

In the second place, our situation on the border further complicates our problems. A poorer civilization with lower standards of living is in juxtaposition with twentieth century civilization and a high standard of living. But this lower civilization is not swallowed up as in the large cities; nor is it encouraged to higher levels by its surroundings. It has an entire country to draw upon and is continually recruited from the interior of Mexico.

In the third place, we live in the "health belt," and thousands come here seeking a cure for tuberculosis. Often they come without means; often communities send them, and though morally certain they received help and ought to be maintained by one of the large cities we cannot prove it. These health-seekers require attention and attendants. The only source of supply is the Mexican. These are gradually infected and thus we have a native T. B. problem in a country where T. B. ought not to exist. This increases our death rate, and a statistical study would prove ours to be a very unhealthy city. Let us see:

#### U. S. DEATH RATE, ALL CAUSES

|           | Per 1,000 |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1907..... | 15.971    |
| 1908..... | 14.780    |
| 1909..... | 14.400    |
| 1910..... | 14.958    |

#### EL PASO DEATH RATE, ALL CAUSES

|           | Per 1,000 |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1907..... | 38.170    |
| 1908..... | 32.380    |
| 1909..... | 36.66     |
| 1910..... | 44.22     |

#### U. S. DEATH RATE, T. B.

|           | Per 1,000 |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1907..... | 1.785     |
| 1908..... | 1.675     |
| 1909..... | 1.608     |
| 1910..... | 1.603     |

#### EL PASO DEATH RATE, T. B.

|           | Per 1,000 |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1907..... | 7.614     |
| 1908..... | 8.517     |
| 1909..... | 7.368     |
| 1910..... | 7.796     |

Now do not think that El Paso is an unhealthy city. Far from it! Its death rate due to the causes mentioned above, and though these may be somewhat remedied, they cannot be eliminated.

And our three-fold problem is further complicated by the political problem. With so many Mexican voters, who may be purchased or easily influenced by jobs, the local administration is not compelled to face the sociological problems. The social worker may point them out, but he has few votes, and the Mexican looks upon disease and death as a decree of God and is not interested in your problems.

And all this is of Jewish interest. A fairly large and representative Jewish community lives here. Jewish men and women suffering from the dreaded plague come or are sent here for their health, and these conditions present problems they could not foresee. Able-bodied young men seek work and find the labor market glutted with Mexican labor, and positions as clerks can only be obtained by those who speak Spanish and English.

These are some of the problems confronting us on the border; what has been done in trying to solve them I cannot here state. I have written enough.

#### Mr. Abelman Succeeds Mr. Mitchell

Mr. Abelman, who, since the inception of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, has been connected with this institution, has been appointed assistant secretary, in place of Mr. Mitchell, who held the office of executive secretary.

#### EXCHANGE BUREAU

An experienced Social Worker, Investigator and Superintendent of Relief Society is open for an engagement. Thoroughly experienced; highest references. Address R. H. B., 1126 Lafayette street, Denver, Col.

Wanted—Assistant in a Settlement as supervising housekeeper. Apply to Young Women's Union, 428 Bainbridge street, Philadelphia, Pa.

## TEACHING FOREIGNERS

How Terre Haute is Trying to Do It

This school is run on a non-sectarian basis, two of our teachers being Christians and some of our students being non-Jewish. But this article has a place in your magazine because we meet in the vestry-rooms of the Temple, under the auspices of a rabbi.

Of course, it is notorious that the Jewish foreigners are more desirous of bettering their education than the non-Jewish foreigners, and that is the reason that we have now twelve Jews who came without urging—in fact, came with many thanks for this opportunity which they had long desired—as against one Protestant Christian and two Catholics, who only came after much urging and quickly dropped out from lack of interest.

The origin of this night school for foreigners has the usual characteristics. It was begun with trepidation and as an experiment. The utmost hopes of its founders, Rabbi Jacob H. Kaplan and Benjamin Blumberg, was to have two or three students at a time. One day one young fellow applied; a week later he brought three of his friends; the next day another foreigner was discovered; three days later he brought two friends, and then the first class was held, containing seven men. A week after this two girls appeared. The following week there arrived at the regular class hour four more men; and shortly thereafter the teachers were surprised to have five more men come in. So that the school at its height contained eighteen students. Then came the usual phenomenon of decrease. One dropped out because he found the rest were too far behind him in his work; three were forced to move out of town; two others stopped on account of sickness.

