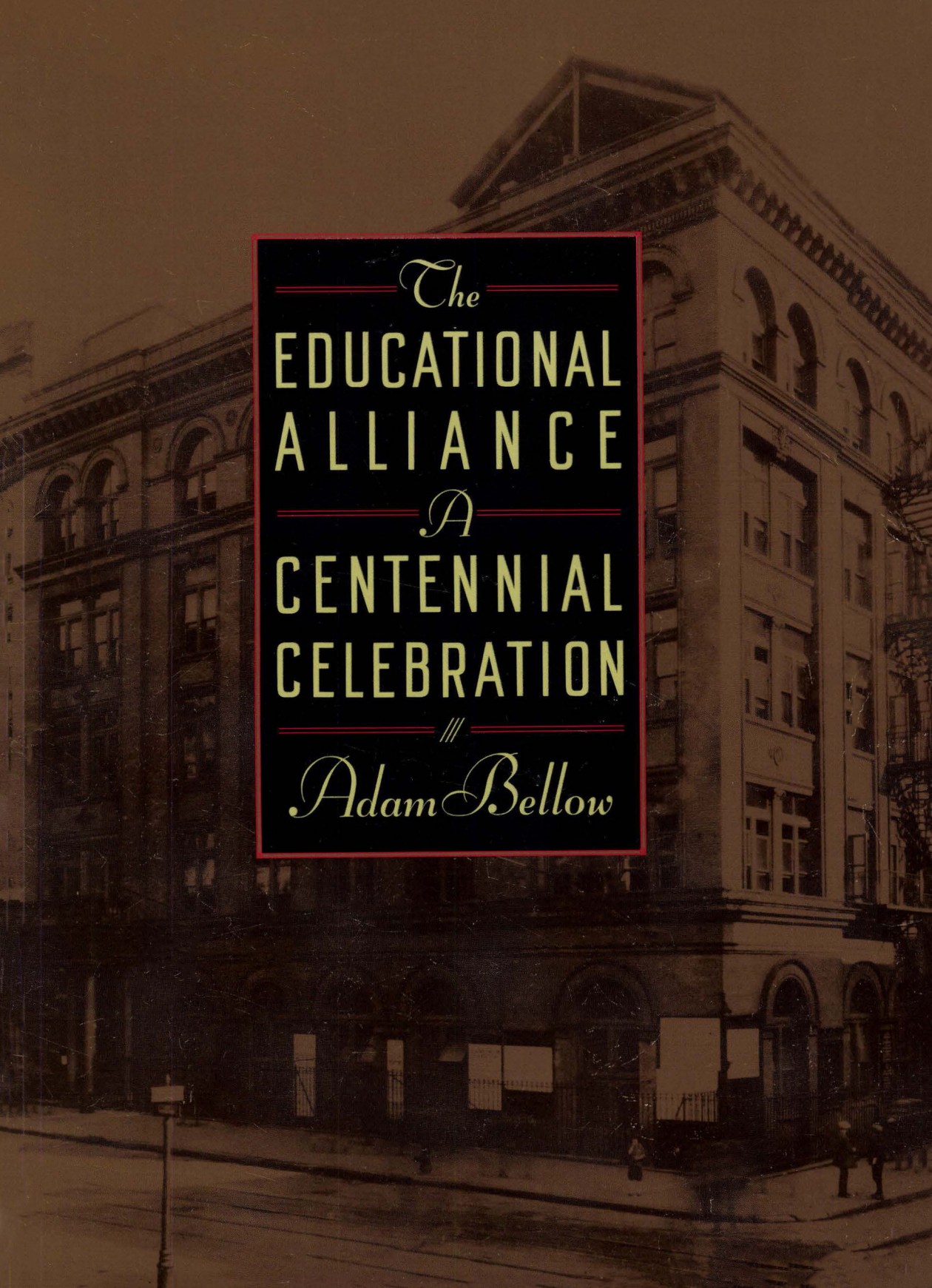


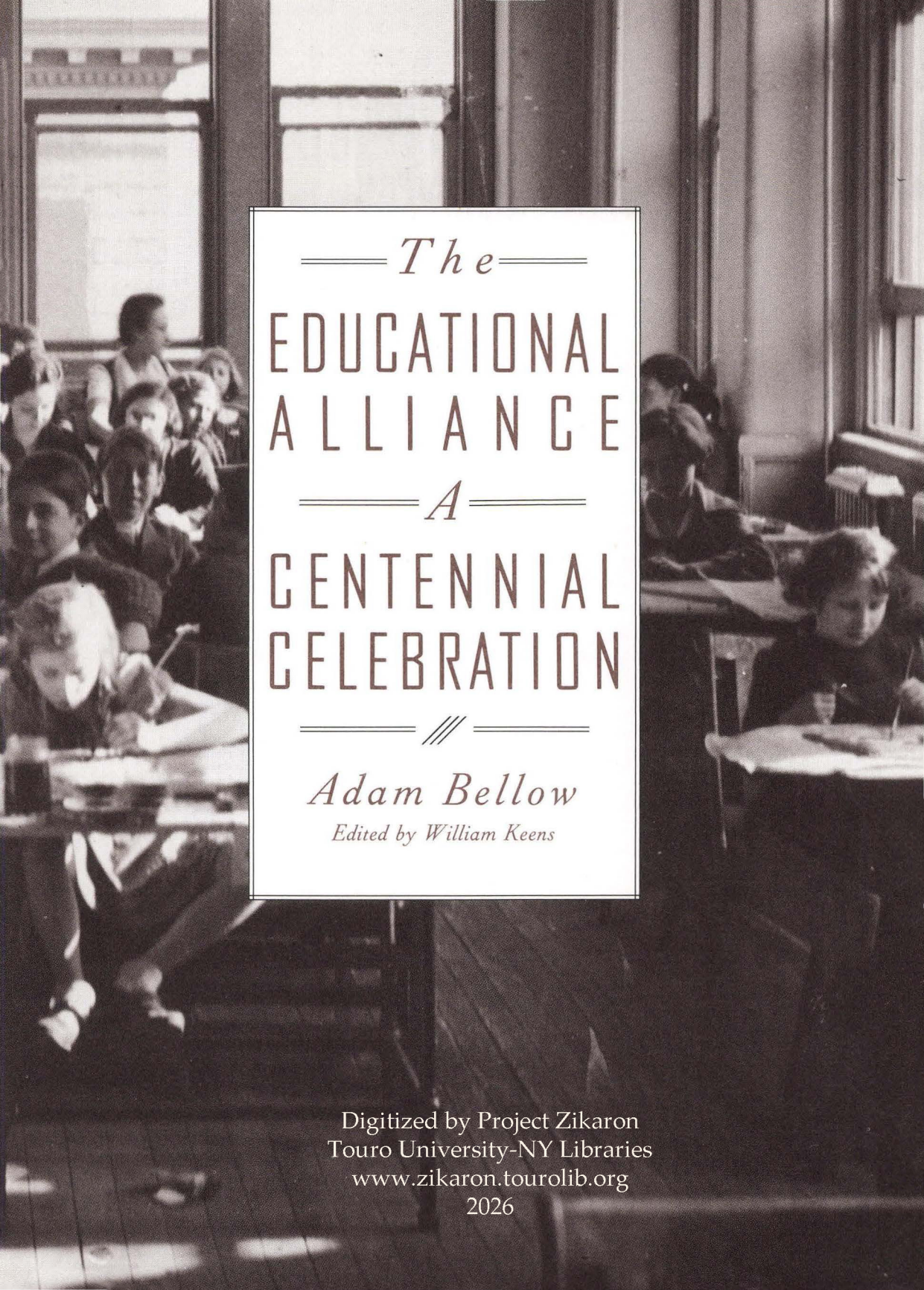
The Educational Alliance

A Centennial Celebration

Adam Bellow

The EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE — *A* — CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION





The EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Adam Bellow

Edited by William Keens

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What a force has gone forth from these walls, men and women who have absorbed the spirit of our land, and who will spread it and transmit it undefiled to the coming generation.

Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo
Speaking at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Educational Alliance, March 21, 1915

It is not incumbent on thee to complete the task; but neither art thou free to abstain therefrom.

Ethics of the Fathers

Special Acknowledgment

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We have also tried to acknowledge the work of writers and scholars whose books contributed to our research. However, a history like this one necessarily relies heavily on unpublished and archival materials. Where documents are from the Educational Alliance collection, specific references have been omitted.

Although we were engaged to write this book by the Educational Alliance itself, we enjoyed complete editorial freedom throughout the research, writing, and revision of the work. The extent of this freedom attests to the confidence of the Alliance's trustees and staff in the institution and in its record of accomplishment. All editorial judgments are our own, as are any errors that this book may contain.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK
MAY 1, 1990

Adam Bellow
William Keens

Preface

