JEWISH SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

fused to buckle under. We should not lose sight of the connection between the acts of Mayor O'Dwyer in defending the Department of Welfare and in declaring June 4th Veto Day in New York City. Thus it is made clear that the fight to protect labor and the fight to protect social services is a common fight.

I do not before this audience need to elaborate on the suggestions contained in Mr. Zelditch's address of the many ways in which Jewish social agencies

can engage in social action. These ways can be readily developed provided there is a desire to act.

Jewish social work, which has played such an important part in advancing the well being of the Jewish people and in defending the special interests of Jews, can play an even more important part in the future by aiding the Jewish people to take their part in the fight for democracy for all the American

HOW CAN PEACEFUL LABOR RELATIONS BE ASSURED IN **SOCIAL AGENCIES?**

By JOSEPH H. LEVY United Office and Professional Workers

N informal round-table discussion on the subject of labor relations in Jewish social agencies was held at the Conference on Monday, June 2, under the auspices of the National Social Service Division of the UOPWA-CIO.

Joseph H. Levy, UOPWA National Vice President chaired the meeting. Participants in the discussion from the platform were: Bernard Segal, Executive Director, Social Service Employees Union, Local 19, New York; Harry L. Lurie, Executive Director, Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York; Alexander Handel, United Service for New Americans, New York; Charles Miller, Assistant Director, Jewish Community Council of Essex County, Newark, New Jersey; and Norman Lourie, Director, Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls School of the Jewish Board of RELATIONS BE ASSURED? Guardians, New York.

The Chairman pointed out that all of the participants would speak informally, without prepared addresses, and that all were speaking as individuals. The purpose of the meeting was to shed light on a difficult problem which is a matter of concern for all responsible persons associated with Jewish social

Mr. Levy indicated further, by way of introduction, that the majority of social workers employed in Jewish social agencies in the United States are unionized, belong to local unions of the UOPWA, and that most of these workers are covered by union contracts. He expressed the view that collective bargaining was now an established fact in Jewish social work and that it was time to proceed to the development of the kind of labor relations which would assure that the interests of the public, as well as the workers and management, would be fully protected. He emphasized that all speakers on the platform, including those from the ranks of management, had shown themselves to be adherents of collective bargaining for social workers and the discussion therefore would not proceed upon the general question of collective bargaining, but would be directed particularly to the specific subject: HOW CAN PEACEFUL LABOR

Bernard Segal, the Executive Head of the Social Service Employees Union in New York City, which has a membership of approximately 5,000 and has union agreements with dozens of social agencies, including most of the leading Jewish social agencies in the city, was the first speaker. Mr. Segal pointed out that Local 19 is now engaged in collective bargaining with approximately 40 agencies affecting 2,000 employees and that the local had made clear its desire to arrive at acceptable agreements with ods rather than stoppages and strikes. Mr. Segal was asked to explain the local's program and how, in his opinion, disputes could be minimized.

Mr. Segal stated that his local union, as well as the UOPWA generally, has taken the position that higher salaries, improved security for the workers, and better services go hand in hand, and that it is impossible to establish and maintain adequate welfare services unless first and major consideration is given to the matter of personnel. It is the workers, whether employed in professional, maintenance or clerical positions, who determine the quality of service as well as the efficiency of social Well-trained professional agencies. workers and skilled office and maintenance workers are essential if the agencies' services are to be of high calibre, but adequate personnel cannot be assured without adequate compensation and good working conditions.

Mr. Segal pointed out that the sharp rises in the cost of living, particularly in the past year, have reduced the "real" income of workers in social agencies and created a condition of substandard salaries, especially among office and maintenance workers. The professional workers and the skilled office workers in supervisory and specialized jobs in social agencies are underpaid when their skills are compared with those of similar workers in civil service and with those of skilled manual workers in commerce and industry. Employees of social agencies are unprotected by security legislation, such as Unemployment and Old Age Insurance laws, and laws safeguarding employees against discrimination because of race or sex. This further aggravates their distressing economic problem.

