

FEDERATION IN ATLANTA

Atlanta has the only federation in the country. This seems to be a rather startling assertion, but here are the facts: Communities all through the land have federated their charitable and philanthropic organizations, but invariably they have brought into the fold only the organizations of one section of the community, viz.: the reformed Jews. The orthodox Jews were not included, either as organizations or as individual representatives on the Federation Boards. The problem of philanthropy to the orthodox appears to be a class problem. It was one section in Jewry ministering to the wants of another. Among those orthodox who did not need this ministry and aid, a spirit of indifference to the problem arose. The spirit of self-help is strong within them and they would rather see the help come from within the fold. Frequently this social ministry of the reformed Jews to the orthodox brother takes the form of social patronage, which is bitterly resented by all except the most ignorant and the foreigner who does not understand the nature of the help granted to him. Among the enlightened, Americanized orthodox Jews, who are neither recipients of charity nor constituents of settlements and have been left out of the social and philanthropic organizations, except as small contributors, there arises either an anti-federation or anti-settlement spirit, or which is worse, an utter indifference to the entire problem of social uplift among our people. Strange to say, these are the people who should concern themselves more than any other in these problems; they understand the foreigner and the Jewish poor better than any other people, for they have experienced these problems themselves. The community that fails to take cognizance of these facts and permits this class to fall into an apathy and indifference to the problems of social uplift among our people will never enjoy the harmony and cooperation that leads to a greater efficiency.

All of these difficulties have been met and obviated in the Federation of Jewish Charities of Atlanta. In the organization of the Jewish Educational Alliance, the orthodox community worked hand in hand

with the reformers; the Y. M. H. A. and the Kindergarten and Social Settlement Association were merged to form the Jewish Educational Alliance. The Board of Trustees was equally divided as to number of representatives from both sections of Jewry. It inspired a confidence in the organization and assured success from the beginning. Two years later, when the Federation was proposed, there was no opposition, with the following interesting exception: The directors of the Montefiore Relief Association, all orthodox, did not agree to federate until they were assured that they would be permitted to investigate and treat relief cases themselves, as heretofore, and that they would have as much work as before.

A year and a half has now elapsed since Atlanta has federated its charitable and philanthropic activities and thus placed itself among the progressive cities of America. For the South this was a great step forward. Prior to this time a number of charitable associations carried on their work more or less haphazard, frequently conflicting with each other. Funds for the maintenance of the various organizations were collected by each by means of numerous solicitations for small donations; by means of bazaars and fairs and other forms of entertainment. The relief societies doled out their funds promiscuously and frequently with a view of getting rid of the applicant. The shipping of charity applicants from town to town was a popular form of philanthropy. Even today this is still the favorite method of the unorganized Southern community. Here the National Conference of Jewish Charities could do a world of good. It is now a recognized fact in modern philanthropy that federation is the most advantageous and desirable mode of charitable organization. To spread this knowledge and to organize the unfederated community is a work that properly belongs to the National Conference. A field worker should be employed to bring the message of federation and cooperation in philanthropy to the unorganized community. This would stop the menace of the Jewish tramp to a great extent. The isolated federated community is

at a disadvantage. It must bear the brunt of the inefficiency of the neighboring unorganized communities.

Despite these disadvantages, Atlanta has federated its activities, and its first annual report shows an admirable record of achievement in the field of philanthropy. The organization itself is on a solid financial basis (having almost trebled its income by federation) and receives unequivocally the moral support of the entire community.

The following organizations comprise the Federation of Jewish Charities of Atlanta: The Jewish Educational Alliance (orthodox and reform), the Montefiore Relief Association (orthodox), the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Association (reform), the Morris Hirsch Free Clinic and the Schoen Memorial Kindergarten, branches of the Alliance, and the Free Loan Association, a branch of the Montefiore Relief Association. Other affiliated organizations are the two Jewish Consumptive Hospitals in Denver, the Industrial Removal Office, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, and the local Chapter of the Council of Jewish Women.