The book you are about to read surveys the history of an extraordinary social institution over a period of one hundred years. Those who are already familiar with the Educational Alliance will need no introduction to its activities. Those who are not will discover an astonishing variety and richness—from the institution's traditional concerns with education, Jewish culture, camping, and social services for every age group, to extensive programs dealing with the problems of today, including homelessness, drug abuse, and runaways. These programs attest to the extent of the Alliance's commitment to honoring its ongoing responsibilities while responding with alacrity and imagination to the pressures of the moment.

Throughout its century of service, the Educational Alliance has participated fully in the life of the Lower East Side and has been immersed, like the people it has served, in the currents of history. Buffeted by change along the way, yet never losing sight of the guiding principles espoused by its founders, the institution embodies

and reflects the very richness of the times. In this light, the strains of continuity in service and philosophy are all the more remarkable, and it is one of the tasks of this book to identify and trace these continuities.

On the great stage of American life, the agency's significance is manifold. Its story may be told from any number of perspectives. Or rather, the Alliance may be viewed as a chapter in any one of several stories: the story of social work, with its many professional branches; the story of the immigrant migrations, which continue even now; the story of Jews in America, with all their complex feuds and aspirations; and the story of Jewish philanthropy, with its fiercely argued methods and priorities.

These various elements are like the threads of a marvelous tapestry, weaving through the agency's fabric and forming a backdrop to its history. But there is another story here—the main one for our purposes—of the agency's relations with its neighbors and clients on the Lower East Side of New York City. It is primarily these whom the Alliance has sought to serve throughout the century. The needs and dreams of this highly particular and very special community have served as the frame on which the tapestry was woven.

