

THE DAWN OF A PROBLEM

Maurice B. Hexter, Cincinnati, Ohio

Within the past few years there has come to the United States a new stream of Jewish immigration—the Turkish Jews—sometimes called the Spanish Jews, or Spanuoles. These people are a new social type. Their tendencies are unlike our other Jewish immigrants; their occupations have little or nothing in common with the occupations of our Russian and Roumanian co-religionists; their psychological forces and sociological tendencies are not at all like what we see in our Jewish brethren. For this very reason, that they are to a certain extent a social entity, they can be handled as such. Any problems that arise at present or may arise in the future must be attacked with due reference to this condition. While drawing lessons from past failures, we dare not forget that theirs is a different viewpoint. They deserve attention because we are responsible for them and because we want to steer clear of any difficulties that can be foretold in the light of experience.

Many of these immigrants go to interior communities. At least thirteen cities have colonies that are large enough to be noticed. Due to the very smallness of the group in interior cities the future problem can be seen molding and developing. Bigness obscures detail. Because interior cities can see this development rapid in some cases, they can see the cause and point out the remedy. Adequately and efficiently to point out such a remedy presumes a knowledge of the extent of the problem. Because interior cities have this advantage of smallness, it is incumbent upon them to survey the situation in order to aid larger cities in the solution of the problem. With this end in view an intensive survey was undertaken in Cincinnati; astonishing data and interesting results were obtained.

The investigation shows that the growth of the Cincinnati colony from without—that is, by immigration—has been steady and rapid.

In 1908	there were	34
1909	"	60
1910	"	95
1911	"	116
1912	"	182
1913	"	219

These figures do not include 27 native-born children and 3 wives of Russian extraction. The Cincinnati colony is closely interrelated. There are two groups. One group—8 families, totalling 45 individuals—is from Salonica, Turkey in Europe; the other group from Dardanelles consists of 42 heads of households, making 174 individuals. This close relationship and a strong feeling of brotherhood that exists among all of this newer element of our brethren make possible intensive removal work. The attractive force of the immigrants is of a high degree, and the Removal Office should take advantage of it.

From the nature of the case methods different must be used. These newest immigrants are almost completely isolated from their co-religionists of other nationalities. This is due to language, ritual and other distinctions. Their language (Ladino) is spoken by none other. They can with difficulty understand Spanish, unless they are especially educated. Their ritual is different from all others. This precludes contact with fellow Jews even in the synagogue. There has arisen out of this isolated condition a feeling of solidarity throughout the colony. Due to these peculiarities any attempt of the Removal Office work among them must use their own agencies. The means of reaching them must be different. The removal work requires special adaptation. Ideally, we should use their own agents in the work, for they know their language and peculiarities.

Isolated by synagogue, ritual and language, it is inevitable that this latest element in Jewish immigration should settle in certain localities. This is the only way they can protect themselves from spoliation. So they have done in Cincinnati. The unfortunate feature in Cincinnati, however, is that the zone they have congregated in is within the restricted district.

Of the 249 individuals (this includes native-born children), only 25 live without this district. A district of one homogeneous group can and does exercise wholesome influences upon its members, but when such a district is interspersed with the low characters of a restricted neighborhood the wholesomeness is lost, and instead devitalizing and enervating forces act and interact. The result of this play of forces is not in the least problematical. Effectively to counteract these forces is impossible, considering the neighborhood. The only plan remaining is to remove all of the families from such a center. Inducements should be offered to the families which, it is hoped, will cause the families to move to a more wholesome district. This does not necessarily destroy their social entity; such a feeling of solidarity and homogeneity is protective. The Spanish society, La Hermandad, is considering purchasing a synagogue. Efforts should be made to induce them to locate this building near the Jewish settlement. By tackling this problem arising from the location of their district at this time, Cincinnati may prevent a recurrence of past evils.

