

FEDERATION IN FACT

Much has been said in recent issues of JEWISH CHARITIES about the advantages of federation as contrasted with the older systems. It has been emphatically pointed out that not only have the aggregate sums raised for charitable purposes increased under federation, but also that the collection and disbursement of the funds have been accompanied by greater efficiency and relatively smaller cost of administration.

The prevailing type of federation obtaining in many cities is fiscal rather than social; to be more specific, the federation idea embraces the collection of funds by one recognized organization and their apportionment to the various constituent associations, the latter retaining autonomy in the expenditure of the funds allotted to them by the parent body and in the management of their affairs.

In the city of Louisville the federation is social as well as fiscal. The constituent societies composing it are interdependent, with their activities so co-ordinated as to form one organic unit, efficiently equipped to combat poverty in all its forms. One board of directors, composed of an equal number of representatives from each constituent organization, both local and national, together with the directors elected from the members at large, governs the federation in all its parts. A smaller executive body, consisting of members of the board keeps in active touch with the superintendent in the guidance and management of all the subsidiary institutions, and reports to the board at its monthly meetings. The superintendent under this system acts as a "Social Engineer," in directing all Jewish philanthropic movements through the channels of this or that component society, causing them all to work harmoniously in the solution of social problems. Each institution has its head worker and assistants working in co-operation with the superintendent of the federation and Executive Committee.

The Federation of Jewish Charities in Louisville consists of eleven local and four non-resident national institutions; but in the latter, the federation has nothing to say regarding their management. Among the local organizations there is the Relief So-

ciety, the Free Dispensary, the Jewish Hospital, the Jewish Children's Foster Home, the Free Loan Society, the Jewish Shelter Home, the Jewish Settlement and several other philanthropic societies directly affiliated with the federation. Of these, the Jewish Hospital, because of its peculiar technical nature and because the major part of its work is non-charitable, has its own board of trustees; but the admission of charity patients must be referred to the superintendent of the federation. Thus the federation in Louisville bears the same relation to its component parts as a highly organized living body toward its organs, functioning toward the same end in order that the organism may live and do its work. Though our federation is only five years old, it has gone beyond the experimental stage and has become a strong social force for constructive work in our community. The Jewish people of Louisville have liberally responded to its added demands from year to year, until it has grown to full maturity, active and accomplishing the ends for which it was created.

The idea of a centralized federation is not original with the Jewish citizens of Louisville; it was taken from the United Jewish Charities of Cincinnati, which, in most respects, is similar to the Kentucky organization. The writer believes that the more centrally organized federation can be made more efficient than those more loosely federated, because there is bound to be less friction and a closer co-operation between the subsidiary organizations of the former. It is also easier to bring the various constituent institutions to bear on the case at one and the same time, as the necessity frequently arises. Overlapping and duplication of work is more easily avoided under a centrally organized federation, and the petty jealousies that sometimes exist between institutions and their workers are impossible under this system.

Whatever objections may be raised to its further introduction in other cities, the Jewish contributing public of Louisville, as well as its beneficiaries are pleased with it.

HOUSING PENSIONERS

The following letters to Mr. Oscar Leonard of St. Louis by Dr. Lee K. Frankel and Mr. Louis H. Levin discuss a question of more than unusual importance, and may be of interest to the readers of JEWISH CHARITIES:

Dr. Frankel to Mr. Leonard

"The question raised by you in your letter and in the recent number of JEWISH CHARITIES is an interesting one and has frequently been considered by relief organizations in the United States. I know that the matter has been before the United Hebrew Charities of the City of New York for many years and has been discussed carefully *pro* and *con*. Suggestions have been made from time to time both by directors and others that the society should either build, buy or rent one or more apartment or tenement houses in the city of New York, in which to house those of its pensioners who in all likelihood would receive pensions for indefinite periods. As you are aware, the New York society has hundreds of pensioners of this kind on its books. These pensioners are largely widows with children and other families who must be cared for until the children have passed school age.

