

being young and enthusiastic, may express opinions that are too radical. He is liable to lose his position, he may be discharged by a committee, and not because he is not qualified, but because the board did not appreciate his endeavors. The directors, on the other hand, are not supposed to be passive. Proper criticism and expression of different views should be appreciated, but let the professional worker have his chance. I believe it does good for the social workers to be frank—let the employer know our own opinion of our own inefficiency, but let him know also that we have the right to judge our work. There is no reason why the social worker should not discuss his work as any other professional worker.

There was a time when the rabbis took possession of the platform of the Conference, and we never had a chance to say a word; now we have gained some ground, let us keep it and let us not be afraid that it will hurt our "dignity."

CHAIRMAN WIENER: A paper has been interpolated on the program, and we will now listen to Mr. Folk Younker.

Mr. Folk Younker, Secretary of the New York Young Men's Hebrew Association, thereupon read the following paper:

#### WORK OF THE Y. M. H. A. OF NEW YORK.

By FALK YOUNKER,  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

The activities of the Y. M. H. A. of New York are to a large extent modeled after that splendid institution, the Y. M. C. A. About sixty years ago this latter association was organized for the purpose of keeping young men within the church, and away from the lowering tendencies of city life. Built upon a religious foundation, this institution has maintained its standard and increased its prestige so that today it is a world-wide association, which receives liberal support and conducts a multitude of man-building activities.

Thirty-six years ago the Y. M. H. A. of New York was founded. The need was already felt in those days for an organization around which young men could rally for mental, moral, social and physical development. In its early days it had as its foremost workers

such men as Oscar S. Straus, Judge Greenbaum, Judge Platzek, David Leventritt, Henry M. Leipziger, Daniel P. Hayes and many others of equal prominence. These men to this day recall with pride and gratitude the training they received as active members of the Association in the formative period of their careers.

The value of an institution like the Y. M. H. A., besides teaching loyalty to faith, lies in its possibility of developing social workers, who, by their training, their ability and their Jewish fervor, are fitted to take up the many problems which confront the community and help in their solution. In a city the need of such a character-building association is strongly felt. The degrading influences of the saloon, the street-corner, the low-grade dance hall and theater must be overcome. But even in the smaller towns, where twenty or more Jewish young men associate, such societies should be established, in order that our youth may be led to take a live and intelligent interest in Jewish as well as civic affairs, and actively participate in all matters which concern the well-being of their city.

A Y. M. H. A. must be so conducted as to gain for it the respect and support of all good citizens. It must be looked upon as a force for good in the community. Its aim should be higher than that of a mere social club, though its work must necessarily be, to a large extent, of a social nature. The mission of the organization must, however, be kept steadfast in mind. No community should permit the name of the Y. M. H. A. to be used unless the leaders devote their time and energy to building up an association that will stand for Judaism, for patriotism and for brotherhood. The great success of the Y. M. H. A. may be summed up in a few words: Earnestness, enthusiasm and devotion to high ideals.

On the 30th of this month it will be exactly ten years since the present fully equipped home of the New York Association was dedicated. This building is situated at the corner of 92d Street and Lexington Avenue, and is the generous gift of Mr. Jacob H. Schiff. Since its opening the membership has increased from 800 to over 3,500; the annual attendance from 60,000 to over 200,000; annual receipts and expenditures from \$12,000 to nearly \$40,000. One of the main activities is an employment department, which is

non-sectarian. Last year over 1,200 positions were secured for deserving young men. An evening school is conducted. The attendance is composed mainly of working boys, sixteen years and upward, who have been obliged to leave school before completing their education. The principal subjects taught are: Penmanship, stenography, preparatory business and advanced commercial courses, civil service, mechanical drawing, civics, English to foreigners, English and debating, Spanish, French and German. Last year over 400 young men attended these classes.

The Association maintains a public reference library and reading-room. The library contains over 12,000 standard volumes.

The attendance last year was over 35,000. Lectures and entertainments are frequently held. These consist of addresses by prominent speakers, prize debates and elocution contests, given by the young men. A series of health talks is arranged each season and conducted by well-known physicians. Chanukah and Purim plays are given yearly. One of the senior clubs of the building conducts a civic forum; public men and city officials deliver the addresses and answer questions put to them by those who attend. The talent secured for the various affairs is always high-class, and it is gratifying to observe how young people can be taught to appreciate entertainments of a refined character.

A series of grand rally meetings is also held during the winter, to which young men from all parts of the city are invited, regardless of membership in the Association. Heart-to-heart talks are given on practical and ethical topics, and these are well attended. A short entertainment is also arranged in connection with these affairs. The attendance ranges from 400 to 700. Religious services are conducted every Friday evening, arranged specially for young people. The various clubs of the buildings are represented at the services, and members take turns in occupying a seat on the platform and reading one of the weekly prayers. A trained choir of children's voices, selected from the Hebrew Free School, helps to make the service very inspiring. The weekly attendance ranges from 250 to 500. Our ministers and laymen encourage this work by responding to our invitations to deliver weekly addresses.

