

THE SOCIAL SPIRIT IN SCRANTON

A. S. Weisberger
Scranton

Classes in English for foreign girls in order to Americanize them is the latest department added to the Young Men's Hebrew Association and Ladies' Auxiliary of Scranton, Pa. Free books for same have been donated by the School Board and valuable suggestions were given to the volunteer teachers of the Auxiliary by one of the principals of the local high school.

The dedication of the new \$100,000 building of the Young Men's Hebrew Association will take place during the week of December 5th and will open the doors of a building that will be a model for other buildings of its kind throughout the country. The building will contain in the basement bowling alleys, seven showers, space for more than 700 lockers, swimming-pool 20 x 40 and boiler room. The first floor contains lobby, library and reading-room, outer business office and private office, telephone pay stations, billiard and pool room, boys' game-room for the junior department, checkrooms, lavatories and gymnasium measuring 40 x 60 and two floors in height with visitors' gallery above. The second floor contains six classrooms for all schools and classes and will work by sliding doors and when all doors are thrown open acts as a banquet hall seating more than 300 people. This can also be used for lectures, for assembly-room and many other activities. There will be little clubs for men, women, boys and girls, such as campfire girls, boy scouts, dramatic club, debating society, glee club, orchestra, classes in citizenship for foreigners, classes in English for foreign girls, classes in Jewish history, lecture courses in salesmanship and also in Jewish history and many other clubs and classes which will use these rooms on the second floor. The Sunday School, with classes comprising over 300 children in session every Sunday morning, and the Sewing School for the same children will hold their sessions in the same rooms on Wednesday afternoons. The gymnasium and swimming-pool showers and lockers will be used by the women and girls on their ladies' day, so that men, women, boys and girls will be taken care of in this building. On the second floor there will be the kitchen right off from the ban-

quet hall, containing dumb-waiter, sinks, china-closets for our pots, pans and dishes, etc., refrigerator and gas range. Two large rooms on the same floor will be given over to the ladies for their own exclusive use. The third floor is given over almost entirely to the auditorium and ballroom, which has a seating capacity of about 1000 people. This room, which measures 60 x 120, including the stage, contains large stage, dressing-rooms on each side and moving-picture booth for stereopticon views and illustrated lectures. The chairs are placed on trucks and rolled under the stage, and when this is done we have the finest dance floor and ballroom in the State. This room can be used for weddings (banquet hall and kitchen on the second floor), dances, balls, lectures, mass-meetings, conventions, minstrels, dramatics, entertainments; in fact, any big affair can be taken care of and accommodated in this room. Fire-escapes on both sides that will be used as exits, plenty of windows for light and ventilation. There is a large lobby on the same floor to be used for lounging purposes while a dance is going on, and besides, there is a men's smoking-room and checkroom, also a checkroom on the first floor, ladies' checkroom on the second floor in their own department of rooms and this checkroom on the third floor. All by itself, on the same floor, there are four rooms and a bathroom for the janitor and family, who will live in the building all the time and properly take care of same.

The headquarters of the Federated Jewish Charities of Scranton, known as "The Kehillah," will be in this building and there will also be a properly-systematized employment bureau. There will be, as stated above, all activities for men, women, boys and girls, so that if you cannot get a person interested in one thing you will get him or her interested in something else. The Big Brother and Big Sister work will also be carried on here. In fact, all Jewish weddings, balls, dances, socials, everything Jewish from the entire community, will come from this new building, which is one of the finest in the country and which will be dedicated the week of December 5, 1915.

(Read at the Baltimore Conference)

TRAINING OF JEWISH SOCIAL WORKERS

L. B. Bernstein
Pleasantville, N. Y.

That the development of social work as a profession is of but recent origin may best be seen from the fact that the number of schools for the professional training of social workers is very limited. Of the total number of about fifteen schools there are only two of university rank in Europe—one in London, known as "The Department of Social Science and Administration," which is a part of the larger division of the "London School of Economics and Political Science," and the other in Liverpool, known as the "School of Social Science and of Training for Social Work," which is part of the University of Liverpool.

Of the other European countries, only Germany is represented by two full-fledged schools in applied philanthropy. But their courses are not of university grade and are established for women only. I refer to the Frauenseminar für Soziale Berufsarbeit in Frankfurt-on-Main and to a similar institution in Berlin, known as the "Soziale Frauenschule." To Jewish social workers in this country it may possibly be of interest to learn that the school just referred to, although by no means of a denominational character, is under the directorship of Dr. Alice Salomon, a leader of Jewish social thought in Germany, and that among the staff of lecturers in economics, literature of social science, social hygiene, theory and practice of social work, etc., appear, *inter alia*, the Jewish names of Fräulein Adele Beerenson, Frau Alice Davidsohn-Kuczynski, Fräulein Gertrud Pincus, Fräulein Bodenstein, Dr. Albert Levy and Dr. Franz Oppenheimer.

