

In conclusion I wish to emphasize one thought. While we should be concerned with the ultimate fate of social welfare as a whole, we must also keep in mind, alertly and constantly, the consuming need for the firm establishment and retention of those agencies and factors which make for Jewish solidarity. Jewish group existence, as in fact the existence of any minority

group, depends on the establishment of social and human justice, not as phrases, mouthed in a sort of a mumbo-jumbo, but as a real and vital actuality. Our work must lie in these two parallel and contiguous channels, not as a matter of expediency, but as a matter of right. On this tenet we must build our hopes for the future and on this tenet we must stand or fall.

The Current Year in Jewish Education

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ORGANIZED, modern Jewish education is entering the twenty-fifth year of its existence under a constellation of still inauspicious circumstances.

The second year of the NRA finds the funds at the disposal of the Jewish school still as paltry and as absurdly inadequate as the nadir of the depression had left them. My friend, an old and venerable Rabbi, sees here as everywhere else in the world the consummation of a providential design.

"Wherefore," queries the old and wise Rabbi, "is the Torah likened unto precious jewels?" And he posits the answer that just as precious jewels are the first to go to the pawnshop in time of a pinch and the last to be redeemed with the return of prosperity; so is the Torah the first to be jettisoned with the coming of the depression and the last to be remembered with its passing.

I confess that I lack the beatific serenity of my older and perhaps wiser colleague, basking in the light of a beneficent providence and sucking solace from a sacred saying. I frankly admit that as time goes on and the strained endurance of a half-starved staff gives way to a lingering despondency, I have fears that as far as Jewish education is concerned the depression is no more than a mere passing phase. Vainly do we look to the hope-kindling blue eagle. The omnipotent bird of Jove blinks evasively. Its aquiline, humid eyes have no message for us, no promise.

I know that my colleagues will frown at this unwarranted note of sadness that I am striking at the opening of an annual convention. It is poor policy, they will say, it is bad psychology, and besides rainbow tints are not wanting on the overcast horizon pointing to a better and brighter day in Jewish education.

I admit that the outgoing year had a number of

positive achievements to record even in our difficult and neglected field, and these I propose briefly to review. First in importance as a promise and a potency stands out the First Annual Conference of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds held in Chicago. That Conference set up a new landmark on the road to organized Jewish community life in this country. It was an impressive assembly, well planned and well conducted, and as far as Jewish education was concerned its declaration of policy left hardly anything to be desired. It was issued as part of a printed report prepared by a committee of the council, headed by Dr. Ben Selekman, and it received the wholehearted and unqualified approval of its outstanding leaders. Let me quote it in part:

"JEWISH EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

"When we pass to these functions, we confront a segment of the community program which, though it receives but a limited share of Federation funds, represents a form of service not transferable to governmental or non-Jewish auspices. The present sharpened thrust of anti-Semitism makes it more than ever imperative to strengthen the inner resources of our people. Unless our Jewish youth is brought up to understand deeply the historical experience of his people and the values of his cultural heritage in relation to the modern world, he lacks an intelligent basis for a satisfying and rational adjustment to the frequency antagonistic environment in which we must live. To refuse one's Jewishness, or not to find a rational basis for its perpetuation in a confused world of racial prejudice is not to escape the penalty of belonging to a minority group in a period of intense nationalism; it is merely to forfeit the recompenses of spiritual dignity and armor.

"If we have to face discrimination and prejudice and

even persecution, shall we merely crumble as before some cruel and incomprehensible catastrophe, or shall we take our stand behind the rich and positive meanings of our inheritance, reevaluated and integrated into our modern life? The problem before the Federation is an outstanding opportunity. By actively promoting instead of merely tolerating cultural and educational activities, by stimulating the adaptation of inherited cultural traditions to fit the needs of modern Jewish life, Federation can both accept and build leadership in the most creative sense.

"Among a large part of our people (the report continues) there is a strong conviction that Jewish education has an all-important and integral function in Jewish life. Federation cannot fail to meet this aspiration and at the same time claim that it represents the entire Jewish community. As a matter of historical fact, the Jewish community has always taxed itself to maintain its educational system. The divorce of Jewish education from such a primary Jewish organization as the Federation, would if ever consummated, constitute a break with our cultural tradition and historical continuity."