"Theoretically there is no reason why such a plan should not be feasible. In fact, it could readily be argued that under such a scheme the recipients of relief would probably be better cared for than they are at present. On its face, it would appear to be desirable to have pensioners who are practically dependent upon relief societies for subsistence housed together under conditions which are sanitary and that supervision could be given at less expenditure of energy than is required at present.

"You are probably aware that this experiment has been tried. The Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor of the City of New York has for some time rented a number of apartments in the Vanderbilt Tenements, where it has installed a number of families, in which one or more members is afflicted with tuberculosis. Unofficial reports, which have been made of this experiment, indicated that the results obtained have been equal to the expectation. In a conversation which I had

with one of the representatives of the society, he gave me to understand that the plan of housing a number of dependent families under one roof has no ill effects and that he has not been able to notice any deterioration in the moral fiber of the families.

"I believe that in the city of Detroit one of the women's relief organizations some years ago erected a tenement or apartment house, in which it houses its dependent families. Probably fuller information could be obtained by you by making inquiries of the United Jewish Charities of Detroit.

"Notwithstanding the apparently good results which may have been obtained from such a method of treatment, I am, nevertheless, of the belief that this method of caring for dependent widows and their families or for other dependent families is not desirable. I cannot get away from the vague fear that such a method of treatment exposes a dependent family to a publicity and eventually to a notoriety which in the long run will reflect upon their moral status. The herding together of a number of families under one roof would soon make such a tenement house known as a 'charity house.' As I see it, it is the introduction of the old almshouse plan of caring for dependents through private instead of public funds. I can see very little difference between an institution for the aged, such as our homes for the aged are, and a tenement house in which nothing but dependent families are cared for. One is an institution as much as the other. The print of charity is placed upon families in one equally as upon individuals in the other.

"This objection is made even stronger by the thought that not only would the adults be cared for, but that the children as well would be exposed to the ignominy of being known as the recipients of relief. At present, the dependent families of the United Hebrew Charities in New York are given the relief which they require in such a manner that the neighbors as a rule are not aware of the fact that the families are not independent and self-sustaining. I do not think it would be possible to continue this, if the families were to live in a special building. Residence in such an apartment

house would soon be noised abroad and the children in the school would be subject to their being known by all the other children as the children of paupers. I may put this rather strongly, but I feel this would be the outcome of such an attempt.

"After all, the modern conception of the care of needy families presupposes that each family is a unit and must be handled as such. Individual attention is required. Families cannot be treated *en masse*. In many instances, such careful treatment must be continued over a long period of years. If the family is really to be reconstructed and to be made self-supporting, so that the children will become finally useful citizens, it is highly necessary that their integrity and independence be preserved. I fear very much that in the scheme which is proposed by you this would not be possible and that a result just the opposite would be obtained. That such a result would be disastrous, I think you will agree with me.

"New York, December 5, 1913."

Mr. Levin to Mr. Leonard

"In reference to the plan outlined to me, I beg to say that a similar plan was brought up years ago by the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Baltimore, which has an endowment fund large enough to permit it to put up a series of houses, or build a large apartment. The same argument was used, namely, that pensioners for whom we are paying rent might be better housed in places belonging to us for the same outlay.

"I have always opposed this idea, and it has been abandoned here. My reasons for opposing it is that such house must become in time a sort of Jewish poor-house. As it will be known that only dependents are living in them, no person who is self-respecting or desirous of maintaining his self-respect in the neighborhood will consent to live there. You will no doubt have all the tenants that you can accommodate, but you will create a class of people whom you would rather not encourage.

"Your tenants not paying any rent will not be interested in the upkeep of the house, and your bill for repairs and general cleaning up will be extraordinary. You will not be able to evict a person, no matter how

unclean or careless he may be, without subjecting your organization to criticism of having put a poor family out; and if you were to move them to another place you will encounter either opposition or resentment, and really will, in fact, be removing families that need good housing most from decent housing to poor housing.

"Considering all these difficulties, I doubt whether it would be a paying proposition to own the houses yourself. Renting a little better class of rooms would in the end be a saving even in dollars and cents. These and other objections have been urged from time to time, and until we see a demonstration that they can be overcome we will probably not consider the matter further.

