

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

economic situations. Of the Jew, more so than of any other people, it must be said that *his* community is the World—the One World—and that Jewish Community Relations, in their final analysis, must be viewed on a world-wide basis.

One further propitious development, begun three years ago, is now operating in the field of Jewish Community Relations. For the first time in our history, we have a single organization whose objective is to co-ordinate the work of all the National and Local Jewish Community Relations Agencies, to avoid duplication of effort, and to achieve the closest possible synchronization among them in action, and unity in expression. This organization is known as the National Community Relations Advisory Council, the NCRAC. Its constituent members are: The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the

Jewish Labor Committee, the Jewish War Veterans, and twenty-one local Community Councils. On the West Coast, San Francisco, Los Angeles and the East Bay—that is, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties—are among its members. That significant development toward unity on the National scene, still in its infancy but auguring well for the future, is being paralleled also on Local levels.

Overcoming anti-Semitism, which is the core of Jewish Community Relations, is like swimming up-stream against a mighty current. The Jew must continue to be strong and persevering. The next five years will test to the utmost our *will* and our *capacity* to survive; for during the forthcoming period we shall be called upon to counteract the effects of recent events—to heal the deep and grievous wounds of the Jew—the most tragic in all our history.

DISCUSSION ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS

By IRVING BABOW
Regional Director for No.
California, Anti-Defama-
tion League,
San Francisco, Calif.

THE following points were brought up in the discussion:

There has emerged in recent years a new profession which has been described by various names: public relations, civic protection, anti-defamation, defense work, and most recently by the concept of community relations. It is the latter concept which comes closest to the field of social work and social work skills. Every social worker, whether

in case work, group work, psychiatric social work, Jewish education, etc., has the responsibility of understanding the dynamics of anti-Semitism and other bigotries. His social work skills should give him or her a better understanding of how to deal with the bigoted personality, with tension situations between groups, and with the effect of prejudice on the Jewish person and how to handle these matters. As a social worker, the

professional person as well as the volunteer in social agencies can do much on the community level to implement the program of the national defense agencies—the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the other organizations—Jewish and non-sectarian working to combat discrimination and prejudice.

In the field of social action and legislation, the social worker can join with other groups in attaining FEPC legislation and in abolishing quotas in colleges and medical schools and social discrimination. The Jewish social worker, who is active in various communal activities, is in a strategic spot to work for shared experiences in which people of all phases can get to know each other in face-to-face contact.

The question was raised as to the findings of scientific research in the field of anti-Semitism and it was pointed out that generally the bigoted personality is a frustrated person who is usually rightist, has difficulties and conflicts in family relations, and has a network of related prejudices against Negroes, labor, Catholics, etc. It was stressed that social workers can do much to work for a climate of opinion which will not provide fertile soil for the hate-mongers. Participation in councils for civic unity, in efforts to promote intercultural education in schools and social agencies, and understanding of how to deal with rabble-rousers who come to town were stressed.

The question was raised as to the importance of knowing the forces behind the organizers of hate-movements and the source of the backing. It was pointed out that well-timed exposure and condemnation by the responsible cross-section of the whole community was very helpful, and also such legal restraints as are compatible with our Bill

Service Quarterly

THE SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

of Rights. The conclusion was that social workers can do the most effective job in working with groups and individuals to immunize them against the germs of hate and intolerance and to stress the high cost of hate to the entire community, not merely to the victim of prejudice. It was emphasized that social workers can do much to enlighten the community on the price of prejudice in terms of wasted talents, unemployment, frustration, twisted personalities, in sickness, in violating the American creed, in slums and in delinquency.

While it was held important that we join with other bona-fide and non-Communist groups in efforts to fight all forms of racial and religious discrimination, it was felt that we do not confuse anti-Semitism with some other prejudices which have some different facets. It was recommended, for example, that Jews should not be lumped with Negroes, Mexicans, and Orientals in a program on "race relations", because this only confused the matter. Social workers have to know a great deal about the Jewish heritage and the status and rich culture of the Jewish people in order to give Jewish people as well as non-Jews a positive feeling about Jews based on self-respect and acceptance and dignity, not on fear, shame, Jewish anti-Semitism, and futile attempts at protective coloration.

Various projects such as the Institute for American Democracy posters (distributed at the Conference) and various materials provided by the Anti-Defamation League were cited as illustrations of the ways in which Jewish social workers could implement the national program on a community level. It was suggested that the social workers might endeavor to bring such projects to the attention of various community agencies with which they are connected.