

to be selected by one or a group of organizations for the purpose of bringing into prominence or promoting its special aims and objects and at the same time extending the hand of good fellowship to the members as well as the appointed delegates of each club. An appropriate program followed by a social hour, including the serving of light refreshments, is the order of the day. Its importance can at once be realized. "Conference Day" has been very successful in bringing together pleasantly various groups that otherwise would never have met in disseminating valuable information among our club women.

One "Conference Day" brought directly to the attention of the clubs an exhibit of the work of the blind, with a plea that we do justice to their handiwork. This exhibit proved so attractive and profitable that it was afterwards shown in other parts of the city. Another affiliated organization brought the Palestine Welfare movement to the Conference, arousing much dormant Jewish sentiment and bringing us more closely to the problems of our people. A "Palestine Welfare Day" was recommended to all the organizations. The response proved to be very generous.

The Jewish War Relief Woman's Fund is another instance of the value of the Conference in philanthropic endeavor. A Conference Committee was appointed. It immediately proceeded to divide and subdivide the city into wards, precincts and blocks and noble women volunteered to make a house-to-house canvass, which resulted in collecting approximately \$7,000. This Committee has again been called into action and the Conference has recommended that each affiliated organization devise ways and means of paying a stated monthly sum to this fund. We cannot doubt that the response will be liberal.

Another outgrowth of one of the Conference afternoons was the impetus given to Girl Welfare Work. Not long after, the Social Welfare League was launched for the purpose of caring for Jewish border-line girls who might fall by the wayside unless trained for a useful and honorable life. True preventive and constructive work, alas, is much needed in our community.

In civic matters the endorsement and co-operation of the Conference has been

eagerly sought. We have been interested in social and sanitary state and municipal legislation, non-sectarian travelers' aid, peace propaganda, public school questions including vocational systems and such other subjects as touch the welfare of the home and the family, for we are an integral part of the municipality.

The Conference has also developed into a forum which eminent men and women have availed themselves of to deliver their special messages. They know that the delegates assembled will carry their message to a larger audience. The Conference has thus become an important educational factor in club life and in many instances is also a training school for the less experienced members who often benefit by the advice and encouragement of the more experienced. Much latent ability has thus been brought to the surface, much inspiration has been imparted and many valuable suggestions have been utilized. The effect, however, is reciprocal; she who gives also receives. In this lies the great value of the Conference.

Representatives of all nationalities and divisions of Judaism come together and view each other from a humanitarian standpoint. What is the result? It is most interesting to observe how prejudice vanishes and respect or admiration often takes its place—on both sides, mind you—as each grows to understand and appreciate the work of the other. When ignorance is banished heart speaks to heart, eye to eye, and enduring friendships are often formed among women who otherwise might never have met.

And then the magic strength of a union of forces, even if they be diverse. Points of agreement can always be found. The work of the Conference has kept pace with its growth. In fields of Jewish endeavor and civic work, although each unit is autonomous, all stand ready to focus their strength in one combined effort for the public weal. They realize the power of organization.

The first term of the Conference, that of Mrs. Hannah G. Solomon, was filled with pioneer and constructive work; the second term, that of Mrs. Ignatz J. Reis, might be called its formative period, and the present term the period of development.

A TRULY JEWISH HOME FOR WORKING GIRLS

Oscar Leonard
St. Louis

The purchase of a new home, or rather of a home of its own, by the Ben Akiba Home for Jewish Working Girls in St. Louis is an event of some interest in Jewish social work. The Home is only three years old. Before the Home was established Jewish girls whose earnings were meager had to find cheap lodgings in insanitary tenements with overcrowded families. They could not afford good food and were underfeeding their bodies in order to make ends meet with their small earnings.

All large cities in this country have the problem of the girl who earns little yet must pay at current rates for the things she needs. This problem is particularly acute in case of the girl who has to rely on her own resources, the Jewish immigrant, who frequently does the pioneering for the family. She may be first to come here in the hope that by her labor and her thrift she will be enabled to help the others follow.