"We are, however, working on a housing proposition, and we are trying to see whether we cannot put up model, cheap, small houses that can be rented at rates a low-wage workman can pay, and yet yield a four per cent. dividend. I am more interested in housing independent workmen just on the edge of things, who can, by a little help of this kind, live in such way as not to cause his family to deteriorate, than in gathering absolute dependents in houses for which others have to pay the rent.

"Baltimore, October 13, 1913."

To Devote Himself to Philanthropy

Mr. Nathan Straus, according to the *Zionist Gazette*, has retired from active business and will devote himself in future exclusively to humanitarian work. In particular Mr. Straus will strive for the universal adoption of the pasteurization of all milk fed to infants, a work in which he has long been engaged. Mr. Straus' enterprises in Palestine needing more careful attention, he also intends to carry out in person his various humanitarian projects. He is going to stay several months in the Holy Land to extend the work of the Nathan Straus Relief Bureau, which operates soup kitchens, the International Health Bureau, and the Pasteur Anti-Hydrophobia Institute, all of which have been established by him. Mrs. Straus and Mr. Nathan Straus, Jr., will accompany him.

Transportation Decision

Health Resorts—Sending Sick People from Town to Town

S. vs. D.

The facts in this case are not disputed, and the conclusions to be drawn therefrom are clear.

The city against whom the claim is made furnished transportation to an applicant to S., his home being in C. He had left his home, being tubercular, seeking relief in S.A. S.A. believing that his disease was incurable furnished him transportation to D., which in turn, instead of returning him either to S.A. or sending him all the way to his home in C., gave him a ticket to S., and in the language of the president of the D. society, "leaving him to work his way as best he could from S."

S., after satisfying itself of the truth of the applicant's statements, furnished transportation to C. and rendered a bill to D., which has not been paid.

This case is a clear violation of the Transportation Rules, and cannot be justified upon any grounds of humanity as the D. society attempts to do in its correspondence. As the committee has repeatedly pointed out in its decisions, there is little humanity in furnishing a sick man with transportation to the nearest point and letting him try to work his way from point to point until he finally arrives at his destination. If he is to be helped at all he must be helped promptly and fully, and no city has the right to make another share its burdens.

We trust that the D. society will recognize the error of its ways and will not only refrain from committing the same offense again, but will promptly reimburse S. for its expenditure.

We recognize the burdens that are cast upon the so-called health resorts and that they are being continually asked to assist strangers who come there in want and in distress, and when they realize the mistake made in coming, seek the aid of the organizations to return to their home.

We recognize the force of their contention that these strangers are not a proper

charge upon their societies, and it might be a possible deterrent to others, who may hereafter be tempted to go unaided and alone, if some rule were adopted by all such resorts that they will render no assistance to such cases and have such rule generally understood. It may seem inhuman at first, but if properly understood and enforced with discretion it would result beneficially to all concerned, saving no end of acrimonious dickerings between organizations and prove beneficial as well to those who are in need of assistance.

MAX HERZBERG.

I concur.

JULIAN W. MACK.

I concur, but think it advisable to call the attention of D. to the fact that they apparently have a claim against S. for reimbursement.

MAX SENIOR.

Borderland Problems

Martin Zielonka

To live in a small city on the border of a foreign country presents problems differing not only in kind, but also in intensity, from those of metropolitan communities. The social worker believes these problems are most acute in the largest cities of the country; the city in which I live may be exceptional, but I am sure it presents certain problems in a most intense form.

In the first place, we are situated more than six hundred miles from any community which can boast a population of twenty thousand or more. This alone complicates many problems. We are situated in what was formerly called "The Great American Desert," and it is desert enough now to make "tramping" almost an impossibility. If there is any doubt as to the existence of the genus "hobo," religion "Jewish," it can be dispelled in this city. When a man is "down and out" here he faces a very serious problem. Small villages may be found every sixty or seventy miles, but not closer. "Tramping" is almost an impossibility. Even labor cannot be obtained with any degree of certainty, because the common labor market is controlled by the Mexican "peon" and the Mexican foreman gives the white man little opportunity. Factories are few and very small.