A Hebrew school was started a few years ago to provide religious instruction to the poor children in the neighborhood. The school fills a long-felt want, and the attendance is so large that the school is divided into two divisions, each section meeting twice weekly. The children receive a thorough training in Hebrew and religion. Nearly 600 children attend.

Sabbath afternoon services, arranged specially for children, are held weekly.

Services are held on the high Holy Days, which the young men of the Association and their parents and relatives attend. The gymnasium, of course, is a very attractive feature of the work, and is the means of interesting a large number of young men. This department is under the direction of a competent physical director. Classes meet every night in the week, except Friday and Sunday, and nearly 500 young men are enrolled.

The summer vacation camp is also maintained to enable working boys to spend their vacation amid healthful surroundings.

The fees for the above privileges are moderate, and within the reach of all worthy young men.

The above is a brief outline of the work of some of the principal activities. The directors of the Association are anxious to spread a knowledge of this work, so that other cities may profit by the experience of the parent association. Information, giving all details, will be cheerfully furnished at all times.

In conclusion, let me quote from the address of Rev. Dr. Samuel Schulman, delivered at the thirty-fifth anniversary exercises, held last year. Dr. Schulman is one of the directors of the Association:

#### SOCIAL INFLUENCE.

"The Y. M. H. A. seeks to equip young men with power by providing them with the proper environments for recreation. It supplements the home by giving them a second home, under whose roof are grouped all the opportunities of a complete and many-sided recreation, interpreted in the most comprehensive spirit. And it is in recreation that men's moral power is generated. What a man's possibilities of attainment for himself may be, he seeks

in his working hours. What he really is as a character and of what service he can be to his fellow-men, he shows in his recreations. What a man is in character I cannot discover by the amount of money he makes. I get nearer to this by seeing how he spends that money. It is, therefore, important what a man's recreation is; if it is in the saloon or in the gambling den it is no recreation, but simply a continuation of the fever and greed which possess us in our daily tasks.

#### MISSION OF THE ASSOCIATION.

"What we need is a Judaism that shall be modern, liberal, religious and loyal to the great distinctive Jewish institutions and Jewish symbols which are the indispensable expressions of the Jewish spirit and the Jewish ideals. The function of the Y. M. H. A. is to train a generation of young men who will thus be liberal and loyal Americans and Jews, and who will be able, without losing their Jewish individuality, to work shoulder to shoulder with Christianity for the moral and spiritual building up of the American people in the great work which Israel, as a priest people, is doing in the service of humanity."

CHAIRMAN WIENER: "Social Work as a Profession," by Mr. Louis H. Levin, Federated Jewish Charities, Baltimore, Md.

#### SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION.

By LOUIS H. LEVIN,  
Secretary Federated Jewish Charities,  
BALTIMORE, MD.

We hear the term "scientific charity" so often that it were not surprising if the public came to think of the professional social worker as a kind of scientist, with his microscope, laboratory and long and dull lectures. Indeed, the social worker has, in effect, all of these, but he is, nevertheless, so far as his calling is concerned, not a scientist, and science cannot be properly predicated of his subject. Scientific charity should rather be systematized

charity, for the professional worker is really a systematizer, and his task is, today, to establish a system of financial, social and educational assistance, which will adequately meet our needs, and which will properly supplement the industrial and commercial system dominating modern life.

Our charities and philanthropies are not so old that many of us cannot remember their evolution in administration and management. First came the small society, taking care of the sporadic case, local or transient. The methods were simple. Money was collected by a figurative passing of the hat, and the applicant received the proceeds. On favorable occasions the collection proved a veritable windfall to the beneficiary; again, if his *mazel* was not up to the standard, the returns were small, and the applicant would be correspondingly disappointed. There were no investigations, no records. The ability to tell a strong, pathetic story was a valuable asset. Men traveled all over the country on no other capital than a moving tale of woe. Many are able still to go through the same performance.

As communities grew and applicants increased, the necessity for a regularly gathered fund and a formal place for distribution became evident. Officers and directors made their appearance, and a voluntary secretary wrote letters, drew checks, and read minutes to a watchful board. The boast was that all money collected was given away; printing was begged, and postage came out of directors' pockets. Giving became more a matter of calculation, for if there was only a circumscribed and definite amount to be distributed, care had to be taken that no one received more than his share. The central place for distribution soon brought out the fact that an applicant of today had made his first appearance before, and a heated discussion at times arose whether the memory of the secretary or a director was to be trusted or whether the indignant protestations of the applicant were to prevail.

Up to this time all is voluntary work, and the test of efficiency is the small amount spent for expenses. But the community grows, more people apply for aid, and, whereas before nearly every applicant, not a stranger, was known to a director of the association, now there comes an increasing number, of whom the whole board