

BOOK REVIEWS

By Charles S. Bernheimer

YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATIONS'
PUBLICATIONS

The Council of Young Men's Hebrew and Kindred Associations (356 Second Avenue, New York City) has issued a series of publications which are of interest to workers in the several fields covered by the national organization. One of these deals with "Clubs for Jewish Work" and is compiled by Coleman Silbert, director of the religious school department of the Associated Young Men's Hebrew Associations of New England. It contains a list of books on Jewish subjects, programs for services, topics for discussion, programs of holiday exercises, suggestions as to Jewish topics for debate and matter along similar lines. There is also a pamphlet by Harry L. Glucksman, superintendent of the New Orleans Y. M. H. A., "The Boys' Club in the Y. M. H. A." This deals with details of club organization. Another pamphlet is entitled "The Boy Scout Movement and the Y. M. H. A.," by Samuel J. Blaut, District Scout Master, New York City, who points out the non-military character of the scout movement and the provision that is made for Jewish work on the part of troops composed of Jewish boys. Other smaller leaflets are as follows:

"Religious Work of the Y. M. H. A.," by Rabbi Aaron G. Robison; "A Model Constitution and By-Laws"; "A Specimen Program for a Small Y. M. H. A."; "The Y. M. H. A. As a Community Investment"; "How to Manage a Campaign for Membership."

CURTIS ON PLAY

Dr. Henry S. Curtis, who has had very considerable experience in playground activity and direction, has published a volume entitled "Education Through Play" (New York: Macmillan Company, \$1.50). Dr. Curtis throughout his work emphasizes the value of play as part of the ordinary activ-

ity of the child and urges it, therefore, as an important element in the curriculum of the child at school. He would make the playground an integral part of the school system and correlate the direction of the play activities of the child with the academic program of the school. One can readily infer from this statement of his fundamental idea that he is an enthusiastic advocate of the school as it obtains in Gary, Ind. His work deals with various aspects of play, both theoretical and practical. He describes playgrounds, camps and social centers throughout the world. He gives much information as to the several kinds of play and recreation that have an educational and aesthetic value. This is one of those books which is helping to educate teachers and parents as to the importance of play in the life of the child.

BLOOMFIELD ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Mr. Meyer Bloomfield, who has done so much to give publicity to the idea of vocational guidance throughout the United States, has put into a volume entitled "Youth, School and Vocation" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company) matter descriptive of this subject as it is being worked out in England and Germany, as well as in this country. He says that if we are to do the work of relating school to employment it should be done by a law establishing a juvenile employment agency to be managed by an executive committee appointed by the school system to be made up of school people, employers, social workers and employes, "to advise as to the school vocational guidance and training activities, on the one hand, and manage the research and placement supervision activities of the labor bureau, on the other."

Besides a description of the movement for vocational guidance, the book contains what is called "Suggestive Material," intended to guide the vocational guide. The entire volume will be most helpful to all those who are endeavoring to get to some basis for guiding young people into proper employments as well as training them in prevocational studies.

JEWISH CHARITIES

THE SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT
ORDER OF B'NAI B'RITH

Rev. Dr. Rudolph I. Coffee, Director

Chicago

For seventy-three years the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith has been active in the field of philanthropy. Orphans have been reared, the aged have received shelter and hospitals have been established for the consumptive and rheumatic. Henceforth the Order will enlarge its field of usefulness. Instead of laying stress on building new institutions, members will be asked to volunteer their services to improve conditions affecting Jewish people in America.

We are anxious to protect the growing Jewish child. In the large cities our poorer children are seriously handicapped. Witness the State of Illinois. Only one Jewish boy from the interior of the state is at the reformatory, yet the crowded West Side of Chicago, where the majority of Jewish people live, has sent seventeen. These boys are not bad. They are victims of circumstances. To meet this condition the Jewish branch of the Big Brother movement has been started in Chicago. This will be developed all over the country and thus save Jewish children from reform schools and penal institutions. The B'nai B'rith is winning new members in various cities. St. Louis has just added 1100; Cleveland 1000; Chicago hopes to add another 1000 this month and so on. What does the B'nai B'rith offer these new members? I answer: An opportunity to serve and one such avenue for service is the Big Brother Movement. The Big Brother will be asked to give his time and his energy toward developing the character and manhood of the lad in his charge. The Big Brother will be asked to give, not of his purse, but of his personality; in short, he must give himself. As a result of this Big Brother Movement we confidently believe that the juvenile delinquency among our Jewish boys will be considerably diminished.

