

## JEWISH RELIEF WORK AND THE C. O. S.

Charles I. Cooper, Pittsburgh

For many years the charity organization society movement has given battle to the old style methods of relief giving. In some cities the contest has ended in victory for the former, in the merging of the two, or in the abolishment of the latter. But in too many other cities the contest is still going on and the public press is full of criticisms, biased to one side or to the other, of the society "that spends 90 per cent of its income in salaries and the balance in actual help to the poor," and then again of the other society "that doles out baskets of groceries year in and year out, indiscriminately, without making intelligent plans for the individual family."

What of the Jewish charities? Are we concerned at all in the above contest? Surely, for we are dealing with similar problems and are confronted by the very same social questions that the non-Jew is called upon to answer.

Briefly, what is the contention of the charity organizationist? That service is needed more often than alms; that the work of the charity worker must be allied more closely with the larger aspects of social reform; that greater emphasis be laid upon family rehabilitation; that intelligent case work take the place of charity doles; that it is wrong to consider the poor as so many stomachs to fill and so many backs to cover; and that the relief that is to be organized should not come from a precollected fund, but should be collected for each case separately.

Let us examine the Jewish methods of relief giving in terms of the C. O. S. We find that the Jewish relief society has incorporated, with perhaps one exception, all its basic principles. It managed to standardize its work, it showed the possibilities of family rehabilitation, it soon recognized the value of investigation and co-operation in the social treatment of the maladjusted family. Careful, consistent case work is not unknown to the Jewish relief worker. In a word, we have proved that it is possible to combine the advantages of the old and the new charity.

In marked contrast to the eagerness with which we adopted the C. O. S. methods of family treatment, we have entirely

ignored the methods of collecting relief funds above referred to.

The writer holds allegiance to the C. O. S. camp and is ready to endorse its tenets, and maintains furthermore that its method of raising relief funds is based upon logic. I need not here rehearse the arguments that have been advanced in favor of it.

But simultaneously with the adoption of sound principles and methods for the treatment of needy families, we Jews have bent our energies in working out efficient methods for the collection of funds. And federation and the C. O. S. method of raising relief funds cannot well work together. In order to gain the co-operation of the community we have been obliged to decry miscellaneous giving. We advised everybody to "send the needy to us" and discharge their obligation to the poor by sending their check to the central office.

The problem that confronts the Jewish federation today is how to enlist the co-operation of the poorer Jews, who for one reason or other, cannot be made members of the federation. These, as we all know, have been accustomed for generations to give their "widow's mite." The readiness of the poor Jew to give to his brother in need, is, I hold, a tribute of no mean value. Has it not been the experience of many cities in the country, that immediately after the federation has been established, and when some of the "orthodox" charities, hitherto supported by the gifts of the poor, have been made beneficiaries of the federation, that immediately new organizations have arisen; sometimes to duplicate the efforts of existing societies, and sometimes to answer needs that are not yet apparent or in existence? And such societies have flourished only because there must needs be an outlet for the nickels and dimes and quarters that the Jews must give.

Is it not possible to turn this into legitimate social resource? Will not the future bring some agency that will be original enough to defy tradition? Is it not likely that some Jewish social settlement will in the future include among its neighborhood activities a charity organization department, whereby the administration of charity may be really democratic?

## BOOK REVIEWS

By Charles S. Bernheimer

THE PROBLEM OF IMMIGRATION IN MASSACHUSETTS. Report of Commission on Immigration, 1914. Boston.

This is an excellent resumé as well as a study of how conditions affect immigrants and of how immigrants affect conditions.

The following statement should be of interest: "It was shown \* \* \* that there is a considerably larger percentage naturalized among the Russian Jews than among any of the other nationalities with which the commission was especially concerned."

Here is another: "Among the Jews in addition to the large philanthropic societies which are formed by the wealthier to assist in the Americanization of the newcomers and to care for the poor of their faith, there are many smaller societies which are organized and supported principally by the more recently arrived Russian, Polish and Roumanian Jews. The loan societies which have been formed in several cities in Massachusetts seem the most successful of these charities."

The report urges a State Board of Immigration and advises that the Deputy Commissioner of the State Board of Education should participate with local communities in providing the immigrants with education. It also recommends the enlargement of State free employment offices.

The executive secretary of the commission was Miss Grace Abbott of Chicago.

EVERY DAY LANGUAGE LESSONS. By Alfred J. Markowitz and Samuel Starr. American Book Co.

This work will be helpful to teachers. Its sub-title is "Practical English for New Americans." Besides lessons as to spelling, conversation, reading and grammar, it gives practical little essays such as "Public Signs," "Registration of Voters," "Opportunities in Agriculture," "The Street Cleaning Department," "The Health Department" and other information useful to the newcomer to this land.

JUVENILE COURTS AND PROBATION. By Bernard Flexner and Roger N. Baldwin. New York, Century Co. \$1.25 net; postage 10 cents extra.

In these days of care of children it is well worth while receiving a book by two such authorities on the subject of children's courts, with detailed information as to the work of probation officers in all its various aspects.

A few references will indicate some of the information that is given. A statement is made that where there is a large population of one nationality, in Chicago and New York, for instance, there should be a probation officer for each neighborhood. This is regarded as impossible in the smaller communities.

"It is the consensus of opinion among experienced probation officers," say the authors, "that it is especially important to have as probation officers dealing with Italians, Poles and Jews, persons who speak their languages fluently."

The authors conclude, "Juvenile court workers are of the opinion that the giving of any relief whatever by probation officers is unwise, and that they should in every instance call in the organized agencies of relief in the community rather than undertake so difficult and inappropriate a work themselves."

It is regarded as undesirable that children report to probation officers at their offices; the best results can be obtained by having the probation officers visit the children at their homes and in their neighborhoods.

The publication is a report of a special committee of the National Probation Association, and has the endorsement of the committee, a member of which is Judge Julian W. Mack.

WITH THE BEST INTENTION. By Bruno Lessing. New York, Hearst's International Library Co. \$1.25.

This volume by Mr. Lessing is a compilation largely of his magazine sketches revolving around the vicissitudes of the Schnorrer Lapidowitz. Incidentally these sketches give glimpses of Jewish life as it is found among the immigrants in New York City.