are supposed to have made to Peter Stuyvesant, one time Governor of New Amsterdam, now New York City, to take care of their poor as a condition for being permitted to settle here. This pledge has been advanced as the primary motive for the development and the continuation of Jewish community organization in America. As related, the incident is dramatic and readily lends itself to exploitation either for or against adhering to the pledge. Since economy lies in the direction away from the pledge, Stuyvesant is rebuked for his harshness, nearsightedness and narrowmindedness, and we are told that we have no obligation to carry out this promise since it was exacted under duress, and because we are citizens of equal right, pay like taxes, contribute to the welfare of the country in equal share, and we are entitled to those aids which organized society grants those who are unequal to the pace it sets for them.

Now it is true that we need not adhere to the pledge, not only for the reasons indicated but because *there never was*

any pledge. Historical research fails to disclose any authoritative evidence that Stuyvesant ever exacted any such promise from the first Jewish immigrants or what is more important, that the early Jews, their descendants and followers, were conscious of any such pledge until the beginning of this century. Dramatic and interesting as the incident may be, it has little basis in fact as a motivation for the organization of Jewish social agencies in the United States or the maintenance of the Jewish poor by the Jewish community.* Such motivation must be sought elsewhere. Right here lies the greatest danger in the Peter Stuyvesant myth. So long as this straw man, though of wooden leg, is made a primary reason for Jewish social service activities, once he is demolished there is no further justification for the continuation of these activities. It makes for superficial reasoning and ill considered action. If, however, the motives for Jewish social work are sought in the deeper consciousness, cultural traditions, and social habits of the Jewish people, and if it is realized that our welfare activities are the result of a social heritage which the Jewish group has consciously and unconsciously accepted as beneficial, if not essential to its well-being, proposals for change and modification of current practices would have to be more carefully considered. They would have to be related to the factors which brought them into being. In other words, if Jewish philanthropy is recognized as part of the Jewish *Mores*, it is no longer an easy matter to recommend its abandonment. *Mores* are not easily abandoned, and he who trifles with them without taking their origin and fundamental nature into consideration, is bound to come to grief.

II

What might this grief be, if Jewish communities were to heed some of the ready advice given them and were to abandon their dependents to the Public Welfare Departments? One need not indulge in long-time prophecy to foretell the results. Nor does one have to go back very far into the history of the development of Jewish social work in this country to prognosticate what might happen. We need only recall some of the attitudes, resentments, and vigorous opposition on the part of East European Jews to the organizations which they found here dominated and controlled by their German-Jewish brethren, and the mushroom growth of Jewish agencies throughout the country as a result of this resentment, to glimpse what may come to pass. The East European Jew though he may not yet give as readily as does his brother of German extraction, and although he may be less willing or less able to give at this time because his wealth has been more recent and less stable than that of the older settlers and therefore he may have suffered to

a greater extent than the others, will, nevertheless, make himself heard when he learns that the Jewish community is abandoning the Jewish poor to the Public Welfare Departments. He will not readily accept such a revision of age-old Jewish tradition. If such practice will not split the Jewish communities and undo what has been accomplished in the last decade in cementing them and in creating united Jewish communities, it will certainly result in the development of small organizations of the type with which all of us are familiar, not excluding the ladies societies dedicated to the proposition of "giving relief without asking questions" and interfering with the work of the central agencies. It will also bring back the days of unpopularity of the Jewish social worker. The attitudes current during the latter part of the last century and the first part of the present, will reappear. The Yiddish press, all too eager for controversial issues, and none too friendly to the Jewish social worker, will not pass up this opportunity to raise a hue and cry that will resound from one end of the country to the other. We shall lose the prestige, recognition, and good will of that portion of the community where our major work lies unless we exercise the utmost care and recognize the full significance of what we are about.

The above is not a figment of the imagination. It is already happening in some communities. Those to whom the traditions of Jewish life mean something will not willingly acquiesce to a procedure which they consider abhorrent to every principle of Jewish social living. While some of the most earnest may protest without doing much about it, the self-seekers and unscrupulous will make social capital of it as they have done in many instances in the past and are beginning to do in the present.

III

What about the Jewish client? How will he fare in this situation?

