

that Robin Hood of Jewish life, Mr. Samuel Untermyer, comes with his megaphone of predatory righteousness, to dispute the primacy with all the others in the field. And most recently, Mr. B. Charney Vladeck comes as a captain of industry among Jewish labor organizations to organize Jewish labor as such with respect to Jewish problems.

To date, both at home and abroad, not only the Jewish masses, but public opinion generally, acknowledge the American Jewish Congress, with its 1,000,000 members and upwards as holding an authentic mandate to speak for the will, the needs and the wishes of a moiety of American Jews. Yet the American Jewish Congress, democratic as are its methods and purposes, represents only a plurality of the total number of organized Jews.

Now we cannot well glorify democracy outside of Jewish life and oppose it inside. A little courage, a realistic approach to the problem of unity, could easily put an end to this irony and abolish the farcical situation of the Jewish minority group in the great democratic American nation, meeting its own Jewish problems not democratically, but in the main through oligarchic and fascist instruments.

Unification is a much simpler matter than timid leaders and timider lieutenants imagine. It has been affected before, in 1918, and can be repeated again. It requires merely that the different parties get together, issue a call for democratic elections, organize such elections and create by this means a single body in which will be proportionately represented each and

every one of the various groups which compose the Jewish community. If the leaders dare, they can have this unity. But do they dare? Most questions involving Jews are solved by their leaders not through decisive action, but by default. They move with a caution which paralyzes when they need a courage which animates understanding to decisive action.

The issue is in no small degree up to you social workers. You are both the servants and the advisors of the Jewish masters in relation to the Jewish masses. As their servants, you dispense their charity; soothe their consciences and ease the universal and endemic tensions which constantly shake the structure of Jewish life. As their advisors, you ostensibly set before them in terms of "scientific charity" and "social science" the dynamic realities of the Jewish community situation. As their advisors, you are in the position of doctors reporting on their patients. Perhaps you will be scientific enough to see that the cause of Jewish disunity is the absence of democracy and that the cure for Jewish disunity is to set up this democracy by the obvious means of a nation-wide election through which every Jew will have a share in determining by whom and how the issues affecting him shall be solved. Will you do it? Only democracy can create unity. Dare you choose democracy?

Freedom, my friends, cannot be waited for. We make freedom. We take freedom. I urge you in behalf of American Israel to take freedom to democratize and thus to unify Jewish life.

The Need of Re-Organizing Jewish Communal Life

From the Federation Point of View

By GEORGE W. RABINOFF

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AN ATTEMPT to gauge the potentialities of the Jewish Federation for organizing the Jewish group to meet the changing conditions of social life today requires an historic perspective on the Federation movement. We use the term "Jewish community" although in this country we have never known the community as a legal entity.

In America, the Federation has been a voluntary agency, assuming certain limited philanthropic functions on behalf of the Jews resident in a community. It never presumed to carry activities of a primary character, which fell within the purview of the government. It never attempted to speak or to act for all Jews. Even within its limited scope, concern for the

philanthropic and in some degree for the cultural needs of the Jews, Federation had not succeeded in enlisting the full support of all classes of Jews, either in finances or in leadership. However, it had established its place; it had demonstrated that divergent groups could come together on a working platform without violence to their individual viewpoints; it had aspired to effective utilization of Jewish communal resources to meet communal problems through a centralization of financial and policy-making interest and responsibility.

Although Federation traces its origins to European traditions, it started here as a co-operative financial device, created by the leaders of existing social agencies to simplify their fund-raising process, to avoid competitive and expensive solicitations and to assure stability through a wider base of support. By joining together, they were enabled to enlist in their membership larger numbers of contributors, and to approximate, in concept at least, a service in the interests of all the Jews in their community. Thus was attained a community status, voluntary it is true, but nevertheless representative of all elements which accepted Federation leadership.

With this background in mind, the forces behind the present shifting emphasis in the movement become more intelligible. Since there was no fixed Federation pattern, each community built up its organization according to its own traditions, its available leaders, and a host of accidental determinants. The Conference was an important influence, but not decisive, because of the lack of continuing consultative service. As a result, there developed a number of types of Federation.