Than language, there is no one element which more effectually can cut off a group of people from its neighbors. In this respect the community of our Turkish co-religionists is no exception. Special means must be devised to teach English to these people. The night schools cannot serve because the basis of instruction is Spanish instead of Ladino. There are in the Cincinnati colony 134 persons over 16 years of age who do not know how to read, write or speak English. Of this number, but 15 attend night school; most of these attend irregularly. The correct method would be to use their own people as agents in this work. A good index of the lack of the knowledge of English and the slow Americanization is the number of males who have acquired citizenship. Of 29 men over 21 years of age, and who have been in America longer than 5 years, only 1 is naturalized. This feature also shows lack of facilities especially adapted to their needs. It is a community need as yet unmet. Cincinnati, in its attempt to ameliorate these conditions, should use their own agents to help these people.

Effectually cut off from the balance of the community, the Levantine Jew, rarely a skilled mechanic, has had to be satisfied with employment at the bottom of the economic scale. The following shows the kinds of employment at which the men work:

Trade and Transportation—

Insurance solicitor	1
Salesmen in postcard shop....	5
Candy stand	2
Hot tomalies	5
Peddlers	3
Vegetable dealers	2
Pool room	2
— 20	

*Manufacturing and Mechanical**Trades—*

Tin factory (unskilled).....	30
Matzos bakery	8
Candy factory (unskilled)...	4
Shoemakers	10
Tailors	14
Pressers	5
Blacksmith	1
Cigar maker	1
Carpenter	1
— 74	

Domestic and Personal Service—

Waiters	9
Busboys	3
Laborers (common)	2
— 14	
Out of work.....	6
—	

114

Of the 114 men, but 32 are skilled mechanics. The vast majority are working at unskilled labor, with its accompanying irregularity and low compensation. It is interesting to note the incomes of these men:

\$ 4.00	1
6.00	4
7.00	1
7.50	2
8.00	12
9.00	7
10.00	30
10.50	1
11.00	3

12.00	13
14.00	2
15.00	6
16.00	1
18.00	4
20.00	1
?	26

As can be seen, 57 men of 88 men whose incomes were determined, received a wage of \$10.00 or less—most of these incomes barely enough to exist upon. To date, small communities have had no trouble with these people due to employment. As a rule they find their own work. With an inevitably large influx this is sure to develop into a serious question. Large numbers will produce havoc. The only remedy is trade education. Cincinnati has had this to a certain extent in its Kitchen-Garden and Trade School for Girls. This school teaches needle trades to girls. At present there are three of these girls in the school. They work at embroidering. Their earnings, respectively, as I write, are \$6.50, \$8.50 and \$12.50 per week. As is evident, no account is taken of the men. Trades should at least be taught to the younger men. It is heartbreaking to see a student of one of the Alliance Israélite Universelle Schools, who knows Spanish, French and Italian, working as busboy for \$25.00 a month, plus tips. This situation cannot be attacked too soon. The effects of this condition are cumulative.

The homes of these families are spotlessly clean. When visited on Saturday, in but two homes was the family cooking. They are all religious; cleanliness and godliness are handmaidens to success among these people. The Levantine idea of the home being the palace and the husband the king prevails everywhere. Although this feeling is unAmerican and undemocratic, it exercises a wholesome influence. With the Americanization that will come in a few years this influence will diminish. We should, therefore, attempt now to adapt the mothers to American standards of housing. Of the total 50 families in Cincinnati, 43 families live in tenements. It is interesting to note the number of rooms occupied:

2 rooms.....	26 families
3 "	13 "
4 "	9 "
5 "	1 "
6 "	1 "

The total number of rooms used for sleeping purposes is 92 rooms for 244 persons—2.7 persons per sleeping room. There are 8 men who own their own homes (one owns 2 houses and one owns 5 houses).