It has been a source of pride of Jewish communities and of Jewish social workers that we do not have a pauper population *per se*, that our agencies have but few second, third, and fourth generations of dependents, that we have no Jukes and Kalikaks. Will this condition continue if we subject our clientele to the conditions prevailing in some of the Public Welfare Agencies? Are we ready to abandon even our less hopeful clients to agencies counting their case loads per worker in the hundreds, and in some instances almost in the thousands? What will happen to them and how shall we face and treat them ultimately when they will come back to us thoroughly pauperized and disorganized? Are we willing to abandon our principles regarding the need and efficacy of case work in conjunction with relief? It should be pointed out here that even in those cases where the case work may be done by the Jewish agency with relief coming

* This subject is dealt with in detail in a book now in preparation on Jewish Philanthropic Origins.

from the public agency, the situation is not altogether safe. Two dangers lurk there: The Jewish community will become accustomed to accepting public relief and will plan on it unconsciously or unmindful of the cost, and the public agency will demand full authority and responsibility for the handling of the case work where it pays the bills as soon as it can manage to do so with impunity with its own evaluation of its standards as the basis for its demand.

What about the Jewish community? It need hardly be pointed out that progress in Jewish community organization does not lie in that direction. As already suggested indiscriminate utilization of public funds under existing conditions may disrupt the Jewish community. No further discussion of this seems necessary at this point. Our older colleagues will remember only too well their trials and tribulations during the early days of this century due to divided communities. They need only be reminded of the energy they spent in clearing up misunderstandings, in smoothing out ruffled feelings, in eliminating resentments, in changing attitudes, and how difficult it was to cement the community, the time and effort that went into these activities which should have gone to build up their agencies, to realize the danger in this new policy. As for the younger members of our group, those who neither experienced the above nor informed themselves regarding them, one can only hope that the older and more experienced social workers will be able to influence them to proceed more cautiously.

It need hardly be pointed out that the position of the Jew in American life is not yet so stable and secure as to make Jewish community organization unnecessary or superfluous. We need only bear in mind what is happening to other, more stable and better integrated Jewries in different parts of the world to realize that wisdom dictates caution. Know-Nothingism, Clanism, Anti-Semitism are by no means dead in America. And who knows when we shall have a revival of Binghamism in one form or another.

IV

Will the gain be worth the price? Hardly. Eliminate the care of dependents from your community responsibility and you will find it exceedingly difficult to raise funds for the other needs. Our drives for local, national, and international purposes have been conducted on an emotional basis. Eliminate the emotional appeal which poverty, disease, the widow and the orphan make without long and careful preparation of your giving public, and you eliminate an elemental force in giving. National and international agencies have learned this to their cost. Those who are clamoring for an immediate shift in emphasis to cultural activities have yet to learn this. The very ones who will respond to cries of hunger and appeals for funds for the sick and destitute will find all kinds of reasons and excuses for not giving for

purely cultural needs, not the least being a lack of sympathy with a given program. If a shift in emphasis from dependency to cultural work is necessary in fund raising, the communities must first be prepared for it. With the emotional appeal lacking, with divided communities, with assimilationist tendencies everywhere evident, with divided loyalties between Federation and Community Chest, with examples of lower standards of giving from the non-Jewish contributors to the Chest, and with a false sense of security due to public welfare assistance, Jewish federations and Jewish communities are bound to go backward.

One federation executive recognized this and almost staked his professional future on insisting that an emergency-relief fund be included in a drive for cultural purposes. This, in spite of the fact that in this particular community such inclusion at this time was not absolutely essential and perhaps not altogether justified. Note what has been happening to Jewish education and community centers where these have been part of federations. Note the alacrity with which some federations have eliminated some national agencies from their budgets, thus destroying in one fell swoop what the National Conference has labored for more than a decade to build up—confidence on the part of the national agencies in federations.

V

The foregoing picture is not an encouraging one. That it is not overdrawn, those who are informed and have had personal or vicarious experience with some of the foregoing, will readily acknowledge. How to prevent what may come about if we go along the lines of least resistance, is the real problem. It calls for professional leadership of the highest order; a leadership, wise, constructive, far-seeing, and courageous. Jewish social workers, especially executives of federations and family welfare agencies, have an opportunity and responsibility never before faced by the Jewish social work fraternity except during the early years of the heavy Russian-Jewish immigration. At that time we had neither the knowledge, nor the experience, nor the financial and community resources, nor the personnel to deal with the problem adequately and in a statesmanlike manner. And—the job was bungled. Today the situation is different. We have the experience if only we would recognize it and profit from it; we have the personnel if we would use it; and we have the knowledge and prestige to make an effective presentation of our case. Do we have the courage?