Because of these facts, the union has

these agencies through peaceful meth- in recent months put forth a proposal that a \$65 per week minimum be established for social workers; a \$75 per week minimum for fund-raisers; and \$40 per week minimum for office workers and maintenance workers, with higher rates depending on length of service, type of position held, etc.

> These proposals of the union, Mr. Segal stated, would help to bring about the highest standards of service in the agencies and would continue to be union goals until their achievement.

> He declared, however, that it was his local's intention to engage in genuine collective bargaining aimed at arriving at such agreements as were practicable under present conditions. It was his plea that sincere collective bargaining between the agencies and the union would generally result in an acceptable agreement. However, it is necessary to provide for those situations in which agreement is not reached through orderly collective bargaining processes. In industry, when collective bargaining fails, most employers and unions freely use the services of government mediation boards. Social agencies have been reluctant to use these agencies although they should be the first to search by every means possible for agreement rather than conflict. The union is eager at all times to make use of existing mediation boards, or to find other formal or informal channels of settling dis-

> Mr. Segal pointed out that in certain industries, such as the men's clothing industry, arbitration has been found to be particularly effective in settling disputes. It was his view that the establishment of an impartial system of arbitration was particularly desirable in the social service field because the public interest was directly involved to a very high degree. He emphasized that it

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should be possible to achieve in the the view that professional workers in field of social welfare, the same stable relations as had been achieved in certain industries. He emphasized the union's viewpoint that it should not be necessary in social work to go through a long period of strife before both parties come to the conclusion that such strife needs to be avoided. He expressed the readiness of the union to work out with the agencies as a group in each city, or with the agencies individually, appropriate methods of settling disputes which would take into account the peculiar factors prevailing in social work. He pointed out that there were many methods of settling disputes available, such as fact-finding, mediation, arbitration, etc.

Mr. Segal expressed the hope that such executives as those on the platform who are friends of organized labor would take the lead in projecting methods of improving labor relations in social work.

Mr. Levy then introduced Mr. Harry L. Lurie, pointing out that Mr. Lurie's agency engages in collective bargaining with the UOPWA. As head of the national service agency for Jewish federations, Mr. Lurie is particularly wellinformed on some of the practical problems confronting agencies in relation to collective bargaining.

Because of time limitations, Mr. Lurie stated that he would limit himself to several of the questions for discussion which had been suggested by Mr. Levy in the planning of this round-table meeting. One question was whether there were basic differences between industry and social agencies calling for different theories and processes of collective bargaining. He emphasized that the union must take into account the special factors influencing collective bargaining in social work. He expressed

social agencies were in a different position in relation to the agency than other employees. They do not stand in a conventional employer-employee relation to the agency, since they share responsibility with lay boards for the agency's policies and programs. "Professional" workers do not sell their services, they seek an opportunity to practice their profession under hospitable auspices. Taking this fact into account, Mr. Lurie expressed the belief that the union should avoid following a theory of "class conflict" in their labor relations in social agencies and should adhere to the policy of staff-board participation. He expressed the view that social agencies should accept those principles of collective bargaining which are applicable to the work of agencies engaged in non-profit services and should sincerely endeavor to arrive at agreements with the union through peaceful methods. He recognized that some agencies had not decided that such relationships were essential. Mr. Lurie believed that the professional workers through collective bargaining in social agencies should be able to find methods appropriate to their professional status of bringing about acceptable salaries and other working conditions. If they failed, they should recognize that there was a basic failure in the nature of their professional relationships. Strikes and work stoppages are inappropriate to procedures in collective bargaining in social agencies and represent an equal failure by both parties in the development of the essential conditions for professional practice.