Another very important work is with released prisoners. Public opinion frowns on the man who has served a term in prison. Last week, in Chicago, twenty Jewish employers were vainly besought to give employment to a released prisoner before one consented. A prominent attorney informs me that 25 per cent. of those in the state prisons would never be there had they been properly defended. The Jew who is a criminal by choice is exceedingly rare. When Jews are paroled or released from prison there should be a helping hand to find gainful employment for them. Therefore this department will build a machinery so that a committee of Jews will take care of every man departing from prison.

The I. O. B. B. will find him a position and have him started again on the road toward useful living.

Still more important is to prevent Jews from going wrong. The I. O. B. B. must do all within its power toward that end. That member of our faith who is interested in commercialized vice, or lives through illicit gain, is not only a disgrace to us but a dangerous foe to the liberty we Jews now enjoy in America. That our freedom is absolutely safe no one will assert. Let him who thinks there will be no restriction on immigration remember that seventeen times a bill has passed one or both houses of Congress. Only the veto of a strong President prevented the policy of restriction from becoming the law of this land. To continue liberal immigration Jews must live pure lives and we must be the first to bring the law-breaking Jew unto justice. The law against the "white slave traffic" was passed through the personal efforts of President Adolph Kraus. He realized how dangerous such traffic was to our Jewish reputation. We Jews intend to clean house from within. Let the Jew know that no

one loathes a Jewish law-breaker more than Jews themselves.

In every city of the land there should be a Social Service Committee of the I. O. B. B. Too often the recent Jewish arrivals inhabit a most unsanitary part of the city. No night-school classes have been provided for them; no playgrounds are available for children and the public school equipment is much inferior to that in other sections of the city. Why should the child suffer these extra handicaps in addition to the poverty of the household? This Social Service Committee should work with city officials to provide the same advantages as obtain in other sections of the city.

The industrial situation will concern this department. Israel ever honored labor and the artisan, but in America Jews have fallen short of our historical ideals. All too many strikes have occurred in which the majority of employers and strikers have been Jews. Why should not this Order, in which are enrolled both employers and working men, do something to prevent strife, bloodshed and even loss of life? Is Israel, which produced Karl Marx and Ferdinand La Salle in the nineteenth century, bankrupt of prudent, constructive and wise economists in the twentieth? Our critics say the Jew only knows how to make money. Let us prove that in whatever industrial field the Jew enters he sets a higher ideal, pays better wages and creates a cleaner standard of ethics.

Then this department will concern itself with the very serious problem of unemployment. In Chicago the I. O. B. B. has successfully conducted an employment agency for five years. Now we shall spread out and try to place Jewish people in all manufacturing towns within a radius of 100 miles. Later on the field will be enlarged so as to provide employment for an ever-increasing number of Jews. Thus we shall have agents in many cities prepared for the influx at the close of this horrible European War.

In other words, this department aims at constructive and preventive philanthropy. There are fine and splendidly equipped charity organizations throughout the land. Our department, however, will continue where they leave off. We are not concerned with charity in the sense of alms-giving;

our aim is to contribute, however little, to prevent the need for such a condition of affairs.

We decline to subscribe to the New Testament doctrine that the poor will always be with us. Charity is a Christian concept which had its origin in Greece and poverty was for many centuries encouraged by the Church.

This department will do all within its power to abolish poverty and render charity unnecessary. It is highly significant that a recent publication on the "Abolition of Poverty" was written by a Jew, Professor Hollander of Johns Hopkins University. Let our contribution to American freedom be that we give of our strength and of our best thoughts to blot out those conditions which increase slums, tenement districts and make for the continued need of doling out charity.