This is the first opportunity that I have to express in public on behalf of the National Council for Jewish Education our appreciation to the committee for the intelligent and courageous way in which it stated the problem and to that entire conference for the treatment accorded it.

But regard for historic accuracy prompts me to add that this report was not accepted without challenge. The challenge came in the form of mimeographed notes to the report. These notes weakened a great deal the unequivocal pledge on behalf of Jewish education contained in the original report. The intent of these notes prepared by an anonymous minority took on a rather sombre retrospective significance in view of what happened subsequently in the Federation of Chicago in relation to its own Bureau of Jewish Education.

Here is how the Chicago situation is described for us in the current issue of the Jewish Education Magazine: "After four years of constant and bitter controversy regarding the work of Jewish education in the program of the Jewish Charities of Chicago, a compromise was reached this year whereby the Jewish Charities of Chicago continue to be responsible for Jewish education *but is to raise funds for this activity independently of its other funds.* For this year, the Jewish Charities of Chicago appropriated to the Bureau of Jewish Education the sum of \$50,000 (subject to their call on or after June first.) Thereafter, only funds

raised in the special drive for Jewish education shall be appropriated for the Bureau of Jewish Education."

It is possible that this arrangement will work out for the greater advantage of Jewish education in Chicago. It will certainly afford the Board of Jewish Education an opportunity to come face to face with Chicago Jewry and discuss educational issues in a manner in which it could not do under the old arrangement. It is possible, too, that the propaganda which the Board of Jewish Education in Chicago will from now on have to carry on in connection with the annual campaigns will deepen the interest of the community in all phases of Jewish education in addition to the purely financial ones. The point, however, is that this compromise was prompted not by a desire to improve the lot of Jewish education but by the threats of the so-called "large givers" that for years were hanging over the heads of the Federation leaders like the threatening sword of Damocles. It was clearly a case where community leadership had to yield, against its own better judgement, to sheer force, wielded by a few powerful individuals.

Even if we confer upon what happened in Chicago the dignified name of "experiment" as does our kindly and charitable Dr. Dushkin, it will not blind us to the fact that Jewish education was set apart there from all other community agencies and was compelled to go looking for new sources of income at a time when the depression is still more than half way with us.

We shall watch developments in Chicago with a great deal of concern and with the hope that out of this crisis the Bureau of Jewish Education may emerge strengthened and with an even greater measure of popular community support.

And so we turn from Chicago to survey the rest of the scene, likewise none too genial and far from being a theatre of unmixed joy. The plight of the Jew in Eastern and Central Europe is continuing to claim the center of attention of American Jewry. Its effect on the status of Jewish Education here has not yet come sufficiently to the surface, although the thing that has happened in Germany, especially as it affects its youth, has definite educational implications for Jewry everywhere. The fate of Jewish youth in Germany sounds a warning which no parent or teacher dare ignore, a warning that we must not let the Jewish consciousness of our youth be nurtured on the one-sided diet of discrimination, persecution and hate. Rather must we balance it with the awards and satisfactions, the great cultural and spiritual indemnifications that our people has been and still is in a position to offer to its loyal sons and daughters.

It should become clear to us that the function of Jewish education is to train the growing Jew for citizenship in Jewry. Bitter experience has taught us that citizenship in the lands of our sojourn be it centuries old, does not suffice to guarantee for the Jew protection of life and property, as witness what is happening in one of the presumably most civilized nations of the world, where the government itself has organized a vile attack upon its Jewish citizenry. The tens of thousands of suicides and broken lives in Germany and in many another place, that have come as a result of the fact that their respective countries have repudiated them, impose upon us as leaders and teachers in Jewish communities a duty so to educate our children as to make them feel that there is one land in reserve which cannot repudiate them, one people which will never turn against them, one language, a rich and beautiful language and literature which is theirs, inalienably theirs. What nation in the world can accuse us of double allegiance in the face of what has happened to us again and again in the course of our tortured history?

In the meantime, however, American Jewry is still too pre-occupied with fighting Hitler and Hitlerism, with the hunting down of every individual case of anti-Semitism, and the hopeless attempt of meeting in frontal attack a whole world of enemies. Far be it from us to derogate at this time the heroic efforts of such arms of defence as the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, the various Anti-Nazi and Anti-Fascist Committees. We merely want to point out that these activities must not be allowed to usurp the entire attention of American Jewry even at this time and that the daily constructive work of maintaining Jewish schools and centers must not be lost sight of in our frantic and panicky and often all too futile activities against anti-Semitism. To open up our spiritual and cultural reserves, to uncork all the tonic winds of national hope and promise upon our desperately-growing youth is not only good Jewish tradition and loyalty but is wise statesmanship and sound strategy.