Mr. Handel, the next speaker, was introduced as a member of the administrative staff of one of the largest social agencies in the United States, an agency which only recently arrived through col-

lective bargaining at a union agreement, establishing one of the best salary scales in the country. Mr. Handel stated that he was concerned particularly about the problem of mounting costs in the operation of private social agencies. Iewish social agencies and fund-raising organizations are confronted "with the responsibility for meeting overseas needs of such magnitude that present fundraising goals are already inadequate to meet even minimum requirements." He pointed out that the failure of the allied governments to resolve the displaced persons problem in Europe would necessarily have its repercussions in the financing of local and national social agencies. Mr. Handel said that despite the limitations in funds, increased costs, and increased needs for social services, it was still necessary for agencies to bargain collectively, to provide adequate salaries for staff, and to participate in the development of peaceful methods of settling disputes. Mr. Handel further stated that one approach to meeting the increased need for social services with the limited funds at hand was more effective community organization, directed toward prevention and necessarily involving the assumption of greater responsibility by government and public agencies. However, he felt that the union had a real responsibility to help in finding the answer to this fiscal problem, since agencies are dependent upon public contributions and cannot indefinitely increase their operating costs without increased income which, at the present time, is not in sight.

Mr. Levy in introducing Mr. Charles Miller, the next speaker, pointed out that Mr. Miller is associated with an agency which is in advance of many other agencies in its collective bargaining approach. The Jewish Community Council of Essex County has a union

contract covering a number of its affiliated organizations and thereby has minimized the danger of overt conflicts since the union is able to sit down once a year and work out a standard agreement, instead of having to bargain separately with a number of small agencies, each of which has only limited autonomy in practice. In many cities the constituent agencies of the Jewish Federation are narrowly restricted in their budgets but they each bargain separately with the union, as if they had complete control of their funds. This brings about considerable difficulty, both on the part of management representatives and the workers involved in arriving at agreement, since the agencies are constantly protesting their inability to get the necessary funds from the Federation and the workers are constantly complaining of "buck passing."

Mr. Miller stated that he was speaking as an individual, but made clear that he and his agency believed both in the necessity of responsible collective bargaining and of arbitration as a method of settling disputes.

He expressed the view that, in order for collective bargaining to proceed more smoothly between the union and the management of Jewish agencies, it would be necessary to recognize certain special problems which develop when the non-Jewish agencies in the same community are not organized. This problem arises out of the fact that the lewish agencies in many instances received their funds from the same source—the Community Chest—as the non-sectarian agency, and while the Jewish agencies have an obligation to pay adequate salaries, the union must recognize that the board members of unorganized agencies did not always understand the situation.

Mr. Miller stated also that it is im-

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portant that the unions, especially in those situations where good faith has been established, should not view with suspicion all employer proposals, but should be prepared to consider them on their merits.

The next speaker, Mr. Norman Lourie, who in the past was the head of Madison House and at present heads a school for emotionally disturbed children, differed with some of the opinions expressed by previous speakers. He expressed the view that persons associated with management, like himself, could be most helpful both to their boards and to their staffs if they would recognize the facts as they are and not seek to gloss over them. For instance, it is a mistake to declare that professional employees are not "workers" because of the fact that they holds jobs in the professional category. Mr. Lourie pointed out that professional employees have problems that are similar to those of other workers as regards wages and working conditions, and that they need to be able to bargain collectively in the same manner as other employees if they are to solve their problems. He expressed the view also that much more could be done to work out peaceful relations between the union and the agencies, and that it was up to the representatives of management, as well as the unions, to explore those possibilities fully. The problem, he said, cannot be solved by denying its existence and that any attempt to differentiate professional workers organized into unions from other workers in effect is an attempt to challenge the concept of industrial unionism and to change the constitution of the CIO.

Mr. Segal, replying to remarks of several of the previous speakers, took exception to Mr. Lurie's statement that professional workers determine the poli-

cies and program of their agencies. He stated that there was strong resistance on the part of most agencies to what they consider any demands by union workers to usurp the prerogative of the agencies' boards, and management in relation to policies and program. He stated, too, that the salaries of professional workers in social agencies were so low as to require remedy and that the methods employed by professional social workers would have to be such as to bring about the necessary improvements. He pointed out that the teachers had been compelled to use increasingly aggressive tactics. Though they did seek to avoid such tactics over a long period, the result was that teaching standards deteriorated seriously, and the results were harmful to the educational system as well as to the teachers them-

Mr. Segal also stated that it would be a mistake for Jewish social agencies to make too much of the fact that nonsectarian agencies might not happen to be organized in particular communities. The Jewish agencies must establish standards that are in themselves adequate, regardless of whether or not unorganized agencies work under substandard conditions.