The Educational Alliance was from the beginning an unusual entity, eluding precise definition either as a settlement house or as a Jewish community center. The tension between the contrasting ideals that this distinction implies has, on balance, been one of the

agency's sources of strength. Its resilience—its ability to take stock of changing needs and alter course where necessary—has kept it viable and vital through a century that has witnessed the rise and fall of many other types of agency. Without this animating tension, there probably would not have been the motive for adjustment, adaptation, and outreach that have been the hallmarks of its conduct, especially since World War II. Nor could any other agency, more rigidly defined, have managed to shape the dialectic of challenge and response from neighborhood residents as various groups contended for representation and service from decade to decade. (For an overview of current activities, see Appendix I, "Directory of Educational Alliance Programs and Services.")

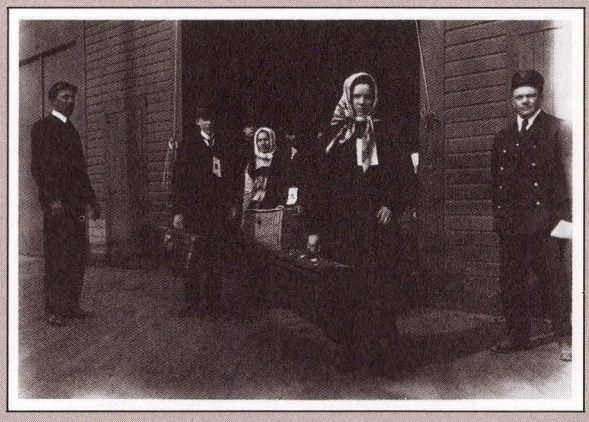
As the Educational Alliance contemplates its second century of service, may this history assist it in further defining its ideals and articulating its future goals and principles. In the press of the ongoing crisis that is urban social service, Alliance trustees and staff have sometimes been too busy to formulate a comprehensive set of abstract principles by which to guide their course. This has been, to some extent, intentional, and reflects as well the pragmatic spirit of social work itself; it may also have contributed to the agency's resilience.

At every point in its evolution, the Alliance has sought guidance from its own identity, which has provided both room for difference and a basis for agreement. The ultimate ground for this agreement can be found in the highest principle of Jewish philanthropy:

helping people help themselves. As this record of achievement demonstrates, the timeliness, importance, and validity of that impulse continue to be tested and confirmed again and again.

The EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE *A* CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Seedbed of American Jewish Philanthropy



Jewish Migration to 1881

According to legend, several Jewish sailors accompanied Christopher Columbus to North America in 1492. A handful of Jews may also have settled in some early colonial outposts. But the first permanent American Jewish communities were founded in the early 1650s under the protection of the Dutch. The settlers came from Portugal and Spain by way of Holland, Brazil, and the Caribbean colonies.

Originating mainly from the mercantile and professional classes of Europe, these elite Sephardic families regarded themselves as an aristocracy among Jews. They were sophisticated and cosmopolitan, though not much given to scholarly interests. Their religious rite was Orthodox and dignified. Sephardic synagogues (there were six in America by the end of the eighteenth century) were distinguished by architectural elegance and ornamental beauty. The scattered community of fewer than three thousand Jews became a small but accepted part of American life in colonial and revolutionary times, mixing with merchant society in such prospering port cities as Charleston, Savannah, Newport, Philadelphia, and New York.

Centuries of social isolation had produced a deep attachment to communal institutions among European Jews, and this continued in America. Though not required by law—as they had often been in Europe—to maintain separate ghettos, Jews established synagogic institutions that embodied their distinctive sense of unity. Historians have noted that these early Jewish settlers were remarkably generous to needy coreligionists, as evidenced by the charitable aid that was expected and obtained on many occasions by Jewish merchants in distress or by itinerant Jews who happened to be passing through the colonies.

The second phase of Jewish immigration started in the early 1800s and accelerated swiftly with the European upheavals of 1830 and 1848, and by 1880 an estimated 235,000 German (Ashkenazi) Jews had entered the United States. With more than 80,000 settling in New York, the German immigrants vastly outnumbered the

small Sephardic colony and thenceforth stamped the American Jewish community with their character.

Sephardic Jews regarded these new immigrants as a lower-class element—vulgar and uncultivated men, fit only for employment as peddlers. In fact, many of the German immigrants did find employment in America as itinerant peddlers. But many were also educated men with higher aspirations. Their fathers had been artisans and merchants who witnessed the French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic wars. Many had been influenced by the ideas of Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), the scholar-theologian who, inspired by the Enlightenment philosophers, had argued for a modernizing attitude toward Jewish law and practice. Mendelssohn's assimilationist ideas laid the groundwork for Reform, a religious movement launched by German Jews who were embarrassed by the "superstitious" origin of many Jewish customs and regarded them as obstacles to fuller integration in society.

The German Jews, like other European immigrants, adapted to their new conditions quickly and became, in their own estimation, as "American" as anyone else. From the 1850s on they quickly grew to be a solidly middle-class element in American life. As settlers moved westward, the German-Jewish peddlers started trading posts and dry-goods stores in many frontier towns, and they prospered along with their adopted communities. The mass of German immigrants arriving in this period settled mostly in the Middle West; large German-Jewish communities were established in such cities as Cincinnati, which soon became the home of

Hebrew Union College (1875) and the American capital of Reform Judaism under the vigorous leadership of Isaac Mayer Wise.

