

## JEWISH COMMUNAL PROGRESS IN PITTSBURGH

BY DR. LUDWIG B. BERNSTEIN

IT IS much easier for an outsider to assess the progress made in Jewish communal work of a particular locality than it is for the one who is intimately absorbed in the work, and yet, after making due allowances for a somewhat subjective estimate of certain phases of the community's work, the following may be said to represent a fair statement:

### 1. *Improved Professional Qualifications of Social Workers.*

It may be of interest to note that of the twenty-five Jewish social case workers, the overwhelming majority, twenty, have had a complete college education. The large majority of our group can even meet the standard requirements for senior membership in the American Association of Social Workers. With the better academic equipment we have also started, as yet along very modest lines, a training class which meets regularly throughout the year for a weekly morning session, for the purpose of taking stock of the work and learning and applying principles of social case work. This service is under the direction of a very experienced worker, formerly attached to the Margaret Morrison Division of the Carnegie Institute of Technology of Pittsburgh, and for many years identified with all types of social work, Mrs. Helen Glenn Tyson. In this connection it might not be amiss to mention the fact that practically all the Jewish social workers of Pittsburgh, forty-six, belong to a Jewish social workers' organization known as the As-

kon Club, which is now in its sixth year and is functioning as a substantial unifying force, both by way of developing an esprit de corps as well as by the advancement of ideals of social service.

### 2. *A Unique Little Employment Bureau.*

After considerable deliberation and, in fact, even hesitation, we have at last organized, by way of a very interesting experiment, a small employment bureau, conducted on a case working basis. The primary purpose of this bureau, known as the United Business Service, is strictly practical, that is, to place, if possible, clients of the Jewish Family Welfare Association into suitable remunerative positions, with a view of enabling them to contribute toward the family income and, incidentally, to develop a better morale. At the head of this bureau is an experienced social case worker, who familiarizes herself thoroughly with the candidate to be placed and who gives full and adequate information to the prospective employer about the applicant. It goes without saying that placements of this character are unusually difficult and frequently disappointing, but we are making good headway. At the present time we have gone beyond the clients of the Jewish Family Welfare Association, and are able to find positions for young women of other affiliated societies. The next step will be the development of suitable positions for boys and young men. One of the most gratifying features of this work is the fine interest shown by a number

of business men and board members.

### 3. *Social Service Building.*

The hope entertained for the last six or seven years has at last come true. Our Federation opened up its new headquarters in a special building constructed for that purpose, where, in addition to the offices of the Federation, all the social case working agencies of the Jewish community are housed in adequate and ample quarters. This building is sufficiently large not only to take care of its own non-institutional work possibly for the next decade, but is even able to accommodate a very important non-sectarian agency, the Public Health Nursing Association. Quite aside from the fact that this building makes for greater efficiency of social service, it helps in bringing about a finer spirit of co-operation among all the workers and, as a matter of fact, costs the community considerably less, figuring the rental that we would have to pay in another building, than we paid in former years.

### 4. *A Small Industrial Exchange.*

Although we have not had time yet to evaluate the service rendered by the Jewish Women's Industrial Exchange, recently organized by our local Council of Jewish Women, it may be noted that we are looking forward to a successful attack of the problem to which it devotes itself and if, as we hope, it proves successful, it will be a constructive piece of work.

### 5. *An Enlarged Settlement.*

Owing to the generosity of Mr. Henry Kaufmann, the Irene Kaufmann Settlement has purchased an

additional tract of land and is preparing to improve and enlarge its facilities for neighborhood service of every kind. No phenomenal growth in membership is anticipated because of the slowly changing character of the neighborhood. But it is confidently expected that the improved facilities in the form of new and reconstructed buildings to cost approximately \$350,000 and comprising a swimming pool, gymnasium, auditorium, additional classrooms, club rooms, etc., will be taken advantage of by the intellectually alert Jewish neighborhood.

### 6. *New Y. M. and W. H. A.*

This leads me to a few comments about one of the most useful and valuable acquisitions of communal buildings, namely, our new Pittsburgh Young Men and Women's Hebrew Association. Although independent of and unaffiliated with our Federation, its leadership is also identified with leadership in the Federation and its support is largely drawn from the men and women who foster the Federation idea. Possibly the most outstanding feature among the numerous phases of service it offers is its cultural work through the Isaac Seder Educational Center, in which it easily surpasses all the rest of the Jewish Centers in America. It boasts of a membership of approximately five hundred students to whom it offers a multiplicity of college and graduate courses of studies covering the entire range of general and Jewish intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual interests. Among the students are college boys and girls, who are given credit for some of the courses at the "Y" by their respective univer-

sities, but there are also to be found among the students mature men and women, engaged in all walks of life, who come to the "Y" to get their inspiration and gratification of their spiritual needs. When it is borne in mind that the building costs in the neighborhood of \$1,250,000, and that its annual budget exceeds the figure of \$125,000, one can easily form a picture of its significance in the life of what may be considered a relatively small community of approximately 45,000 Jews. The "Y" anticipates a total enrollment in actual active membership of not less than 5500 to 6000 members. Viewing it in its entirety, our new Y. M. and W. H. A. has been the most important single contribution to our community life during the past year.