None of the great universities of Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy or Russia have as yet developed a body of graduate or undergraduate courses for the professional training of social workers. In this country the only two schools of graduate character, the New York and Chicago Schools of Philanthropy, are independent organizations. The School of Social Economy of Washington University, St. Louis, is rapidly approaching graduate rank in the character of its work; on the other hand,

neither the schools affiliated with Loyola University of Chicago nor the Department of Social Work of Simmons College of Boston can boast of university grade of work. To the same class belongs the Boston School for Social Workers. Considerably below the standard of this school is the Pennsylvania School of Social Service, although it is much more substantial and representative than the Kansas City School for Social Service, which is conducted under the auspices of the Board of Public Welfare of Kansas City.

With the sole exception of the Loyola University School in Chicago, none of the schools just enumerated is strictly denominational, although it may possibly be said that some of them are strictly Christian in conception and preference.

As far as preparation for Jewish social work is concerned, the story is briefly told: The efforts are modest, few in number and far between. Several years ago the Society of Jewish Social Workers of Greater New York organized an evening course for men and women actively engaged in the profession, raised the necessary moneys and after completing one winter's work turned the whole program over to the New York School of Philanthropy and thus became responsible for the first evening school course which has ever been offered by that institution and which in the meanwhile has been abandoned.

Special phases of Jewish social work have been developed in the last few years by the Free Synagogue of New York, which established a course of lectures for volunteer workers under the leadership of Dr. Sidney Goldstein, and by the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Orphan Asylum, which conducted a training school for cottage mothers and is still conducting a practical and theoretical course in modern child-caring.

No doubt many other Jewish institutions and organizations have developed training courses of a more or less definite character; in some cases this training course even assumes the character of regular weekly conferences with or without formal lectures

and assigned reading, but even at its best this work is detached and isolated and lacks the basis of a broad and comprehensive professional training.

An interesting and noteworthy attempt along the line of developing a more ambitious scheme for a school for Jewish social service was made by Dr. Boris Bogen in Cincinnati. A glance at his curriculum will, however, reveal the fact that his field work has an undue preponderance over the professional training courses and that the most important lectures in applied philanthropy, given at the rate of two hours per week, deal with *detached subjects* rather than with the broad and comprehensive aspects of the profession. There is a veritable mine of practical suggestions embodied in the part of the curriculum designated as "Practical Experience," but even the very friendliest interpretation of the curriculum cannot attach to it the value of a basic professional training, not to speak of graduate university work.

Another interesting training course representing one of the numerous activities of the Baltimore Association of Jewish Women was recently organized in our hospitable convention city under the able presidency of Mrs. Jacob M. Moses. It is frankly and modestly conceived as a preparatory course for intelligent volunteer workers. The trainees are required to attend lectures at Goucher College and elsewhere in order to become familiar with underlying principles. One of the noble features of this course is the breadth of view which prompts the organization to require trainees to obtain experience not merely with Jewish but also with non-Jewish organizations.

This training course, which, like that of the Free Synagogue, is intended primarily for volunteer workers, has its *raison d'être* and cannot but raise the general standard and ideals of Jewish social work.

Another vigorous attempt to meet, to some extent, the demands for Jewish social work in Chicago is the recent organization of a course in "Practical Sociology" given at the Chicago Hebrew Institute. Although Mr. Seman deserves credit for a number of valuable suggestions, his course does not claim to be of strictly professional rank.

After this introductory survey of the general field of professional training for social

work, we are perhaps better prepared to appraise, at its true worth, the great constructive program submitted by Dr. Benderly. To understand fully the significance of a school for Jewish communal work, a project swiftly, as if by magic, called into existence in a few months' time, one must first of all realize the magnitude of the Jewish communal problem of a population of 1,250,000 Jews in our metropolis. One must also bear in mind that in the struggle for existence and in the process of rapid accumulation of wealth large groups of children have been left without a Jewish education, without a Jewish religion and without a Jewish consciousness. But this phenomenon does not belong to New York alone. There are large and important Jewish communities scattered all over this country which are confronted with similar problems. In this storm and stress period of American Jewish life we are in much greater need of leadership in communal affairs than in finance, in the arts and letters, in the pulpit and in the other professions. We need trained men and women of culture and character and of social vision, thoroughly competent by professional training to diagnose and interpret the social needs of their communities with a view of carrying into successful operation worthy and effective plans, standards and ideals. It is in this spirit that the School for Jewish Communal Work was conceived.