The freedom and respect accorded these immigrants—the absence of repressive economic regulations and the novel opportunities for individual advancement afforded by American society—were powerful factors in helping them feel accepted as German-Jewish Americans. Until the economic depressions of the 1870s and the consequent revival of nativist sentiment, immigrant labor was welcome, indeed actively sought after, particularly in the West; and anti-Jewish feeling, although present in some Southern states, was little felt in the northern industrial centers and frontier settlements. The new citizens regarded themselves primarily as Americans of German descent who also happened to be Jewish. The Civil War enhanced their new sense of belonging, and typically they came to the support of the Union cause, often helping to finance or supply the war effort.*

The new business and financial opportunities offered by the Civil War and Reconstruction raised some members of the German-Jewish immigrant community from the level of merchant trader to that of magnate. Great family fortunes such as those of Lehman, Loeb, and Seligman (successful merchants who became investment

*A notable exception was that of Isidor Straus, a founder and the first president of the Educational Alliance, whose father had settled in Talbotton, Georgia, in 1852; the younger Straus distinguished himself as a Confederate agent in Europe during the war. Another exception was Judah Benjamin, who, as the Confederacy's Secretary of the Navy, was the first Jewish cabinet member in American history.

bankers) and of Guggenheim and Lewisohn (who prospered in mining and refineries) were founded in this era.

Since the Sephardic community tended to exclude them, the German Jews modeled themselves in manners, dress, and politics on the leaders of the Protestant society. Their impulse to assimilate was strong, and they did not encounter much prejudice in the early 1800s, especially in elite commercial circles. But after the Civil War, with the rise of Mrs. Astor's Social Register (composed of four hundred select Protestant families) successful Jews began to find themselves excluded from these privileged social circles.* Hotels and clubs and private schools began to close their doors to Jews. Yet at the same time German-Jewish wealth and power were approaching a new peak. About one hundred Jewish families who had attained economic and social prominence now formed their own informal elite society, modeled after Mrs. Astor's and, if anything, even more exclusive.

The principal founders of the Educational Alliance would be drawn from this exclusive aristocracy. Inspired by pride in their new status—as well as by Jewish charitable traditions, the ameliorating impulse of American Progressivism, and the mildly activist social gospel of Reform Judaism—they underwrote an impressive

*In a famous incident, the banker Joseph Seligman, whose father was a frequent White House guest of President Lincoln, and who had himself been offered a cabinet post as Secretary of the Treasury by President Grant, was barred from the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga in 1877. And in 1893, Theodore Seligman was blackballed at the Union League Club, even though his father had been one of its founders.

array of charitable projects. Beginning in the 1850s, they established hospitals, asylums, relief agencies, retirement homes, settlement houses, and vocational training schools. The leaders of this effort were those who led the Jewish community in other respects. They were a small and closely knit group of German-Jewish businessmen, linked by marriage, social ties, and business interests. The group included such distinguished names as Lehman, Warburg, Straus, Schiff, Loeb, Salomon, Seligman, Speyer, Filene, Brandeis, Marshall, and Kuhn. Their constitution as a social group, their German cultural background, their wealth and status, and their religious practice of Reform with its assimilating tendency—a tendency that did have certain limits, as would soon become apparent—all strongly influenced the formation of the Educational Alliance and would mark it from the outset as a distinctively German-Jewish philanthropic effort.

JEWISH PHILANTHROPY TO 1881

One provision of the charter granted in 1654 by the Dutch to the first group of twenty-three Jews wishing to settle in New Amsterdam had been that "the poor among them should not become a burden to the community, but be supported by their own nation." However, while this may have been a prudent stipulation from the viewpoint of the frugal administrators of the Dutch West India Company, the injunction proved to be superfluous.

There is no separate word in either Hebrew or Yiddish for charity. The word *tzedekah* describes a religious duty to establish justice through compassion. The dignity of beggars is preserved in Jewish custom by a charitable ethic which ascribes the highest virtue to anonymous assistance. Giving that inspires an obligation is not *tzedekah*. The Jewish sage Maimonides had argued that the highest form of charity is that which helps a man to help himself. Failing this, a gift of money is acceptable, but the donor should remain unknown.

Needless to say, the actual practice of charity usually fell short of these high standards. But all Jewish communities maintained a fund for the needy, which was collected and dispensed by the synagogue. In America, until the nineteenth century, charitable activity for the support of basic needs in the Jewish community was conducted under synagogic auspices, according to the European custom.

Beginning in the 1830s these small private agencies provided food and clothing to the arriving Jewish immigrants—to German-Jewish immigrants at first, but increasingly to Poles and Russians as the century progressed. On the Lower East Side, where many of these immigrants settled, the wealthy "Uptown" synagogues established Sabbath or Sunday schools for children and sponsored "sisterhoods of personal service" to assist the poor and sick. In addition to religious instruction, the Sunday schools provided meals and offered baths and changes of clothing to poorer children.