The primary aim of the school is to teach these foreigners the American language. They desire more than anything else reading, writing and spelling. But the proper pedagogical theory demands that these simple things be concealed and sugar-coated with other names, to wit, a course in American history is given, a course in Arithmetic is given, a course called grammar is given. We have a course called conversation. The problem of textbooks was

hard to meet at first. We attempted to use eighth grade grammar school arithmetic, grammar and history, but it was found that the grammar contained words which were of no use to a practical foreigner; that the history contained long words that were useless and lacked short words that were necessary, and that the arithmetic dwelled too much on theory and not enough on practical problems. Now we are using the books published by the Association Press, at 124 East 28th street, New York City. For the beginner these pamphlets and cards are most excellent as far as they go, but they are mere starting points which suggest to the teachers long lists of words and subjects which these Y. M. C. A. books do not mention.

At present we have eleven teachers. Mrs. Ed. Kohn is in charge of the conversation class, and often finds that she must invite some member of the class to a private conversation in her home in regard to some work not acquired in the classroom. Rabbi Kaplan has charge of the grammar class; Miss Edna Vineberg teaches history and writing, and she has found the work grow more interesting from day to day; Mr. Walter Letzer has charge of the business forms, and for that purpose has adopted a tablet No. 7, used here in the public schools. The arithmetic classes are in charge of Benjamin Blumberg, Miss Tillie Strouse, Edwin Goodman, Leon Rubin and Jennie Brown, where a different problem is met with. There are also as substitute teachers to fill occasional vacancies, Mrs. Henry Wolf and Nathan Shuckart. Of the twelve now in the arithmetic class, it was found that there are five different stages of education. Five of the men were able to take up mixed fractions; two of the students rapidly went through the arithmetic and began the study of fractions; four of them knew addition and subtraction, but could not divide nor multiply plain numbers; two of the men did not even know how to subtract or add on paper. One of them is a Frenchman and must be taken in a special class, because he knows the methods according to the French, and only needs to be taught the

American pronunciation. This resume shows what confusion can result when foreigners are gathered together from all parts of the earth, and shows the difficulty of our problems as to the division of classes.

Now our schedule contains two hours of classes on Sunday morning, to wit, history from ten to eleven in one class, and conversation during the same hour in another class; then reading in the first class from eleven to twelve, and writing in the second class from eleven to twelve, besides a special teacher for the Frenchman in reading, writing and spelling. On Monday we have the five classes in arithmetic, from eight to nine; these classes are gathered into three groups from nine to ten, one of the groups continuing its arithmetic, the other two groups taking up conversation in the one and business forms in the other. We meet again on Wednesday night, when from eight to nine there is one class in writing and one class in so-called literature, which is merely reading; and from nine to ten one class in grammar, another in conversation, and another class in writing.

The personnel of the school is made up of four Russian Jews, two Polish Jews, two Hungarian Jews, two German Jews, two Bulgarian Jews and one French Christian. Some of these have had high school educations (gymnasium); some of these have merely attended *cheder*; two of them have had one or two years of grammar schooling in Russia; three of them have sporadically attended night school in this country before coming to Terre Haute. In fine, this variety of races shows that to properly give these people what they want, namely, a workable knowledge of the English language, and at the same time to do this as quickly as possible and without duplication, it is necessary to have almost as many teachers as scholars.

We are charging the students merely the cost of the books, which has been \$1.30 per student. A nominal fee to satisfy janitor and lighting service of 50 cents a month is charged.

Up to date our only problem has been that of procuring sufficient teachers without salaries, but in the future our prob-

lems will be, first, how to grade the courses so as to give each course a beginning and ending; second, how to arrange these courses in a consecutive order so that there can be promotions and a graduation as in other school systems. We shall also get in touch with a large foreign element by means of advertisement in order to be able to start a new class every half year. This is a city of some 60,000, with a close suburban population of some 25,000. Among these there is approximately 10,000 foreigners who cannot write nor read English. The Y. M. C. A. is in touch with a few, but does not nearly solve the problem.