Generally speaking, the past five years have seen a searching of the soul in Federation seeking adjustments to modern conditions.

Among the factors which have broken the mould of the Federation pattern are the following:

1. Economic and social conditions—

a. The newer immigrant groups had become stabilized, financially and socially; they had become articulate. If Federation were to continue to have community-wide status these units had to find, or be given, a place in the framework, involving fundamental changes in program, to recognize the attitudes and interests of the labor, the conservative, the orthodox and the nationalist elements in the community.

b. Old dynasties of financial and leadership strength have fallen, new figures have appeared, not as powerful and not as interested socially. Because they are indigenous, and better equipped, they are in a peculiarly favorable position to work out current problems.

c. Increasing taxation for welfare and other purposes cut substantially into funds available for voluntary giving and necessitated a further spreading of the base of support.

2. Conditions within social work—

a. The Community Chest movement has implications not yet understood nor evaluated. To what extent is the active participation of Jews important in Jewish social work? Can such participation continue unless Jews retain direct responsibility for financing and policy-making? Even more fundamental is the possibility that the Community Chest studies now under way, may result, under pressure of dwindling resources and objective tests of performance, in the merging of certain Jewish philanthropic activities into non-sectarian agencies. Can Jewish clients be cared for adequately under non-Jewish private agency auspices, or do the clients and the Jews as a whole, both need the Jewish agency as an expression of their kinship?

b. The public welfare services are being rapidly extended, the government taking over a constantly increasing proportion of areas formerly considered the prerogative and the special province of private social work. The volume of work of Jewish agencies in general has not fallen below the 1929 level, but they are no longer responsible for the bulk of Jewish relief clientele.

3. Conditions in the Jewish group—

a. The "Jewish question," in all its aspects, has been brought forcibly to the attention of Jews in this country, as never before, by the post-war and more recent events in the Jewish communities of Europe, by the reflection of these events here, and by the sharpening of issues incidental to the depression. The problems of occupational discrimination and the economic re-adjustment of dislocated industrial and middle-class Jews are not, strictly speaking, within the ordinary concept of social work, but they are matters of communal concern. Similarly, and some insist primarily, attention is being directed communally to the so-called "positive" aspects of Jewish life, the programs for educating the youth in appreciation of Jewish culture and traditions, the activities directed to the upbuilding of Palestine, the agencies financing international relief and reconstruction and organizing Jewish opinion on behalf of one or another platform for the safeguarding of Jewish interests.

The National Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds was organized in the Fall of 1932, to provide a channel for the analysis of these social forces and the exchange of experiences. Forms and general

principles are being crystallized to guide the Federation movement through the necessary re-organization process and to make possible a planned development throughout the country. Through the annual General Assembly, Regional Conferences, direct contacts with individual cities by correspondence and field visits, a national and representative Jewish Welfare Mobilization Committee, and publication of reports on national agencies and studies of community experience, the National Council is bringing Jewish community leaders closer to each other.

There are certain aspects of the local Federation program which require national co-operative effort on behalf of the combination of Federations, but the major emphasis of the National Council calls for the strengthening of the local organizations to a position of accepted and effective communal leadership.

Uniformity is not the objective of the National Council. Rather, conscious of the differences among

our people, we seek a platform of harmony between the divergent elements, each with its special interest, but all having in common a concern for the basic needs of the entire group. Through the democratic processes of discussion and education, controversial issues are resolvable into those factors which can be dealt with communally, and those which cannot be reconciled in such a program. Group survival is accepted by all the elements. Practical considerations dictate the necessity of cooperation within this minimum framework. We can attain this goal most readily by the extension and modification of the one mechanism with which we have already experimented, the Federation; the Federation as a centralized community agency to serve the Jewish group, the leaders democratically designated, alert to the cross currents of Jewish life, flexible to meet changing conditions, firm in their acceptance of the basic principle of an integrated Jewish group within the American milieu.