Mr. Levy pointed out that in most cities non-sectarian agencies were organized along with the Jewish agencies, but that this did not in itself bring about a readiness to improve salaries. He pointed out also that there was no inclination to insist that executives of Jewish social agencies have their salaries on the same level as executives of non-sectarian agencies. It was the union's position that executives should be well paid in order to provide for competent management and by the same token the workers should also be well paid.

Mr. Levy pointed out also that Mr.

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professional workers would be most strongly resisted by the professional workers themselves, and that any union leaders who advocated such a position would be quickly discarded by their membership. The professional workers in Jewish social agencies are seriously affected by the increase in the cost of living and while they are most anxious to arrive at a solution of their economic plight by peaceful means, they are not willing to accept a situation in which they are forced to live and work under unacceptable conditions, because of their professional status.

Mr. Levy expressed the view further that strife in Jewish social agencies as well as in social work generally is costly to all parties concerned. He declared that there have been "increasing conflicts between unions and agencies over salaries, with some work stoppages already taking place." He urged that the best

Harry Lurie's viewpoint in regard to intelligence of both the union and the agencies should be applied to the job of avoiding such conflicts and to develop more mature and saner methods of doing business in the field of social welfare. He declared that the UOPWA was prepared to go much further in the field of social work in giving up some of its privileges under collective bargaining than would be the case in the field of commerce and industry. He said the union was prepared to meet management at least half-way in solving these perplexing problems. He declared that the unions would gladly cooperate with the agencies provided that the agencies were willing to accept rule by law rather than by force as a means of establishing salaries and working conditions in the field of social welfare.

> There were several questions brought forth from the floor, following which the meeting adjourned.

SOCIAL WORK PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE CHANGING COMMUNITY

By ELLIOT E. COHEN

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ARE I begin with the timehonored sentence: "This is an historic occasion." As a matter of fact, it is. It marks the first official appearance, before this historic body of the newest profession in the Jewish community: the public relations profession. It is the first time that this profession has been given the opportunity, through the newly formed Jewish Publicity Directors Association, to organize a session for this conference, and to discuss before it problems of mutual interest to the social work profession as a whole and itself.

Not that the public relations worker is really a Johnny-come-lately, born vesterday among us. He has been around for quite a while. But both he and the profession he represents are still far from understood. With my own ears I have heard social workers ask: What is public relations? Why do we need it? What can it do for us?

Since this is a conference paper, and the opening paper of a session at that, I am allowed to take a long running start in answering these questions. In COMMENTARY magazine some of you have noted a series of articles which have been appearing for some months now, called "The Crisis of the Individual." Thinkers of various fields and different slants have participated:

philosophers, religionists, sociologists, psychiatrists and political scientists. They agree about few things; but again and again they highlight a single factor as crucially important in the crisis of our civilization. They note that in the past few decades society has drastically changed-scientifically, organizationally, technologically-at a constantly accelerated rate; but that man's emotional attitudes, man's knowledge, man's thought patterns have not kept pace. Accordingly, a yawning gulf has opened up between the facts of modern society and the human being who must function within that society and operate it. Technologically, we live in the atomic age; intellectually and emotionally, we live in the early nineteenth century.

It is no news to you that similar revolutionary transformations taken place in Jewish communal work in the last two to three decades. The span between 1947 and 1917 is the span between two ages almost as different from each other as the Carboniferous and the Jurassic ages. I am reporting nothing that is not familiar to all of us; but I believe it would be useful to review quickly what some of the chief changes have been:

1. The all but complete professionalization of communal work. The development of the trained expert and the