No good movement is successful if it does not aim at the stars, and our ambition is to have a school running the year round, which will bring in some of the older married people. It is easy to teach those of an age from eighteen to thirty, which is the range of ages in the present school. But we are very anxious for an opportunity to teach people of the ages from thirty to fifty. We have been sadly handicapped by the lack of adequate books and dictionaries, and have felt that the Y. M. C. A. books are not quite adequate for our needs. If we cannot find any other textbooks for our purposes, it is the plan of Rabbi Kaplan and myself to prepare some sort of textbooks for this purpose, based on our experience of this year.

BENJ. BLUMBERG.

We would like to correspond with anyone who can offer some suggestions as to books and methods.

#### Organizing Immigration Work

The various organizations engaged in handling immigrants at the port of Baltimore, upon arrival or after landing, have formed a very close organization for the purpose of doing comprehensive work, such as is perhaps not undertaken elsewhere. The new plan includes the landing of immigrants, care while detained, prosecution of appeals in cases of exclusion, special work with girls, follow-up work with immigrants of all kinds, economic adjustment, education, provision for rational amusement and naturalization.

#### A LESSON FROM CORRESPONDENCE

For years our charities have been hampered in securing information in towns in which there are no organized Jewish charities, or in towns and cities in which the Jewish societies are not affiliated with the National Conference of Jewish Charities. It often happened that husbands left their families in destitute circumstances and settled in unaffiliated cities, and we were at a loss to know whether the men were able to contribute toward the support of their families, or whether there was good reason for the separation and the consequent destitution of the families, and the possibilities of reunion. Inquiries addressed to local rabbis or private persons, asking for information, often remained unanswered; and, if answered, the information contained was so meager and vague that it left us in the dark; for the correspondents were not interested in our work and were not under obligation to enter into details, and to make sincere efforts to correct abuses.

In cases of desertion the truant husband felt comparatively secure, if he settled in a town where there was no affiliated organization to take up the cause of the deserted family; there was no one to worry him or to remind him of his duties as husband and father. Even in cases in which the Desertion Bureau succeeded in locating deserters, it was a difficult matter to adjust the family relations satisfactorily, owing to the lack of responsible intermediaries.

It is to be hoped that conditions will now change for the better, as the National Conference of Jewish Charities has appointed seventy-four correspondents in as many unaffiliated cities and towns, who are expected to answer any inquiries touching charity matters concerning individuals having a connection with their town. The number, however, is too small; an effort should be made to find more correspondents in unaffiliated towns to cover the entire country.

Judging from the small number of correspondents with whom the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Baltimore had occasion so far to enter into communication, I can assert without doubt that they will facili-

tate our work, and their co-operation will prove most valuable. The few correspondents we addressed have responded promptly and have manifested a disposition to assist the individuals in their towns, as well as their families here. They even expressed a desire to keep in touch with our cases and to extend a helping hand in the future, if that be found necessary. These correspondents have displayed more zeal and more sincere interest in our work than some of the old established charities, with whom we are in constant communication.

It is very disappointing indeed, when in an urgent case one has to wait weeks for a report which ought to come within a few days, and to be compelled to write twice and even three times before an answer is received.

It would be surprising to know that some of our old established charities are even lacking in the courtesy due to a sister organization in acknowledging receipt of communications, and when an investigation is asked, little or no effort is made to locate the party in question.

I have in mind a Western progressive organization which was requested to locate a husband who left a wife and children in Baltimore. The woman presented several letters from the man, with his address, in which he stated that he was unable to support her. The man's material condition, according to his own statement, was considered fairly good, but there was some uncertainty as to his mental condition. The woman replied to the several letters, the receipt of which the husband acknowledged. Yet when we wrote to the charities for a report, giving the man's address, the superintendent replied that the man could not be located. The wife thereafter continued her correspondence with the husband; the mail carrier had no trouble in finding the man, but our friend, the social worker, was unable to locate him.

I am sure our new correspondents—judging from the short experience—have the welfare of our work at heart, and that some of our affiliated societies will learn a lesson in co-operation from them.

S. B.