Are there any salient features of this school which would seem, from the very beginning, to insure its professional character and at the same time to distinguish it from similar institutions?

(1) To begin with, the *admission requirements* embody graduation from a reputable college. This requirement is one of the prerequisites for placing the school upon a graduate school basis and thus puts it on a par with the leading schools of this kind in the country in a very essential aspect. There are two features among the requirements for admission which are novel; whereas practically every school of philanthropy has made due provision from the very start to give the student some kind of practical training or field work, this school requires at its very outset not merely field work but *actual employment with some Jewish communal agency* for part of the student's time;

and in order to still more emphasize the idea that this training for communal leadership is to be a slow process, the school makes it quite clear that it will require from *three to five years' residence before graduation*. To such an extent is the school wedded to the idea of actual part-time employment that it will not admit a student to any specialty in which employment cannot be secured.

Possibly such requirements would be considered by some social workers as too rigid and extreme, perhaps even as distinctly deterrent factors for otherwise good student material; but who will deny that students who are attracted by such requirements are likely to be of the most promising type?

(2) As to the next great and most important element of any school, namely, the *actual professional studies* offered, there are likewise a few novel features presented to us. As is very well known, every school of philanthropy makes provision for a general survey of the whole field of social work at some time in the early part of the curriculum. In some schools this virtually constitutes the only course, but in the projected Jewish school a preliminary survey is given at a time when the student is still connected with the college or university. This preliminary course of eighty-odd lectures is presented on a sufficiently broad basis to afford to the prospective student ample opportunity to select, tentatively at least, the field of social work in which he is particularly interested.

In the so-called *basic course* which every student is to take, no matter what his future specialty may be, the school offers a total of 220 lectures. Of this number only 100 hours are devoted to subjects generally taught in similar schools, whereas the specifically Jewish courses on Jewish history, on Jewish immigration, on Jewish religious life and on Jewish ethical and religious education require a total of 95 lectures, to which must be added a course of 25 lectures on the "Spirit of American Institutions," evidently intended to serve Jewish students as a solid foundation for a broad, political, economic and philosophical *Weltanschauung*. The distinctly Jewish work represented in the preliminary as well as in the basic courses claims, out of a total

of approximately 300 lectures, fully one-half of the time.

Referring to the plan of the *advanced or secondary course*, I dare say that to some extent it is a contribution to the general conception of philanthropy-school curricula. Although the idea of a major and two minors is a recognized principle in American university life, every school of philanthropy thus far has shaped its advanced course upon the theory that, with the exception of one or possibly two theoretical courses, the student devote his time to one specialty only. The theory of one major and two minor subjects or the theory of group studies can be carried out only on a plan which considers a three years' residence in the school as a minimum time of study, the usual time assigned to the work in other schools ranging only from one to two academic years.

(3) There is one more important feature which seems to assure to the new school some measure of success, and that is the *composition of its faculty*. While it consists chiefly of busy executive heads of Jewish social agencies, most of whom have neither the time nor inclination to prepare the material for courses of thirty or forty or fifty lectures of strictly scientific value, the general composition contains nevertheless many elements of considerable strength and power in the field of practical and progressive modern social work. To secure ample scientific and theoretical training in the various subjects the school will from the very start supplement its faculty by drafting into its service some of the very best men and women from the New York School of Philanthropy, from Columbia and New York Universities and possibly also from the various Foundations.

It would seem almost ungracious to subject the fascinating draft to an analytical discussion and yet the projected school can much better afford to incorporate modifications, if such were necessary, at this time than later on in its career. Because the start has not yet been made, it is important to ascertain whether the new school has avoided the well-known pitfalls: Has any organized effort been made to exclude from the program non-productive field work? To what extent has hypertheoretical training been banished from the program? Are the

main or basic and the secondary or advanced courses sufficiently broad and comprehensive to include every important modern endeavor in our social, civic and communal life?

In the face of these important questions, what are the concrete suggestions or possible amendments which the experienced social worker has to offer? The recommendations that I desire to submit touch on four aspects of the professional training for Jewish social work.