The need for this sort of charitable work was acute and growing

rapidly as more immigrants flooded into the Lower East Side, an area that ran from the Bowery to the East River and from Houston to Monroe Streets. Small factories and workshops ringed the district. In the early 1880s relatively few Jewish families lived in this neighborhood; the East Side was still dominated by Irish and German immigrants. But in a short span of years the Jewish population dramatically increased, until by 1891 the neighborhood bulged with over five hundred people per acre—Russians, Poles, Austrians, and Rumanians, most of them Jews. By the century's end that density would climb to seven hundred per acre. "Nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here," wrote Jacob Riis, a well-known journalist and neighborhood observer. Riis described a typical space-sharing arrangement:

> A tailor lived with his wife, two children and two boarders in two rooms on the top floor. . . . But this tailor, with his immediate household, including the boarders, occupied the larger of the two rooms. The other, a bedroom eight feet square, he sublet to a second tailor and his wife; which couple, following his example . . . divided the bedroom in two by hanging a curtain in the middle, took one half for themselves and let the other half to still another tailor with a wife and child.[1]

In 1890 Riis judged that there were more than 330,000 persons living in the neighborhood, making it the most densely populated urban district in the world—twice as dense (according to Riis) as

the worst London slum. Even Bombay was less crowded. The immigrants lived in miserable five-story tenements, often without electric light or heat or indoor plumbing. Rents were relatively high—six to nine dollars a month—and evictions for nonpayment were abrupt: "the evicted family was seldom suffered to pass the night," according to the eminent contemporary journalist William Dean Howells. Howells estimated in 1896 that over 30,000 evictions had taken place the previous year. The squalor of the neighborhood during this period is infamous, and accounts of the misery of its inhabitants are found in every memoir of the time. The streets were noisy, dirty, overflowing, thronged with pushcarts, strewn with garbage thrown from windows, clogged with horse manure; gangs of ragged children roamed everywhere. The pestilential odors of the neighborhood are also legendary, and ironic testimony is provided by the fact that an East Side lane called Orange Street was renamed Baxter Street because it smelled so little like the fragrant fruit.

Diseases bred and flourished here: smallpox and typhoid fever raged in periodic epidemics, and during the First World War, tuberculosis, called by social worker Lillian Wald "the tailor's disease," ravaged the ghetto as well. In the early 1880s, the overall death rate in one enormous East Side tenement (the "Big Flat," which covered six city lots) averaged forty-two per thousand, nearly twice the rate in the rest of New York; 62 percent of these victims were children under five.

Crime also flourished in this atmosphere; brothels and "dancing

academies" operated openly, protected by grafting policemen and their political bosses in Tammany Hall. Notorious procurers known as "cadets" met young Jewish girls at the docks and, under the pretense of offering assistance, hustled them into the vice trade; many of these unwitting recruits ended up in one of the "disorderly houses" on Allen or Rivington Streets. The largest such house on Allen Street was flanked by a school and a synagogue, and the prostitutes boarded with the families of local working men.

Every neighborhood produced its ethnic gangs, and many youths were involved in street fights, larceny, and organized extortion. The singer and comedian Eddie Cantor, later an Alliance stalwart, grew up on these streets, and in his memoirs he recalls that at the age of ten he was rewarded "with a cup of coffee and two doughnuts" for helping a gang break into a bicycle shop. At thirteen, while he was making his first appearance on stage at the Educational Alliance as Little Lord Fauntleroy, dressed in a blond wig, he was also a "strong-arm" member of an East Side strike-breaking gang led by a terrifying figure called "pock-faced Sam." Cantor earned the princely sum of three dollars a day for this ignoble work.[2]

Crime paid well enough for some, but the majority of Jews, with great hardship, earned honest livelihoods. Most East Siders found employment either as peddlers or in the sweatshops of the "needle trades"—the booming garment industry. Writing at the turn of the century, sociologist Isaac Max Rubinow observed that in America,

> the unique Jewish branch is the garment industry. . . . Clothing in America has become much cheaper, and there is no doubt that the neatly dressed American public is indebted to the tattered, sometimes soiled Jewish masses.[3]

Often for less than a dollar a day men labored eighteen hours in the steam-lofts while their wives and daughters took home piece-work and their sons became street-hawkers, bootblacks, and newspaper vendors in the hours after school. Contract garment-making work was distributed to makeshift clothing shops in alleys, attics, stable-lofts, and family dwellings. The work continued seven days a week and went from dawn till after midnight. Workers crowded out into the halls, onto the fire escapes, and even on the rooftops. Riis describes a visit to one of these tenement shops:

> Up two flights of dark stairs, three, four, with new smells of cabbage, of onions, of frying fish, on every landing, whirring sewing machines. . . . Five men and a woman, two young girls, not fifteen, and a boy who says unasked that he is fifteen, and lies in saying it, are at the machines sewing knickerbockers, "kneepants" in the Ludlow Street dialect. The floor is littered ankle-deep with half-sewn garments. . . . A bare-legged baby with pinched face is asleep. A fence of piled-up clothing keeps him from rolling off on the floor. The faces, hands and arms to the elbows of everyone in the room are black with the color of the cloth on which they are working. . . . They turn out one hundred and twenty dozen "kneepants" a week for which the manufacturer pays seventy cents a dozen.[4]

The sweatshop owners were most often German Jews who lived Uptown in an entirely different world, though as the century progressed many of the more recent immigrants also became managers and bosses.