It was for this girl that the Ben Akiba Home was started. The idea for such an institution was first suggested in this city by Mr. Philip L. Seaman, who was at the time superintendent of the Jewish Charities in St. Louis. It took some time for the idea to take root. It was difficult to convince even an appreciable part of the community that the Home was needed. After all, those who understand the needs of a community are few and far between. Among those few was Mrs. Henrietta Cook, who is now president of the Home. She has come by her interest in social service honestly. Her father, who is affectionately referred to here as "Old Dr. Epstein," did the first charity work undertaken in the St. Louis Jewish community. Mrs. Cook worked hard to see the Home established. No one was as happy as she when in November, 1912, the Ben Akiba Home for Jewish Working Girls was formally opened. The original expense was \$1500. The Home was open two months before any one applied for admission. Those who did not believe there was need for such a home joined the "I-told-you-so" class. The writer of these lines predicted the day the Home was dedi-

cated that before a year would elapse there would be a waiting list. Knowing the situation, he was convinced that St. Louis needed a home for more than twenty-four Jewish girls, that being the capacity at the time. Before a year was over there was a waiting list. Those who ventured into the Home liked it so well they told other girls who were living in crowded tenements. Here was a fine, clean home, good food, pleasant surroundings, companionship and the motherly interest of both matron and president. Of course, the girls liked it and said so to their friends.

The girls who come to live in the Ben Akiba Home are mostly immigrant girls. When they come they do not know the language of the land, but they acquire it soon. They are all advised to go to evening school and they readily take this advice. Each girl pays 40 per cent of her earnings for board and lodging and laundry. This makes the rate uniform. Last year the average pay to the Home was \$1.90 per week per girl. When a girl is out of work she is not expected to pay. Girls who earn enough to be able to afford board and lodging in good private homes are not accepted. Girls who, in the judgment of the president, do not earn enough are aided in obtaining better positions. If a girl shows special talent of any kind or possesses any special abilities she is guided into channels making for the development of such abilities or talents.

It may be interesting to know that Dan Cupid is not barred from this Home. There is a nice parlor, where the girls may have callers. This is part of the idea of making this place a real home and not an institution. In the three years of its life the Ben Akiba Home has had the pleasure of marrying off eight of its girls. Some of the girls were married right in the Home. All of them have retained a love for the place and frequently return to visit the friends they have left behind.

There is a great deal of social life in the Home. Dances are given at frequent intervals, picture-show parties are formed and at times the girls all go to a dance together.

All girls are expected to be at Home not later than 10.30 in the evening, except when special permission is obtained to stay out later. Mrs. Manheimer, who has been matron from the beginning, generally uses her judgment as to any one staying out later than the regular hour. The Home is strictly *kosher* and is conducted as a Jewish home should be. There is a truly Jewish atmosphere in the place.

The Home is supported by subscriptions and donations. The Ben Akiba Aid Society, an organization of several hundred Jewish women, contributes \$500 a year. It was this organization which really established the Home. The house which has been purchased for the Ben Akiba Home is well situated. While the Home was fortunate in purchasing it for only \$12,000, it was originally built for one of the best families here at a cost several times that amount. Some \$4000 will be spent in repairs and readjustment. There will be room for more than forty girls when the Ben Akiba Home is ready for occupancy.

The success of the Home is undoubtedly due to the fact that its president, Mrs. Cook, is there every Sunday conferring with the girls, counseling them. It is a fine picture indeed to see this gray-haired mother in Israel surrounded by these young Jewish girls, listening to her motherly advice, plying her with questions about work, about the country, about the troubles of their kin folk in the Old World and blushing about their beaus. If Mrs. Cook does not like a young man who calls on one of the girls she says so and the girl will become more alert and try to study the young man more closely and more carefully. All girls who live in the Home know, too, that any time they want to see Mrs. Cook or speak to her she is at their disposal. All they have to do is call her up and she will invite them either to her own home or come to see them at the Ben Akiba.

Other cities may have more palatial homes for Jewish girls, or larger ones, or places where there are more luxuries and perhaps even more comforts, but in the Ben Akiba Home for Jewish Working Girls St. Louis has the homiest home.

REFUGEES AT SEATTLE

One of the effects of the war on this country has been to bring into prominence two additional ports of entry. San Francisco, where immigrants have been arriving from Siberia and Japan since the outbreak of the war, and Seattle. Latest reports from Seattle are that it is receiving many Jewish immigrants with every steamer.