It must be clearly recognized that it will require no mean amount of courage on the part of the family welfare executive to stand out against the tendency and hold out against turning over Jewish clients to poorly run and socially inefficient public departments at a time when the agency's budget is heavily in the red. It will require courage, a

great deal of courage, on the part of the federation executive to support such a stand of the family agency; to stand against the reduction of standards of work in the agencies; to hold out against undue and crippling budgetary cuts in educational and recreational agencies; to prevent the elimination of national agencies from the federation budget at a time when it is difficult or impossible for them to raise their needed funds without elaborate and costly machinery after having trusted in the federation's good faith. It will take even greater courage (since the matter may become somewhat personal) to argue against reductions in salary standards especially in the lower brackets. But above all it will require courage to adhere to a program of community integration, development, and democratization at a time when those upon whom such a program must be urged have to pay for the default or failure to carry their just share of community burdens and responsibilities on the part of those who would perhaps profit from such democratization. But this is precisely the time when it is essential to bear in mind the larger values and the deeper purposes of Jewish community organization. Unless that be done we may lose or permit others to lose perspective and our work will become like a rudderless ship at the mercy of every strong wind without being able to steer toward port.

I do not lack faith in the ability of Jewish social workers to withstand adversity or to be able to convince their communities of the wisdom and imperative necessity of maintaining fundamental standards. I have seen such remarkable achievements on the part of social workers in raising standards in communities against almost insuperable obstacles that I have no doubt in their effectiveness in the present emergency if they will recognize the importance of maintaining essential standards and determine to do battle for them.

VI

I do not expect that all will agree with me. The cause which I plead is not a popular one.* It is so much easier, pleasanter, and safer to follow the mob than to check it that few dare attempt it. Unfortunately one can very easily obtain sanction for reducing standards and taking advantage of existing public resources without much thought to the quality of their work or their effect upon the clients. In all the discussions on this question recently, the matters of standards and results were hardly mentioned, not to say stressed. Moreover, in recent years the tendency, especially among the case work group, has been away from the direction and cautions indicated above. This has manifested itself in many ways, including their desire to minimize the

*I am not advocating non-participation in public welfare departments but insistence on suitable standards of service and relief before utilizing them. For my view on the role of the state in the care of its citizens see pp. 358-62 of *The Scientific Basis of Social Work*, Columbia University Press, 1931.

value and significance of Jewish social work *per se*, as well as the National Conference of Jewish Social Service. They have rightly emphasized the development of techniques and criticized the older generation of Jewish social workers as not having developed them. I would be the last to underestimate or decry the value of techniques either in Jewish or general social work. But I have a very strong suspicion that the "techniques" argued for are rather narrowly conceived and that the ardent desire to cultivate them at the cost of the integrity of Jewish social work may not infrequently cover up some other motive. Be that as it may, those whose responsibility it is to think in terms of the entire Jewish community must not themselves, and must not permit others to sell the Jewish community's birthright for a mess of pottage even though it be spiced with "technique."

Similarly, the responsibility which rests upon Jewish social workers, in common with other social workers, to help develop the public agencies and which is occasionally advanced as a reason for utilizing public agencies when their standards are much below those of the private or Jewish agencies, is neither a sound view of the matter, nor is it ever justified, nor is it the best way of helping the public agencies. As Jewish social workers our first and most immediate responsibility is toward those with whose welfare we and our agencies are directly charged. It is their interests and their welfare that must be our first concern. We have no authority or right to sacrifice them even for the so called "good of the larger number." Were we to do so and were our doing so known, the most interested and most concerned members of the Jewish community would consider us recreant to our trust, and, if they had their way in the matter, we should be relieved as unworthy of and unequal to the responsibility.