The Jewish Educational Alliance is primarily Jewish in its tendencies and activities. The Talmud Torah, the Sabbath Schools, are considered very important. All of the Jewish holidays and festivals are properly celebrated. There are a number of organizations which stand for Judaism primarily, viz.: The Zionist Societies, the Young Judeans, the Yiddish Progressive Dramatic Club, and the Lovers of Hebrew Society. The Americanizing influence, which was the primary work of all settlements, is not neglected. There are classes in English for foreigners, lectures on American institutions and instruction in citizenship. There is a society of Turkish and Syrian Jews which meets weekly for the purpose of learning English through conversation, and the study of American history. There is an American History Club for immigrant girls. Every effort is made to bring the foreigner in close contact with Americanizing influence.

From the beginning it was the hope of the superintendent to make the Alliance a community building, a social center for all Jewry. To a great extent this hope was

realized. Almost every Jewish organization meets in the building, and nearly every Jewish affair given in the community finds place in the Alliance. The children have not been neglected, and there are sewing classes for the girls and numerous clubs for both boys and girls. For the young men and women there are many clubs, dancing classes, classes in Hebrew, etc. Athletics is taken care of by the Alliance Athletic Association, an organization of young men. For the adults there are numerous affairs, lectures, concerts and other forms of recreation.

That the Jewish Educational Alliance has filled a great need in our communal life is evident from the attendance and the interest in the activities.

The Montefiore Relief Association has for the last twenty-two years carried on its work by alleviating the distress and suffering of the poor. Federation stimulated its activity and put the organization upon a solid basis. In the words of the president, expressed in his annual report, "The Federation having been effected, we were for the first time in a position to meet every reasonable demand for the care of the needy. We are facing the new year with every assurance that those dependent upon charity will receive all the benefits of organized, scientific charity, in a way that has heretofore been unknown to the workers of our association." It is to the credit of the Montefiore Relief Association that the directors are all heart and soul in the work, and that they give their time and their services to the cause freely. From the knowledge and acquaintance of the directors with the applicants, an individual treatment is possible that means efficient help. The principle, the best method of helping is "to help a man to help himself," has become deeply ingrained in the minds of the directors. Every case is carefully planned.

The Morris Hirsch Free Clinic, the Kindergarten and the Free Loan Association and other organizations in the Federation have all done well, as shown in the annual report. The Clinic has given 2,454 treatments to 867 patients during the year 1912; 1,092 prescriptions were filled during this time. A fee of ten cents per prescription is charged, but if the patient is not able

to pay this nominal sum, the prescription is filled free of charge. A number of minor operations, such as the removal of enlarged tonsils and adenoids, were performed in the Clinic. Our staff of volunteer physicians are specialists in their various lines, and the clinics are divided to give a certain time for each particular disease, viz.: Monday, general medicine; Tuesday, eye, ear, nose, throat and general medicine; Wednesday, gynecology and general medicine; Thursday, surgery, eye, ear, nose,

throat and general medicine; Friday, general medicine; Saturday, general medicine, gynecology, eye, ear, nose, throat and surgery. Ten of the ablest physicians of the city give their time and energy to the Clinic. Some have never missed a clinic since it was opened nearly two years ago.

The success of the Federation and the work is due to the fortunate cooperation of all sections of Jewry and the able leadership developed in both.

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SETTLEMENTS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Before entering upon our discussion of the question, "How far shall settlements actively engage in work carried on by other agencies, such as relief societies, public schools, and others," we must make clear to ourselves what we shall agree to call a "Settlement," and what are its essential functions.

Work consists in an adaption of means to an end. Its efficiency depends upon complete understanding of the materials which the worker has at his disposal, his appreciation of the ends to be accomplished, and the effective adjustment of the materials to their purposes. In considering the work of the settlement, it is necessary to take two of these three factors into account; first, the study of the institution as such, and second, the study of the social purposes it aims to realize. The problem of adaptation or of adjustment has reference rather to the administration of the settlement than to a discussion of its nature and ends, and therefore need not form a part of this treatment of the subject.