Our Jewish people have come to America and increased in wealth, but the acquisition of money has not decreased prejudice against us. We thought that when our Christian neighbors would learn the truth about the slanders against the Jews, when they realized that the Jews did not kill their God (as if any god could allow himself to be killed), the prejudice against our people would fall away. Events proved to the contrary. The university clubs in the different cities of America, where culture and education should obtain, are practically unanimous in denying admission to Jews. The sure method of preserving our liberty in this blessed land is to offer to America such ideals as the Jew possesses and this country needs. To this task this new department consecrates its service. We hope that this Order will vitalize and strengthen Jewish interests throughout the land and by breathing nobler ideals into them bless America and strengthen its citizenship.

The Situation in Denver.

Many readers of JEWISH CHARITIES have no doubt heard of the dissolution of the Federation of Jewish Charities in Denver and the formation of a new Federation. An authoritative statement of the situation will be presented in the next issue of this magazine, showing the matters at issue leading to the dissolution and the different ways in which they were approached by the people interested.

THE CONFERENCE OF JEWISH WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Benjamin Davis

Chicago

The Conference of Jewish Women's Organizations was called into existence in 1910 under the auspices of the Council of Jewish Women. Mrs. Henry Solomon and Mrs. M. A. Weinberg, first chairman and secretary, respectively, of the Conference were its founders.

The ever-increasing number of Jewish women's clubs in this large and cosmopolitan city and the selection of similar dates for some of their various meetings, social functions, lectures, etc., was the cause of much confusion and waste. This and the overlapping and often duplication of work that was known to exist and the necessity for considering the comparative value of new work were the main causes that led to the formation of the Conference. Experienced club women were strongly convinced that much waste of valuable time, energy and money could be eliminated by co-operation.

Co-operation, then, was the keynote of the Conference. A simple constitution was adopted. When the permanent organization was completed twenty-six organizations were represented, each by two delegates and two alternates. Officers were elected for a term of two years and *were not eligible to re-election*.

The Conference is now in the third term of its existence. From twenty-six affiliated bodies it has grown to sixty-one, which represent an aggregate membership of approximately 11,000 Jewish women of Chicago. Meetings are held monthly. All shades of Judaism are represented, as are all degrees of Jewish culture. Delegates from religious, charitable, educational, civic and fraternal bodies mingle and become acquainted with each other's work and, what is very important, with each other. Business of common interest is presented, discussed and appropriate action taken; reports are carried back by the delegates to their respective organizations, each of which has retained its autonomy.

Has the Conference accomplished its objects? Yes! and more.

The attempt to avoid a clash of dates is always made. All organizations are requested to select and publicly announce all important dates at the earliest possible time. Many calendars are consulted before the final selection is made. Among so many organizations it is almost impossible to provide for "guest days" and many other social functions, in addition to regular meetings, without some conflict, but this has been reduced to a minimum.

Duplication of work has not only been prevented in a number of instances, but organizations learning of each other's work have been led to combined effort, such as the annual book and magazine collection in May, when discarded books and magazines are sent to *one* place to be distributed by *one* committee to such as require them, placing in the hands of *one* committee the vocational scholarship fund which provides a better training for self-support for Jewish boys and girls whose parents cannot afford to keep them at school; uniting such agencies as give institutional relief and entertainment, thus preventing one from receiving too much and another too little; systematizing general relief work so that each shall have its particular field.

Co-operation has been promoted in many ways: Beginning with the support of a kindergarten in the congested Jewish district by our affiliated organizations and including co-operative work for our fallen girls and immigrant investigation and aid for men and boys, the Conference has brought about the adoption by one organization (with the co-operation of others) of the work for the blind which formerly had been done in a scattered and desultory fashion. The affiliated organizations of the Conference have also signified their willingness to co-operate with the Rabbinical Association in securing the services of a Jewish chaplain for our penal and corrective institutions.

One of the early developments of the Conference was the establishment of a monthly "Conference Day"—a social day