The discovery of these terrible conditions produced a call for the various uncoordinated efforts at charity to be both broadened and focused into more determined institutional activities. The proliferation of new agencies included a Home for Aged and Infirm Hebrews (merging its efforts with the already existing Bnai Jeshurun Ladies' Benevolent Society for the Relief of Indigent Females), a Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association, a Hebrew Relief Society, a Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society, and numerous other small groups whose disparate efforts were united in 1874 by the United Hebrew Charities. In the years before central communal bodies like the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies took on the task of organized fundraising, funds for charity were raised from private individuals by various means. The Purim Society (a social entertainment committee founded in 1861) sponsored an annual ball. Later, fairs yielded large sums in support of Mount Sinai and Montefiore Hospitals (the fair for the latter earning over $150,000 in 1886).

In addition to relief, a number of job-training and acculturation programs were established to help the immigrants adapt to their new country. Stress was laid on helping them to become independent of communal charity as quickly as possible. The Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society, which had begun its work

in 1822, adopted an educational program that offered training in various industrial skills. It would eventually expand (under the guidance of Jesse Seligman) to house a trade school for mechanics and printers, as well as offering secretarial classes in shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping; the Asylum also boasted a forty-piece musical band.

Founded in 1833, the first of the philanthropic education societies devoted to the poor—later to become an important part of Jewish culture on the Lower East Side—was known as the Society for the Education of Poor Children and the Relief of Indigent Persons of Jewish Persuasion. The ladies of Temple Emanu-El—among them Mrs. Nathan Straus, Mrs. Lee Kohns, and Minnie D. Louis—established in 1880 the Louis Downtown Sabbath School, offering afternoon lessons "in Bible work, hygiene, behavior, and singing" to young girls from poor families. When industrial courses were added, the school, located at Second Avenue and Fifteenth Street, became known as the Hebrew Technical School for Girls.

Also in this period two of the original three partners in the Hebrew Institute—a predecessor of the Educational Alliance—were established: the Hebrew Free School Association and the Young Men's Hebrew Association.

The Hebrew Free School Association was founded in 1864 to counteract the work of certain Christian missionaries who, the year before, had set up a "Free Hebrew School" on the Lower East Side. The school's curriculum was found to involve little Hebrew

and much Christian teaching, and this attempt to win Jewish children away from Judaism was regarded as a serious challenge to Jewish survival in America. Beginning in 1865, a series of Jewish "mission schools" were established "to teach morality and to exert a refining influence upon the Jewish children of the East Side." A Board of Commissioners was appointed—one commissioner from each congregation in New York—to oversee and manage the schools. Located mainly on the Lower East Side but with branches all over the city, these were afternoon schools, intended not to replace but to supplement public education. Instruction was given in Hebrew, religion, and Bible history. Later, singing and sewing were added. Each of these schools was endowed by Jacob Schiff with a small library. Pupils were also supplied with clothing and other necessities and were frequently taken on excursions. The first Jewish kindergarten, which expanded rapidly, was opened in 1882 on Avenue D, and in 1879 the Association opened an Industrial School for Girls, which was transferred in 1894 to the newly established Educational Alliance.

The Young Men's Hebrew Association, founded in 1874 on the model of the Protestant YMCA, had as its primary object "the betterment of the condition of the young Jewish man, morally, intellectually, and physically." The Y's activities included classes in Hebrew and other languages and literatures, as well as instruction in music, drama, art, and athletics. In 1882 the Y began to contemplate a downtown branch and entered into collaborative projects with other agencies. In 1886 its library merged with that

of the Hebrew Free School Association to become the Clara Aguilar Free Library Society—later the third institutional partner in the original Hebrew Institute.

THE RUSSIAN EXODUS

The year 1881 has been called a turning point in Jewish history as significant as that of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain four centuries earlier. In that year, the liberal Russian Czar Alexander II was assassinated by a group of revolutionary anarchists belonging to a widespread movement that included many Jewish members. As had happened in the past on a variety of pretexts, a wave of anti-Jewish violence resulted—instigated by the czarist police—claiming thousands of lives and stirring up considerable outrage in the West. A series of repressive laws enacted in the following year compounded the harshness of Jewish life under Russian authority. These events, combined with severely depressed economic conditions in Eastern Europe, triggered a massive emigration. Over the next forty years about one-third of Russia's Jewish population departed, most of them for the United States.

Public concern over state-sponsored anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia was widespread in America, among Christians and Jews alike. Russia was widely perceived as essentially undemocratic and reactionary, and the pogroms and anti-Jewish legislation were

viewed as odious persecutions of a religious minority, the very opposite of American principles of toleration and equality.

In 1882 a mass meeting of New York's leading citizens was called by former President Ulysses S. Grant and other prominent Christians, with New York's Mayor William Russell Grace presiding. Speakers such as former Secretary of State William Maxwell Evarts expressed their sympathy with the persecuted Russian Jews, condemned their oppressors, and called for action. Jacob Schiff and other Jewish notables responded with substantial sums of money.

But though they willingly and swiftly provided monetary aid, the German Jews expressed concern about the likelihood of a new wave of mass immigration and its effect on the lives of established American Jews. Their thought was then of only thousands, not of the hundreds of thousands that soon arrived.

Come they did, however, quickly and in unimagined numbers, knowing nothing of America, filling up the ports and needing absolutely everything. From 1880 to 1910, over one and a half million Jews entered New York from Russia, Rumania, and Austria-Hungary. By World War I, when immigration was temporarily interrupted, the Jewish population of New York had risen to 1,335,000, with the city's German Jews representing only 10 percent of this number. The population of the Lower East Side increased from the 330,000 estimated by Riis in 1890 to over 542,000 in 1910.