But since we set out to chronicle the positive gains which Jewish education has to record for the period of the last twelve months, let us, then, continue to keep our eye on what there was of positive achievement.

First, we note with satisfaction the numerous attempts that have been made during the last year in almost every center of Jewish population to organize the Jewish community in some organic fashion. From

many a quarter the demand for such organizations has come. The need seems to have penetrated to every Jewish community function. But nowhere is a systematic coordination of the entire community as imperative as in Jewish education. To have an organized school system in a disorganized Jewry is an obvious impossibility.

We, therefore, hail the many stirrings and unmistakable signs of seriousness that have come in evidence of a desire to achieve community integration. The advent of the Jewish Welfare Fund organization, the National Council of Federations, the council of the leaders of orthodox, conservative and reform rabbinate, the central council of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the B'nai B'rith, the pooling of campaigns for the Agency and the Joint and the numerous community councils and "Vaad Ha'irs" already functioning, justify our hope that the day is not far off when the American Jewish community will cease to be a mere euphony and will become a fact.

This very conference in which this year are brought together social workers, center workers and educators is evidence of the growing recognition of the correlation of the services represented by these three professional groups. The broadening of the school functions and the deepening of center life have brought these two institutions, and the workers in the two respective fields, into closer relationship. Our next step in this direction ought to be a linking up also with the Rabbinic profession. Our mutual provinces of activity and influence touch sufficiently—indeed they often overlap—to warrant common council and the establishment of a more definite mode of cooperation. Another source of satisfaction to the Jewish educator has been the movement in the direction of adult education. A large number of institutions for Jewish adult education have been organized throughout the country. The Jewish lecture forum seem to have, in many instances, given way to a Jewish school, and the sporadic lectures to a systematic course of study. The interest in Jewish studies on the part of adults has been going on for years, but it has gained new impetus recently. Not only has the number of institutes and the enrollments grown by leaps and bounds, but the range of subjects taught in those schools has vastly increased. One finds among the subjects listed in the catalogues not only the traditional courses in the Bible, Jewish history and current events, but such comparatively new subjects as contemporary Hebrew literature, Jewish literature in European languages, Jewish social research, the Jew in

contemporary philosophy, the history of Jewish nationalism, the British Colonial policy in Palestine and Near East, Palestinian geography, etc. Whether this expansion in the field of adult Jewish education is due to an intensification of interest in Jewish life and lore due to external pressure, whether it is due to the fact that the depression has made other leisure time interests too expensive, or whether it is a normal development and a sign of our coming culturally of age is uncertain. The probabilities are that all three causes are involved. But whatever the causes, the movement is on and we pray that it continue to grow and expand. In these unsettled days with the shifting currents of doctrine becoming all too violent, cultural values are in especial need of new friends and patrons. Acts of vandalism are needlessly perpetrated upon them during social upheavals for no valid reason other than the ignorance of the insurgents. Empty vessels are foundered without much scruple, but one hesitates long to shipwreck a cargo carrying the precious wealth of the ages.

You will invariably find that those in our midst who would give up with light heart all Jewish cultural values happen to be themselves ignorant of them. I have somewhere read a phantastic tale about the deaf men of a country who have piled up carloads of music sheets—every music sheet they could lay their hand on—and committed it to a bonfire lit on the public square, and as the sheets of five devoured the world's music, these deaf men gesticulated wildly, ecstatically, drunk with triumph. That was *their* way of wreaking vengeance upon those who can hear; that was one way of achieving equality. Such acts of vandalism whether through commission or through wanton neglect have nothing to do with views on economic radicalism or on social stratification. Their association is adventitious not intrinsic and the sooner they are dissociated in the popular mind the better for culture and the better for social and economic reconstruction.

And so we note with exceeding gratification the coming into evidence of the time-tested craving of the Jewish adult for Jewish as well as for general knowledge.

Corollary to the expanding movement of adult education and undoubtedly stemming from the same latent roots is the phenomenal output of books of Jewish interest during the last year. Their number exceeds that published in the three previous years put together. I have before me a list of close to 150 such volumes published in English during the last twelve months. This list has no claim to completeness.