The public agency, too, would be better served if we adhered to and insisted on adequate standards before turning over our charges to them. Despite the effort to minimize budgetary differences between Jewish and non-Jewish family societies, there can be little doubt that the Jewish agencies have profoundly influenced relief standards in private and public agencies. In this way they made and can continue to make a most important contribution to the development of family social work if they would only recognize it. Where the other agencies have not followed their lead they have at least become acutely conscious of the difference and have become aware that they are not doing an adequate job. Our achievements here are the envy and goal of the non-Jewish agencies both public and private. We should be proud of and should cherish the privilege of setting this goal and should not lightly forego the opportunity of continuing to make this contribution. Jewish social workers and Jewish social work have won the respect of their non-

Jewish colleagues because of their high standards and the achievements of Jewish philanthropy have brought more credit and glory on American Jewry than any other single aspect of Jewish life. Jewish social workers are, therefore, in a better position to bring pressure on public agencies when they hold out for higher standards than when they take advantage of standards that are much lower than their own because of the monetary gain that would accrue to them. This has been my own experience when I faced these problems. It has been corroborated by colleagues who faced similar problems. Thus the best interests of the public agencies coincide with conservative action on the part of Jewish communities with respect to turning over their charges to the public welfare departments. We have here then another opportunity for service to the development of general social work. Shall we give up all this, shall we abandon our clients, give up our ideals and ambitions for complete and effective community organization, forego standards which it has taken decades to develop, and see our prestige and that of our communities go crumbling, because of a temporary depression?

I say "temporary depression" advisedly for it is and is bound to be only temporary. In a large measure it is psychological with us. We are now in a depressed state psychologically just as two years ago we were in a state of elation. To be sure there is good cause for some of it. But the situation is by no means as black as it has been painted. Some agencies are better off financially than they have ever been. Some federations have resources and reserve funds which have not yet been touched. Unfortunately it has become somewhat fashionable to be individually poor and organizationally distressingly so. In addition some have utilized the general depression as warrant for advanc-

ing their own pet prejudices on account of presumably needed economies which at other times they could not so easily defend. Others seek to curry favor of the powers that be by an uncalled for show of economy at the expense of sound programming and organization. Attitudes of fear and panic are thus engendered which result in action altogether beyond the requirements of the situation. Unhappily such shortsightedness is not limited to heads of local agencies. Individuals and agencies of broader scope from whom deeper insight and greater perspicacity might be expected have been equally guilty if not more so. In some instances it was precisely these that first started the endless chain of depression consequences.

VII

The remedy? It is implied in all that was said above. No one formula can be applied everywhere. But in addition to the specific correctives to be determined upon and used in accordance with the local problem and situation, it is most imperative that we regain our poise, balance, and perspective. We must recapture our appreciation of the fundamental values in our programs and emphasize them to the point where they will once again become the guiding principles in our planning and work. To do otherwise is to declare ourselves lacking in those qualities of leadership which our communities have a right to expect of us. Momentary approval of shortsightedness from a blind Present is an unsafe criterion. History is a more discerning critic. It will judge us and our achievements even as we judge those of our predecessors. What shall that judgment be? It is in our power to insure a favorable judgment if only we shall have the necessary wisdom and courage.

Is Philanthropy Intelligent?*

By I. M. RUBINOW

LEST there be any misunderstanding, I consider it my duty to explain that I am not responsible for the question. I haven't asked it. In fact, the question is asked of me by one of the editors of this publication and for some reason or other I am supposed to give a satisfactory reply.

The explanation is necessary because many colleagues may resent the question as a reflection upon their profession and, by implication, upon themselves. Others, perhaps less sensitive, will point out, and very properly, that this question, somewhat embarrassing, had already been answered;

*For the intelligent reader—strictly confidential. This is really meant as a review of "Intelligent Philanthropy," Edited by Ellsworth Faris, Ferris Laune and Arthur J. Todd. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1930.—THE AUTHOR.

for here is a heavy book prepared by three good men and true representing a joint effort of twelve scholars and the very title is proof positive that philanthropy is intelligent, or at least that there is such a thing as intelligent philanthropy. And so, perhaps it might be the easiest and safest way for the writer to answer "yes" and suggest to the doubting Thomas that he purchase the book and let it go at that.

I have a dim suspicion, however, that something more is expected of me—though why it should is another question which may be put without any hope of an answer. So the book had to be read—which of itself was not an unpleasant task. Under the conditions under which social