#### 7. *The Solution of the Problem of Self-Perpetuating Boards.*

The last few years have seen the adoption by the Federation and by the Jewish Family Welfare Association of a plan whereby it is possible to retain on the Boards, as Trustees for life, with every possible privilege of serving as officers or on com-

mittees, men and women who have rendered real service to the community for a number of years past, the minimum number of years being set at ten. All new Board members to be known as Directors are chosen for a period of three years, after which time they drop out *automatically for a period of one year*. At the end of that year a Board member is re-elected if he has shown real capacity for and interest in the work; on the other hand, he is left off, making room for other members in the community, if the Board finds it of advantage to its work. No person can feel hurt by being left off in that way. Whatever may be said in favor of the courage of Boards in asking for a Board member's resignation, in practice it does not work out that way, as we all know. The plan, as adopted by us in Pittsburgh, gives promise of solving a well-known problem which has given rise to a great deal of anxiety. Incidentally, it guarantees the continued interest and support of the really valuable members of the community without glutting the Boards with dead timber.

## MILWAUKEE—THE END OF A QUARTER CENTURY

BY BENJAMIN GLASSBERG

THE writer turned a new leaf on New Year's Day, 1927, and went West. He joined the city made famous by a certain beverage now forbidden by constitutional amendment. Milwaukee, alas, has fallen from her high estate. It is reduced to the anomalous condition of being the only American city which is

actually proud of its mayor and city council.

The end of the year is a logical circumstance for taking stock of what the past twelve months have brought forth. By good fortune this moment coincides with the request of our Editor to introduce Milwaukee to this section of the Quarterly.

During the year now coming to an end, Milwaukee has experienced a two-fold development; a closer integration between the Federation and its constituents and a broadening of its activities through the affiliation of the Mt. Sinai Hospital, and the assumption of complete responsibility for the work of Jewish education. Both are important steps in the direction of a complete, well-rounded communal social work program. There are still two important gaps in such a complete communal organization—the Home for Dependent Jewish Children and the Old Folks' Home are still outside the purview of the Federation. The foundation and capstones still wait to be placed in their niches, although in these two fields of child care and the care of the aged some forward steps have been taken. The possibility of these two non-affiliated agencies coming within the fold are, at the close of the year, brighter than ever.

In commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Federation, Milwaukee is justified in feeling that the past year has indeed been a fruitful one.

It was early in February that negotiations looking to the affiliation of Mount Sinai to the Federation were consummated. Although often discussed during the past few years, the constantly growing deficit of the hospital, following the organization of the dispensary, made affiliation an inevitable step.

Mount Sinai Hospital is as old as the Federation. It grew from a very humble beginning to its present capacity of 160 beds, with assets of approximately \$1,000,000. Although the hospital has always been man-

aged by a Jewish Board of Directors, two-thirds and more of its patients are non-Jewish. This, for a Federation hospital, is most unusual. Two-thirds of the dispensary patients are, however, Jewish.

Coincident with this decision, another important step was taken which placed the work of Jewish education in Milwaukee for the first time on a satisfactory basis. In 1924 the Federated Jewish Charities began the policy of subsidizing the Talmud Torah. This made it possible to engage a thoroughly trained principal so that the school might be reorganized along modern lines. It was still incumbent upon the Talmud Torah to appeal for support through membership dues and donations—a method wholly unsatisfactory. Several years' agitation, especially by the Orthodox element, resulted in the Federation agreeing to take over the entire budget of the Talmud Torah and to place it in the same category as the other constituent societies. Fortunately the question of Federation responsibility for Jewish education was not complicated by Community Fund affiliation.

These two decisions, arrived at just before the Federation drive was to be launched, made it necessary to appeal to the Jewish community for \$150,000, although but \$85,000 had been raised the year previous. The sum of \$143,000 was actually subscribed, an increase of 68 per cent over the previous year. Over 600 new subscribers were secured, which increased the total to 2600, or one to every two families. It is interesting to note that ten years ago the Federation raised \$33,000 and five years ago but \$56,000. The