So large is the number of Jewish immigrants who have already arrived at Seattle that the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society may establish a branch in that city so that immigrants arriving at this port shall receive the same assistance and guidance as those who arrive at the other ports of the United States. Public-spirited citizens of Seattle, such as Rabbi Samuel Koch, Rabbi H. Genss and Mr. Leopold M. Stern, endeavored to handle the situation immediately upon the arrival of the first lot of immigrants, but the task became too great for them. They appealed to the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society for assistance, stating that they were unable to cope with the situation since it is necessary to facilitate the landing of immigrants, locate their relatives, shelter, clothe and provide them with employment. The Society immediately sent a sum of money to the committee to temporarily meet their needs. It is also planning to send a special representative to Seattle to put the work upon a firmer basis. Judge Leon Sanders, president of the Society, will hold a conference with a committee of the Board of Directors concerning the question of organizing a branch in Seattle in order to make the work at Seattle part and parcel of that of the national organization. The immigrants are refugees from Russia who came over the Pacific Ocean because other ways of reaching the United States were closed to them on account of the war.

Large numbers of Jewish immigrants are expected to arrive in Seattle shortly, so that it has become imperative to create the proper facilities for their reception and assistance.

BUREAU OF PHILANTHROPIC RESEARCH

Leo Arnstein
New York

At a meeting of the Council of Jewish Communal Institutions of New York City held on Monday, November 15th, an offer was received from Mr. Adolph Lewisohn assuring to the Council the sum of \$5000 per annum for three years, provided the Council would undertake the establishment of a Bureau of Philanthropic Research under its own auspices. It was determined to accept the offer of Mr. Lewisohn and the president of the Council was authorized to nominate a committee of nine members who should constitute this Bureau of Philanthropic Research and direct its operations, and furthermore the nine members were to be selected as follows: five from the membership of the Council and four from the membership of the Kehillah, all to be appointed by the president, subject to the approval of the Council.

The question of establishing such a Bureau of Philanthropy was suggested to the Council in the early part of this year by Dr. J. L. Magnes, acting for the Kehillah. A committee was at that time appointed by the Council and in conference with a committee from the Kehillah submitted to the general committee a plan for such a bureau. This plan, which was never definitely adopted by the Council but which will no doubt serve as the basis for the establishment of the new Bureau, was in part as follows:

I. *Need for a Bureau*—The Jews of Greater New York today number more than 1,000,000 people and present for philanthropy a problem which in the variety of needs, multiplicity of agencies and extent of requirements is comparable with the problems of a municipality. The charitable activities of the Jews are carried on by about 100 organizations of considerable size, a host of small societies of a local character and a great variety of mutual benefit societies and lodges. Their total expenditures are unknown, but it is certain that the budget of the larger organizations alone today exceeds \$3,000,000. No survey has ever been attempted to determine what are the needs of the community and what its resources to meet those needs, what duplica-

tion there is, what fields of work are wholly or partially uncared for. There is no Jewish organization whose function it is to study the underlying causes of poverty and its effects as it concerns the Jewish people with a view to preventive action. While there are a number of relief-giving institutions, child-caring institutions, hospitals, etc., there exists no agency devoted to the study of general charitable problems of the community; no agency equipped with trained workers, prepared to investigate in behalf of the community or of a special institution or to help in the solution of new problems constantly arising. There is an indisputable need for such a Bureau.

II. *Purpose and Function*—As an agency for investigation its functions should be in general to study the underlying causes of existing social ills, with a view to suggesting preventive measures. For this purpose the duties of the Bureau should be:

(1) To gather and record available information on the philanthropic requirements and existing provisions; to analyze and interpret the data so secured.

(2) To serve as an agency equipped with trained workers, capable of undertaking and carrying out investigations into philanthropic problems in behalf of the Council of Jewish Communal Institutions, the Kehillah or other existing institutions.

As a center for information its duties shall be as follows:

(1) To serve as a Bureau of Information on the purpose, activities and needs of institutions now in the field and to indicate directly or by publication to what ends and in what fields new activities might more profitably be devoted.

(2) To serve as a Bureau of Information to public authorities, city and state; to supply information required on existing or proposed institutions.

(3) To serve as a Bureau of Information for beneficiaries of philanthropic institutions, giving advice to applicants as to the manner in which their needs may best be met and the institutions to which they should apply in order to secure relief with the least delay.