Every other day a new English book is published dealing with some phase of Jewish life and letters. As I glance through the titles of these books and call to mind their contest, I have a growing conviction that Jewish culture in this country is unquestionably on the upward grade. Mind you, 150 volumes and not a single detective story among them, not a single dime novel. The calibre of these volumes is such that would bestow honor upon any cultural group. Suffice it to mention such works as "Baruch Spinoza," by Professor Wolfsohn; "Buddha and Spinoza," by Dr. Melamed; "Judaism as a Civilization," by Professor Kaplan; "The History and Destiny of the Jewish People," by Kasten; a translation of the Hebrew poetry of Ibn Ezra, and titles by the late Wasserman, Feuchtwanger, Sholom Asch, Zweig, Toller, Golding, Lewisohn, Fineman and Cohen and many others. In this connection it is of interest to observe that so many of our Temples and even Synagogues who claim that Judaism is to them no more than a religious denomination take pride in filling their shelves with these secular books without realizing their amiable inconsistency in so doing. Their Jewish interests are here shown to transcend their purely religious purposes and they build better than they know.

Lastly, in our day no discussion of Jewish cultural life anywhere in the world can be complete without giving due recognition to the cultural influences that Palestine is beginning to exercise over our social, educational and religious institutions. The concept of Palestine as a spiritual center is already beginning to take on visible application. Practically all Hebrew literature comes to us now from Palestine where no less than 10,000 copies of Hebrew books are being turned out daily from its printing presses. The Palestinian folk songs are resounding joyfully not only in Hebrew classrooms, but in the meeting halls of thousands of youth groups ranging all the way from Young Judaea and Junior Hadassah to the Junior Council of Jewish Women and the Junior B'nai B'rith.

To Palestine, too, we owe the inspiration that went into the making of "The Romance of a People" which afforded half a million Jewish adults and children in this country a fleeting glimpse into the history and destiny of our people and its land, symbolized in color, mass and rhythm.

But Palestine does more than that for us. It gives tone to everything that we do educationally. It is the leit motif in all our cultural efforts. It has a sublimating effect.

Thus, as we review briefly and sketchily our cul-

tural gropings and strivings amid a scene of poverty and depression and hatred, record with joy the few hard-won spiritual triumphs wrested from a reluctant and begrudging fate, the pathos of it all begins to weigh upon us and in a kindred spirit woven out of

ecstasy and agony we respond to the mood of the self-spenders of our land when they sing to us:

"In patched and tattered garments we come to celebrate the Sabbath of our souls and out of the depths of despair we sing hallelujahs."

The Vocational Adjustment of Jews

A Contribution Towards Understanding the Problems Involved and Towards Communal Planning

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BY THE method of sampling the registration and employment data for four of the general Jewish federation employment bureaus in New York City was studied by the writer in 1933 and used as the basis for an evaluation report of the services offered by those bureaus. These same data, checked subsequently for possible significant variations, will be used as the starting point for this paper.

Twenty thousand unemployed males and females seek the aid of these four agencies in the course of a year. Approximately four thousand of them are placed in positions. We know how large a segment of the total unemployed Jewish population these twenty thousand represent, for a fair estimate of Jewish unemployed in New York City yields the figure of 85,000. But we have no way, at present, of knowing how large a segment of all available employment opportunities for Jews those 4,000 filled positions represents. Yet in the absence of information to the contrary, it may be assumed that those 4,000 positions are a fair sampling of all available job opportunities for Jews in New York City, outside of the professions and of jobs under union control.

This large mass of unemployed men and women fall in the age range of 17 to 35, with the modal point at about 25. They are, on the average, economically under-privileged, well-educated, intelligent, and—Jewish. This is not meant to imply that this same

phenomenon could not possibly happen in the socio-economic experience of any other minority racial group in this country. Yet in the combination of factors—the low economic status, the high educational attainment, the intelligence, the struggle to reach high occupational status, the widespread habit of attending evening schools and colleges, the far-remove from the occupational interests or pursuits of the parent, the stigma they attach to manual labor even when no other kind is available, the quick sentence to exploitative or blind-alley employment—there is in all this something commonly recognized as Jewish, something which is not altogether explicable in terms of immediate economic and social conditions which the Jew, alone of all peoples, meets, something that is at least partly to be understood by reference to subjective realities like attitudes, opinions, personality.