From the Point of View of Jewish Education

By DR. EMANUEL GAMORAN

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THE Jewish community life of the future will center not around philanthropy but around the recognition on the part of our leaders that community organization must lead to the preservation of Jewish life and to the fostering of Jewish values. There have been two tendencies manifest in the Conference for Jewish Social Work. One was the tendency of those who, as Professor Dewey has somewhere pointed out, are so eager to be like others as to become entirely indistinguishable from the rest of humanity. This group thought and—some of the members of it still think—that they can contribute their share to the solution of the Jewish problem by accelerating a process of assimilation which would ultimately lead to the disappearance of the Jew. Their policy with regard to Jewish community life was really the result of a failure to recognize that the Jews are a distinct community. To the extent that they helped our people to unite, it was on a philanthropic rather than on a cultural basis.

A second tendency, that has only recently manifested itself and that grew largely as an accompaniment of the miserable conditions brought about by the years of depression, may be described as that of the economic radicals who think that the only solution to the Jewish problem can come through the solution of

world problems. They will take the "easy" course of solving the economic problems of the world, and incidentally—so they think—they will achieve a solution for the Jewish problem. This group, too, does not offer any positive program for Jewish survival. For, it centers its attention on the solution of the economic problem, and good-naturedly, with reference to Jewish culture, either is not interested in it or assumes that that problem will take care of itself.

The point of view of the Jewish educator, and I am happy to say of a great number of Jewish social workers, is that neither of these outlooks is justified either by the logic of the situation or by our experience as students of Jewish social life. There are few people that are to be pitied as much as those who, like the assimilationists, seek to escape their Jewishness—to escape being themselves. Nor is there any reason, on the basis of the participation of the Jew in liberal movements to conclude that the problem of Jewish survival and Jewish culture can take care of itself. As a matter of fact, those who take the attitude of economic radicalism plus a laissez faire policy with reference to Jewish survival, too often become steeped in an economic materialism that bids fair to destroy all cultural values and to show concern only for the "dinner pail."

Yielding to none in his desire to participate in a radical solution of our present economic problems in the finest sense of the term "radical," (which means going to the root of things) the Jewish educator and the Jewish social worker, who are Jewishly conscious, recognize that the survival of the Jew is their primary task. The organization of Jewish community life in the future must therefore aim to provide, first of all, for the possibility of survival. Secondly, it must aim, in organizing its life, to see to it that survival should not be "mere survival," that it should be on a high plane of cultural creativity. Finally, it must recognize that the ultimate aim of any system of Jewish community life is the happiness of the individual boys and

girls who are growing up into our Jewish communities. These boys and girls are the "ends." In all countries throughout the world they are born into a minority group—a fact with which they must sooner or later, at times happily, and at other times unhappily, reckon. The intelligent Jewish community will so organize its life as to utilize the human cultural, aesthetic values which have evolved in the Jewish group, as a means of furthering and enhancing the life of the individuals that are growing up in its midst. Only in this way can they achieve that mental, spiritual protection needed by members of minority groups. Only in this way can they provide for the happiness of the boys and girls who will constitute the Jewish community of tomorrow.

From the Point of View of a Center Representative

By AARON G. ROBISON

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I HAVE never been conscious of the fact that the Jewish Community has ever, at any time, been really organized in any way in America. It is therefore logically impossible to reorganize something that has never previously been organized. Permit me therefore to reword the subject as "The Organization of the Jewish Community."

A Jewish Community assumes the existence of Jewish Citizens in that community. It is a commonplace that there can be no citizenry without the well organized, well financed assistance of education in that community. I would therefore say that the first requirement for the organization of a Jewish Community is a thorough system of Jewish education. Only in this way is it possible for us to have a Jewish Com-

munity. For this reason, I would shift the emphasis in our Jewish Community program from the purely eleemosynary and charitable to more constructive efforts such as Jewish education, Jewish center work and synagogue activities. The taking care of our Jewish orphans, our Jewish sick and our Jewish poor would never help us to create Jewish Community life. While the care of these unfortunate is the necessary duty of the Jews, it does little, if anything, to build up the Jewish Community.

It seems to me therefore that our first step in organizing a Jewish Community is to shift the emphasis now placed on the purely negative and eleemosynary activities that are characteristic of the Jewish life to the more constructive ones of Jewish education, etc.