The rest pay the following rental:

\$ 6.00 per month.....	2 families
7.00 " "	3 "
8.00 " "	7 "
8.50 " "	2 "
9.00 " "	6 "
9.50 " "	1 "
10.00 " "	4 "
11.00 " "	5 "
12.00 " "	5 "
12.50 " "	1 "
13.00 " "	6 "

This averages about \$10.00 a month for rent. This is rather a high rental in proportion to earnings. As a result it is not surprising that means are taken to augment the family income. Some of the women go out to sew or take sewing into the home. In some cases this leads to the neglect of the children. Another means of augmenting the income is by boarders and lodgers. One-half of the total 50 families augment their income by boarders or lodgers, distributed as follows:

Boarders	16
Lodgers	1
Boarders and lodgers.....	2

Lodgers almost to a unit pay \$3.00 per month. Boarders pay from \$10.00 to \$12.00 a month. For this amount they are given breakfast daily and dinner only on Sunday. Besides these 25 families who have boarders or lodgers, there are 7 families who have relatives stopping with them. This extensive boarding and lodging is beneficial to the boarder or lodger, in that it keeps him within the influence of his friends. He is under their keen eye; his every act is scrutinized. There is, however, another side to the situation. Boarders and lodgers tend to break up the family spirit—to break up the family unit, to desecrate the home. There is no doubt that in several instances, locally, lodgers have exercised a very deleterious influ-

ence upon the family. The whole housing situation, however, is promising, for they are used to better conditions at home. To bring home to them American standards and ideals is easier than with our Russian and Roumanian co-religionists.

The recreation question is one of the most vexing and difficult. The individual's right to recreation is now undisputed. The only recreation at present is talk. Their social centers are two pernicious poolrooms and coffee houses. The worst feature in this program, as in so many of like nature, is that their fellow-countrymen who have been in America longest are the exploiters. Due to their language, they have no other mode of recreation except possibly the moving picture theaters. Positive influences must be set in motion to counteract these poolrooms. Even in this small community can be seen some of their evil effects. They have possibly one other social feature, and that is the synagogue. This is one of the activities of their Society La Hermandad—the Brotherhood. This was founded in October of 1910. The members pay 5c weekly. A physician is supplied when absolutely necessary. This privilege was so abused that at present it has atrophied. Another privilege is the aid and advice of the members who have been in America longest. The avowed purpose is the acquisition of a cemetery and a synagogue. To date their services have been held in the Administration Building of the United Jewish Charities. Through their dues and through the sale of privileges and seats in the synagogue, their treasury amounts to some \$900. This organization, as all others of like character, requires supervision to prevent spoliation by the older and shrewder members. Indeed, talk had begun to circulate concerning irregularities in connection with this money. The old régime was ousted. The younger members have now incorporated. The need for adequate supervision of and provision for recreational facilities is shown by the fact that there are 58 single men over 18 years of age and 15 single girls over 16 years of age. This situation needs no comment. Especially in these matters, delay is irretrievable. Already there is much immorality among the single

men. The girls are still swayed and protected by their former teachings, but it is a question of only a short time when this influence will end with disastrous results.

The investigation shows that there is:

1. Great opportunities for removal work with specially adapted agents.
2. Supervision of the location of their new homes should be timely.
3. Necessity for trade education.
4. Necessity for specially adapted methods for teaching English and introducing American standards and ideals.
5. Urgent necessity of supervision of recreational facilities.
6. Necessity for positive recreation to offset negative influences of the community.
7. Desirability of using their agents in this welfare work.

In order to carry out any program whose avowed purpose it is to alleviate and ameliorate the conditions of these people, an adequate survey must be made. The time is ripe for this work. Added numbers complicate the problem, augment the difficulty. If the past has taught the social workers any single thing, it has taught them that the earlier a problem is tackled the easier it is to solve. If we do nothing to relieve the situation it will be the old story over again and a good deal of our past work shall have been in vain. Let it not be said that we have permitted to develop a center in which all the negative forces shall be duplicated. To permit this will be unpardonable for Jewish social work. The *raison d'être* of social work is, in the final analysis, prevention—in the absence of which social work lacks even an apology.

National Jewish Hospital Meeting

The annual meeting of the trustees of the National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives, at Denver, will be held at the Orphans' Asylum in Cleveland, on Sunday, January 4th, at 2 P. M. The services at the Temple will be devoted to the hospital. The Rev. Drs. J. Leonard Levy, Wm. S. Friedman and Moses J. Gries will participate in the services.

The trustees of the hospital will be the guests of the Orphans' Asylum at dinner, at 12.30 P. M. The headquarters will be at the Stadler Hotel.