Having in mind this group of 20,000 and the labor market to which the records seem to indicate their vocational destinies are bound, let us examine the problems which confront them.

Part I—A Synopsis of the Problem Involved

Some of the problems that complicate efforts in adjusting Jews vocationally are:

1. The concentration of Jewish capital in industries that are seasonal, are fraught with large firm and labor turnover, that have unfavorable work conditions, and that are contingent upon an expansive rather than a contractive industrial economy;

2. The mal-distribution of Jews in occupations within these typical industries where Jewish capital is

concentrated;

3. The technical changes in American industry which are rendering skills and special Jewish aptitudes functionless;

4. The tendency towards an older average population at work, particularly in the professions and the white-collar occupations in which Jews are assumed to be already over-numerous, thus making for a critical condition that confronts young Jews in training for these occupations;

5. The changes in job specifications which is standardizing job operations in both productive and distributive phases of industry, a tendency inimical to the assumed characteristics of the Jewish vocational personality;

6. The participation of government in the basic industries as distinguished from the non-basic, a tendency which benefits capital rather than labor, and that in industries in which, as far as we know, few Jews are now engaged; this will only indirectly and ultimately help to improve the condition of Jewish labor;

7. The lack of exact information regarding the occupational distribution of Jews, as well as other problems in Jewish employment, like the extent and causes of discrimination;

8. The unrealistic and sterile nature of current vocational guidance with its emphasis on the individual rather than on social and economic conditions;

9. The sterility and aristocratic-ecclesiastic tradition of colleges in which it is assumed Jews are found out of all proportion to their ratio in the entire population;

10. The special traits of the Jewish personality, the intellectual drive, the aggressiveness, the ambition, the radicalism;

11. Discrimination against Jews in industry, both by Jewish and non-Jewish employers;

12. The present impossibility of important aid in solving the employment problems of Jews through the public employment exchanges.

Part II—A Community Plan for the Partial Solution of the Problem

There can be little doubt that the Jewish community in New York City at least is exercised over the crisis growing out of the problems and tendencies described above. That this is true is attested by the existence of many Jewish organizations directly or indirectly concerned with the general problem of Jewish employment. In New York City the list of such organizations includes both national and local agen-

cies, agencies concerned with the problem of discrimination, with the placement of young men and young women, social, economic and personality handicaps, Sabbath observers, immigrants, German refugees, with research and vocational guidance, with attempts to combat the Fascist threat against the economic and social status of Jews.

With all these groups and organizations in the field operating discoordinationally to effect specialized and sometimes narrow ends, it is no wonder that the outsider gets the impression that there is a great deal of confusion and duplication. A more sweeping criticism of the entire Jewish social work field was made at the convention of Jewish Federations at Chicago in January, where the keynote address called for a re-organization of Jewish social work in terms of problems instead of agencies. Such re-organization calls for a generous wielding of the axe that cuts budgets, throws people out of employment, and reduces the number of executives. It will therefore probably not be wielded unless the Jewish Federations reflex the growing crisis in private philanthropy.

The disunity that characterizes the work of the eight employment agencies supported by the Jewish Federation in New York City was disclosed in the survey made by the writer in 1933. It was found, among many other defects which political considerations make it necessary to avoid mentioning here, that

1. The various offices were competing against each other for desirable jobs and desirable applicants.

2. A rivalry existed among the agencies to reach pre-eminence quantitatively and qualitatively.

3. The professional standards of work were low, due to inadequate personnel, the absence of vocational guidance and counselling, of necessary trade information, of any facilities for either short-term or long-term and continuous research.

4. The fact that the agencies were departments of centers, case work agencies, etc., imposed a specialized experience on the agency, employers associating the employment agency with the purpose of the institution, and making it possible to contact employers only on a "charitable" basis.

5. Records were inadequately kept and had no provision for collecting valuable data regarding educational, social, and economic status of applicants, although without such provision the work must always remain haphazard and unintelligible.

6. No account was taken of the changing vocational needs of applicants or of the changing labor market, the agencies being content to function on pre-established lines despite mediocre success.

(1) See "A Study of Jewish Employment Services in Federation, etc." by Irwin Rosen, mimeographed report, issued by Y.M.H.A., N. Y. C., Sept., 1933.

(2) See "Occupational Trends in New York City." Adjustment Service Publications, No. 1, April, 1933.