By 1914, when the flow of immigration was temporarily halted by the outbreak of war in Europe, close to two million Jews had

arrived here. Immigration resumed after the Treaty of Versailles and continued unabated until 1924 when the U.S. Congress, yielding to pressure from organized labor and a variety of self-styled patriotic groups, passed a stringent set of immigration laws that firmly closed the "open door" and brought the mass migration period abruptly to an end. But by that time more than 3,500,000 Jews had entered the country.

The Russian Jews were as different from the Germans as the Germans had been from their Sephardic predecessors. Most Russian Jews came from a rural, preindustrial society where they had worked as artisans and small businessmen. Daily life in the Russian pale still centered on the synagogue and its Orthodox ritual, and the Orthodoxy of these *shtetl* Jews was rigid and intense.* Proud of their distinguished tradition of religious and legal scholarship, they regarded their Reformist American cousins with surprising contempt, and they insisted on establishing their own religious schools and institutions. They wanted only to continue as before,

*Judge Simon H. Rifkind, an Alliance alumnus who came to the U.S. in 1910 when he was nine years old, recalled his early education in the following terms: "Our behavior in [the] village was very closely regulated. . . . The regulations were spelled out in the book written in Hebrew by one Joseph Karo and published in 1554. This book was a *vade mecum* which collected the Commandments of the Bible, of the Talmud, of the great Rabbinic scholars, and provided the answers to every question of an orderly, pious life—when to rise and when to retire, when to offer one's devotions, how, when and what to eat and drink, when to make love, when to work and when to abstain, when and what to read and study. The book, written in easily readable Hebrew, was followed literally by millions of people. . ." (Rifkind, *One Man's Word,* Volume I, pp. 4-5)

and they resisted every well-intended effort on the part of German Jews to help them integrate themselves into American society.

No less contentious were the Jews who came from great cosmopolitan centers such as Vilna, Lodz, and Warsaw. These were members of an urban proletariat with well-defined political ideas and deep differences in outlook which they clung to with a passionate conviction. A veritable jungle of dissent grew up around "the Jewish Question." There were Zionist socialists, national socialists, and antinational socialists; there were religious and nonreligious Zionists; there were Diaspora nationalists, territorialists, assimilationists. Like their Orthodox cousins, these secular dissenters also viewed the German Jews distrustfully, regarding them as part and parcel of the prevailing national-capitalist system.

Throughout the 1880s it was expected that the rate of immigration would diminish, that the flow could be diverted (one plan proposed that the newcomers be settled en masse in a Galveston, Texas, farming colony), or that pressure on the Russian and Rumanian governments would ease the situation in Europe. But immigration neither slowed of its own accord nor yielded significantly to efforts to staunch or divert it. Complicating matters were the often strained and difficult relations between American and European relief agencies. Many American Jews, although receptive to the idea of immigration, favored a restrictionist policy. They hoped to limit the number of unskilled, unhealthy, or impoverished arrivals. Undesirables, they warned, would be returned. In 1881, the American directors of the Russian Emigrant Relief Fund set an

arbitrary limit of 5,000 immigrants per year. More than this, they stated in a letter to the French Alliance Israelite Universelle, "would render the burden upon us absolutely intolerable." Myer S. Isaacs, a subsequent founder of the Educational Alliance, complained in a letter to the Board of Delegates of American Israelites that the European agencies were not bearing their fair share, remarking, "It is habitual with benevolent organizations in certain cities in Europe to dispatch utterly helpless Jewish families to America—only to become a burden upon our charities."

There were others who shared this feeling. Furthermore, it was pointed out, there were already a sizable number of Jewish poor in American cities. Nevertheless, despite complaints that funds were lacking, from 1881 to 1889 the United Hebrew Charities expended more than $1 million annually for immigrant relief.

Despite the actual diversity of these immigrants, who brought their customs, feuds, and aspirations with them, it was the image of the *shtetl* Jew that dominated the American—and the American-Jewish—conception of the immigrants. The Eastern European Jews were thought of as unmannered and unwashed; their native Yiddish was considered a degraded form of German; they were frequently referred to as a mongrel race of Asiatic peasants with whom the established American Jews could have nothing in common. In a sermon delivered at Temple Emanu-El in 1889, Rabbi Jacob Silverman, speaking to the very congregation that was expected to sustain the newly-organized Educational Alliance, expressed a prevailing attitude when he warned that the existence of a large

population of foreign Jews with "loud ways and awkward gestures" would be "naturally repulsive and repugnant" to more refined American sensibilities.[5] The fear was that this ungainly element would fan the rising flames of anti-Semitism. Silverman called for a vigorous program of Americanization to help them shed their awkward differences and thus reduce the friction with American society.