Primarily, the settlement is the definitely localized center for the social activities of a community. In the largest sense, it is a social center. In a simpler organization of society, where specialization has not permeated the industrial, the economic and even the recreative life-phases, the home is the natural center from which radiates every influence that comes to bear on the life of the individual. Increasing complexity has brought new problems to the front. Life

is the struggle of man attempting to realize his highest potentialities despite the fetters of his environment. As human agencies have become more minutely differentiated, each part has come to present problems peculiar to itself, yet related to problems of other parts. Thus, the labor problem, a unit in itself, is related to questions of immigration, of education, of civil and criminal law, and the like. Nowhere, however, has the burden of new problems weighed more heavily than upon those who seek to obtain general social uplift through utilizing the social instincts.

Gregariousness is the essential human instinct. No man can live entirely unto himself. He must profit by the labor of others; he seeks the stimulus of contact with his fellowmen; he must communicate his thoughts to others. Even in play he yearns for companionship. Where economic conditions are not abnormal, the need for the preservation of self does not enter into conflict with these. But if the struggle for existence becomes bitter, socializing tendencies become stifled. Life becomes self-centered. Man's energies are turned inward, and he seeks to further his own interests whatever the cost may be to his fellow-men. In other words, an unnatural condition is created because of mal-adjustments in our social organism. And just as specialization and differentiation in the industrial world have given birth to this unnatural condition, so must a specialized agency be created to meet the situation.

But it is not this bitter struggle for mere existence that is alone responsible for the atrophy of the social instinct. Arrested in its development, perverted, almost unnatural in its manifestations, the social instinct is never completely smothered, however, burdensome may be the cares of a material existence. But no tendency to self-expression, however essential it may be to complete individuality, can ever realize itself unless it receives its immediate cue from a favorable environment. In congested sections of our cities, where human beings are huddled into so-called living quarters, there is no place where men and women can meet to satisfy the cravings for social intercourse. The post-adolescent particularly seeks surcease from trouble, and driven from an almost impossible home, he seeks the companionship of his fellows in the dance hall, at the moving pictures, and the like.

It is at this point that the settlement has a specific function to perform. It must rescue the social spirit from death. It must orient man's interest. It must take man from himself that he may all the more truly find himself. The settlement must broaden his outlook upon life in order that he may see the highest personal efficiency in completest social cooperation. Nay, more; it must carefully tend the dying spark of sympathy until it lights into the kindly glow of brotherly love. It must recreate man as a social being. And because of the housing conditions of those whom it seeks to influence, it must provide the environment of an ideal home for those who otherwise might be compelled to gratify the most wholesome instincts in the most vicious of surroundings.

It is not enough, however, that the settlement be a home. It must be "our home" to every member of the community in which its work is to be done. Every man and woman of the neighborhood must come to feel a personal ownership in this common meeting place. It must be vitalized by love and strengthened by affection. This, then, is our notion of the settlement and the work it should be called upon to perform. To what extent shall this work overlap that which is done by relief societies, public schools, and the like? To

what extent shall duplication be permitted? Shall the settlement be an experiment station for trying plans later to be submitted for extension to other institutions?

The answer to these and to similar questions should not be made in a haphazard way. They should result from the application of the fundamental purpose underlying the establishment of the settlement to the situations as they arise. That purpose is essentially social. The settlement must guard whatever social instinct is already present. It must therefore possess an equipment which will enable it to carry on such work as tends to encourage sociability.

Putting the matter in a different way, it may be said that it is a matter of small importance whether other agencies are in existence for doing the work which the settlement is attempting to accomplish. The only important matter to decide is: Is this work necessary to the development of social cooperation in the community? Does it contribute to the evolution of a closely knit neighborhood spirit? If the answer is "Yes," then that is work which the settlement must take up.

Such work is both positive and negative. On the one hand, it must overcome the anti-social tendencies due to the pressure of economic needs. On the other hand, it must use the spirit of cooperation for the uplift of the neighborhood. Other agencies may exist for certain phases of this work, but unless the equipment is unusually expensive, the work of these agencies should be done in the settlement in order that this one physical center may become the center for the influences which will touch every phase of the life of the individual.

Furthermore, there must necessarily be a great difference in the spirit in which this work should be done. Other agencies perform certain duties and consider their work an end in itself. The settlement may do the same work, but always with an ultimate purpose of developing the social idea. Educational work, relief work, recreative work—all these are considered by the settlement as means to an end.

It has already been pointed out that where the economic needs weigh heavily