(1) My first suggestion is in the form of professional advice and deals directly with the problem of *field work*. Since in this school practical field work seems to be of paramount importance in the training of prospective communal workers, it is of vital concern to the community that this training be on as high a plane as possible. Unfortunately the tentative outline fails to disclose a constructive plan of field work which will radically differ from the humdrum methods at the present time pursued by some of our better or even best-grade schools of philanthropy. When the inexperienced worker from such a school is sent to the busy executive head of a large social agency—what generally happens, in the absence of a definite pre-arranged program, is that such a student is turned over to the tender mercies of a second or a third or a fourth or a fifth assistant. As a rule the student is far removed from the possibility of initiating, under expert guidance, plans and methods of attacking big problems. Unless the field work is so organized that the student will definitely avoid useless detail work, there is a splendid opportunity for him to waste many a month in barren effort.

(2) What I contend is, that the prevailing practice lacks the vital touch involved in the personal and sympathetic relation of the head worker to the student. Unless the head worker, by some definite plan, is required to devote himself personally to the trainee for a period of from three to five hours a week, no student can fairly be expected to acquire the training necessary to undertake the work of a leader or of an assistant leader in another community, which is the avowed purpose of the school.

(3) The third subject that I desire to touch upon refers to the vital question whether the basic curriculum as suggested in Dr. Benderly's outline quite meets the

requirements of future communal workers. To be more specific—do the preliminary and basic courses combined, representing a total of about 300 lectures, offer a *sufficiently broad basis to give every student, irrespective of his future specialty, a requisite elementary or basic knowledge of the more important social movements of the day? They do not.* From a comparative study of this course with similar European and American curricula, it would appear that there is no provision made for several subjects *universally recognized as essentials* and that in other subjects the time allotted is seriously inadequate.

Of the three subjects entirely eliminated from the basic course, two are of universal importance to every school for social workers:

First, administration and management of social and communal agencies (including the preparation of budgets and financial accounts).

Secondly, a course on public health and preventable disease.

The third subject omitted from the basic curriculum is of particular importance to Jewish life and deals with the adjustment of immigrants to American industrial conditions with industrial removal.

The three important courses treated with utter inadequacy, from the point of view of time, are:

The course on "Methods of Social Investigation, Social Surveys and Statistics";

The course on "Social Legislation," and last but not least

The course on "Child Dependency."

May I urge that, instead of the seven hours per week of school work during the basic course, at least ten hours a week, or two hours every school day, be devoted to theoretical study, and may I further urge, in view of the abundant provisions made for the Jewishness of the course in the preliminary year, that the fifty periods devoted in the basic course to Jewish history be reduced to thirty periods. These two changes would gain for the students in the neighborhood of 120 hours and would facilitate the necessary readjustment of courses.

In my judgment the time allotted for the three subjects omitted from the basic course should be as follows:

Thirty hours a year should be given to the study of "Administration and Management of Social and Communal Agencies and Budget Making."

Fifteen hours a year should be devoted to the study of "Problems of Public Health and Preventable Disease"; and

Fifteen hours a year to the study of problems of the industrial adjustment of Jewish immigrants or industrial removal.

In view of the fact that the New York School of Philanthropy devotes *ninety hours* to the study of social legislation and modern industrial conditions and in view of the fact that a similar policy of time allotment is pursued by the leading schools, it would seem as if much more time and attention than is indicated in the outline should be given to this phase of work *during the basic course of training*. There should also be a considerable increase in the number of lectures on the general subject of social statistics, social investigation and surveys, the latter two of which are not even mentioned by name in the curriculum. There seems to be a unanimity of opinion that this course together with the previous one on social legislation should be given the greatest possible prominence in any adequate course for the training of social workers.

Fourthly, I consider it my duty to call attention to a number of serious shortcomings and errors in the *advanced or secondary course* of the proposed school.

To begin with, there is a grave doubt in my mind whether at any time during the professional training course it is advisable to cut loose entirely from set-lecture courses for which absolutely no provision has been made in the tentative draft. Is there not a great deal to be said in favor of one or two courses which should be obligatory for all advanced students and which might possibly serve as a rallying ground for the discussion of the broadest possible aspects of Jewish social work?

Without entering into too technical a discussion of that part of the tentative outline which deals with the program of group studies, may I call attention to the fact that a complete revision will be necessary to bring greater balance within each individual group and to harmonize the groups among themselves upon sounder principles of

evaluation. There also is need for careful checking up of the various problems proposed as "Special Studies" within the domain of the major subjects. Some of these special studies are vital and require scholarly, thorough and comprehensive treatment; others are disproportionately insignificant and do not measure up to reasonable requirements for advanced study. But the most striking shortcoming in this advanced course is the strange absence of opportunity for capable, mature and ambitious students to specialize in the subject of immigration with its allied branch of industrial removal or in the subject of modern child-welfare, phases of social work in which Jewish philanthropy in the past two decades has achieved signal success.

