

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF JEWISH SOCIAL WORK

They attempt to help groups and individuals adjust as Jews and Americans, to enrich group ideals and individual personalities.

The trend has been toward coordination and centralization of these services through extension programs in neighborhoods, use of synagogue and other facilities, and assistance to various independent organizations.

The Jewish Welfare Board is the national coordinating and service agency in this field.

Jewish Education

Jewish education programs are conducted by congregations, fraternal organizations, and special educational agencies. Essentially they supplement the public schools. Thus 50.3 percent of Jewish children attending some form of Jewish schools were enrolled in Sunday schools; 43.4 percent in week-day afternoon schools; and 6.4 percent in all-day schools.

A total of 231,000 children was enrolled in 1946. About 30 percent of the Jewish children of school age attended some form of Jewish school at any one time. During the depression and war years there was a decline in the number of children enrolled. In 1946 this decline was arrested.

Thirty-five cities have central bureaus of Jewish education, and there are regional bureaus in two other areas.

The bureaus are concerned with central budgeting, raising the standards of teaching and of physical facilities, developing uniform records and calendars, and common text books, all with the principle that there is no interference with the ideology of each program and with the right of each parent to choose the type of educational program he wishes for his children.

The American Association for Jewish Education is the national coordinating and service agency in this field.

Community Relations

Historically the responsibility for overcoming discrimination and prejudice against Jews, and for improving inter-faith and inter-group relationships, rested upon such national agencies as the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, with the Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, and Synagogue Council of America more recently assuming specialized responsibilities.

Greatly stirred by the Nazi menace in the 1930's, most large cities established community relations councils or Jewish community councils to coordinate and administer such programs centrally. In intermediate and smaller communities, these functions are increasingly carried by the federations, welfare funds, and community councils through committees and special departments.

In the past few years these local and national efforts have been coordinated by the National Community Relations Advisory Council.

The emphasis in this program is on prevention of bigotry rather than concentrating only on overcoming problems already existing. The programs have as their objectives the strengthening of American democracy and of equal rights for all groups. The problem of anti-Semitism is viewed not strictly as a Jewish problem, but as one which affects the well-being of the entire nation and in fact of the entire world. Efforts are directed at cooperating with groups of all faiths and races interested in developing inter-group cooperation and understanding, and in strengthening civil rights and democracy.

EPILOGUE

By Dr. Leo Baeck
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siding in London

Nothing is perhaps more characteristic of our time than the fact that no country has its own intellectual and social problems only. Today there is no people that can live its own separate life. The triumph over distance has—with or without their wishes—brought the peoples of the world too near to one another to permit isolationism. It is now impossible for nations just to live beside one another; they can no longer afford to seclude themselves even if they want to do so.

Questions and answers, thoughts and sorrows find their way everywhere; no frontiers can bar them from any sphere. Today there is only an "International of Need" and an "International of Hope." Today all necessary things are the concern of all. No one—neither an individual nor a community—may think that any decisive matter does not concern them.

Much depends therefore on the bringing together of needs and hopes with great thoughts, with living ideas. A hope without the great idea becomes an illusion, and a need becomes a disaster, even a catastrophe, if the great idea does not lead and accompany it. Today more than ever, lack of ideas would be the fatal destiny of our time.

It is therefore a task to be envisaged and fulfilled that people to whose hearts the needs and hopes of this time, especially the social needs and hopes, appeal, get together and work together to become conscious of great ideas and to clarify them for themselves and others. All depends on a beginning somewhere. What began at one point spreads its influence farther and farther. Everything influences everyone; everything also influences all things.