That the division of the group studies has not yet been subjected to a sufficiently critical analysis as to relative values may be gleaned from the fact that whereas the dignity of neither a major nor a minor study has been accorded to as broad a subject as immigration and industrial removal, or to as extensive a field as child dependency, correctional work for minors, which is, of course, a much more limited field, has been considered of sufficient importance to form in the curriculum both a major and a minor subject.

At this point may I be permitted to direct attention to the amazingly narrow and misleading interpretation of the term "Social Work." In the outline this term is used to cover practically only the work of the Young Men's Hebrew Associations and kindred institutions and includes such promising social forces in Jewish life as for instance "Jewish Private Clubs." In view of such interpretations, which are foreign to the true conception of social agencies, would it not be better to revise radically the terminology used in the outline?

My concrete suggestion is that the secondary or advanced course provide without fail for a strong course in immigration and industrial removal as a major, with industry as a first and statistics as a second minor. That the special studies under immigration should be of specific Jewish interest goes, of course, without saying, nor is it necessary to sketch the topics for the special studies, since the field practically offers unlimited opportunities for research.

As to the subject of child dependency, which in the tentative outline is treated as a subsidiary chapter in relief work, I would say that this method of dealing with it is entirely contrary to the practice of every well-known school either in Europe or America. Nor is there indeed any social theory to back up such an interpretation.

As is well known, child dependency par-takes both of the character of relief and social work. But it is a chapter in relief for a brief period only and ends as such the moment the child reaches the door of the institution or of the family home. From that time on child dependency develops into a social problem par excellence, involving as it does important questions of education, vocational training, home life, civic training, social activities, industrial efficiency, after-care, etc. In view of the fact that all over the world the proper care of the orphan and dependent child constitutes one of the most cherished phases of Jewish philanthropy, it becomes essential that the projected Jewish school provide not only *adequate basic instruction in methods of modern child-caring*, irrespective of what specialty the student may take up in his advanced or secondary course, but that it incorporate as a separate group and as a *major subject* the general study of modern Jewish child-care. If this study is a major it will be perfectly proper to have correctional work for adolescents as the first minor and social work as the second minor. At this point it may be said that if correctional work is to constitute a separate major its first minor should naturally be normal child dependency and its second minor social work (instead of the contemplated two minors of social work and relief work). Some of the more important special problems in the advanced course under child dependency as a major subject might deal with such topics as:

The historical development of modern child-caring in theory and practice.

The essentials of a plan of inspecting child-caring institutions and other child-caring agencies.

Administrative studies of congregate, cottage home institutions and placing-out agencies.

Social activities in child-caring institutions.

Big Brother and Big Sister movements.

Self-government among dependent children.

After-care work.

The institution school or the public school.

Correlation of institution life to school life.

Municipal and national administration of child dependency.

The handicapped child (cripples and atypical children, etc.).

There are many other omissions of movements of great social concern to our Jewish American life. Let me mention the all-important problem of social work for women and its related field of recreation; but it would lead us too far to enter into this special line of inquiry.

However important as some of the errors, weaknesses and shortcomings might be, let me remind you that they do not affect the soundness and integrity of the general scheme. With his characteristic resourcefulness and unbounded enthusiasm, Dr. Benderly has created a piece of work powerful and fascinating in its great possibilities in spite of the numerous weaknesses contained in the tentative outline. May his school soon develop into a strong and powerful factor in the life of American Jewry; may it help to generate constructive forces for the social uplift of our brethren, and may it thus prove to be another expression of Jewish social and communal effort to raise the standard of American citizenship in every city where there is a Jewish community.

Programs for Women's Clubs

Under the title "Practical Programs for Women's Clubs," Alice Hazen Cass has compiled a number of study subjects for organizations, which will undoubtedly be helpful to committees arranging literary programs. Subjects on social work, education, art, music, literature and travel are included. The book is published by A. C. McClurg & Company, Chicago (75 cents).

EXCHANGE BUREAU

A young man, 33 years of age, with literary abilities, formerly assistant secretary of a large charitable institution in the West, seeks a position. Address G. Y., care "Jewish Charities."

JEWISH CHARITIES

Entered at the Postoffice at Baltimore, Md., as Second-class Matter

Vol. VI.

Baltimore, December, 1915

No. 5

Social Service I. O. B. B.

Rudolph I. Coffee

A Truly Jewish Home for Girls

Oscar Leonard

*Bulletin of
National Conference
of Jewish Charities.*

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO 411 W. FAYETTE ST., BALTIMORE, MD.