But whatever the actual differences that separated the Russian Jews from their German predecessors, in the eyes of an America already overflowing with immigrants of all descriptions these distinctions were too fine. Rising anti-Jewish sentiment tended further to erase the line between Russian and German Jews and created new difficulties for those who had complacently believed themselves established and accepted. It now appeared that, like it or not, the German Jews were to be enmeshed in a complex partnership with their Eastern European coreligionists, a partnership, in the words of historian Evyatar Friesel, "filled with ambivalent tendencies in which impulses and expressions of mutual repulsion and mutual attraction were interwoven in contradictory patterns."[6]

Historians have strongly disagreed about the conduct of established American Jews in this period: some have assigned blame and condemnation on the basis of class interest, social prejudice, or simple inhumanity, while others have found various excuses for the relative unwillingness of the German Jews to embrace their needy coreligionists. But most do note a significant change in

Jewish attitudes beginning in the 1890s which resulted in the vigorous pursuit of large-scale philanthropic programs and a reversal of the conservative approach to immigration. Indeed, these very Jewish leaders made considerable efforts to block the proposed legislation that would restrict the flow of Jews from Eastern Europe.

The Stewardship of Wealth

The mass migrations of this period presented unanticipated moral and intellectual challenges, raising questions for American Jews that have never been fully answered: What is an American? Who is a Jew? What should be the character of American Jewish philanthropy? Should religion and social services be separated? Which form of Judaism—Reform, Orthodox, Conservative—should be practiced? Far from being merely theoretical, these questions involved serious practical problems, problems that the Educational Alliance has had to wrestle with throughout its history.

The philanthropists who financed the vigorous and expanding network of philanthropic institutions were primarily German Jews who had risen to prominence before and after the Civil War, and their names appeared again and again on institutional board lists. They were a powerful elite, and while they had some differences of opinion, they did share a common outlook. Highly Americanized themselves by this time, they tended to regard Jewish separatism—in language, dress, and manners—as being opposed to the funda-

mental principles of American democracy. Wealthy and on easy terms with America's financial and governing elite, they were Republican in politics and disapproved of socialists and unionizers. Practicing a moderate Reform Judaism (most of the founders of the Educational Alliance belonged to the Reform Temple, New York's Emanu-El), they viewed the Orthodox as retrograde, premodern, "Oriental." Further, having comfortably "arrived," they resisted the Zionist call for a Jewish national homeland on the grounds that such a basis for a state was incompatible with democratic principles.

Typical of the powerful German Jews and a leading figure of particular importance in this period was Jacob H. Schiff. Among his many business undertakings, Schiff—who played an instrumental role in bringing the two sides of the continent into communication—helped launch such future giants as Western Union, Armour, AT&T, Anaconda, Westinghouse, U.S. Rubber, and the Union Pacific and other railroad companies. He floated huge international loans to the foreign governments of Santo Domingo and China and assisted Japan in its war against Russia, which he hated for its treatment of Jews. Schiff's charitable activities were equally varied. He supported the Red Cross, the Knights of Columbus, the YMCA, and the Salvation Army. An interest in education produced gifts to Columbia, Barnard, Johns Hopkins, Cornell, and the university of his native Frankfurt. Schiff was deeply religious and gave generously to Temple Emanu-El and the Jewish Theological Seminary. The Montefiore Home for

Chronic Invalids and the Henry Street Settlement were also favorite charities to which he gave much time as well as money.

Schiff's idea of philanthropy was not, it must be said, the perfect anonymity of *tzedekah* according to Maimonides.* In their approach to social charity, as in so many other things, the wealthy German Jews closely followed the model established by the leaders of American Protestant society, particularly magnate Andrew Carnegie, who argued that philanthropy must always be directed by the donor with the good of the recipient in mind. Schiff wrote,

> Charity and philanthropy, to become effective, should have personal supervision; for it is unlikely that others can carry into practical effect our ideas as well as we can do it ourselves.... The surplus wealth we have gained ... belongs to our fellow human beings; we are only the temporary custodians of our fortunes. Let us be careful that no just complaint can be made against our stewardship.[7]

Predictably, however, and despite Schiff's reasonable tone, the "stewardship of wealth" approach, in practice, provoked severe complaints from Russian Jews who felt that they themselves were better able to determine what was good for them than their Uptown benefactors. The philanthropic attitude of German Jews was not

*Schiff did, however, assist Lillian Wald in her efforts to start the Nurses Settlement only on the condition of anonymity. Wald made secret reports for Schiff, detailing her visits to tenement sickrooms. These letters give a graphic picture of conditions in the slums.

what they were used to; the tenor of Uptown charity, dispensed by Downtown institutions like the Educational Alliance, lacked the element of personal contact that had characterized fraternal assistance in the *shtetl.* This missing element they called *menschlichkeit,* or humanity. The German Jews, they said (and also wrote in editorials), were patronizing snobs.

As soon as they were able, the immigrants began to establish their own social service institutions. Some were founded to address needs not covered by the existing charitable agencies: The Daughters of Jacob, assisting the elderly, was supported by wives and mothers out of their household money; the Hebrew Free Loan Society, founded in 1892, made small loans to immigrants without requiring collateral or charging interest.* Others were directly conceived as alternatives to the German institutions. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, for example, was founded in part to provide an alternative to the "overbearing" representative of the United Hebrew Charities on Ellis Island. There were also the *landsmanschaften*—mutual aid societies formed by small groups of Jews with common origins in Europe.† The *landsmanschaften* helped provide

*Philip Cowen, editor of the *American Hebrew,* attended meetings of the Hebrew Free Loan Society, which were held in the Alliance auditorium—"and they were well worth going to," he wrote. Cowen especially noted the enormous pride that these poor immigrants took in finding ways to help themselves and others like them.

†In 1892 there were at least 136 East Side *landsmanschaften,* according to a contemporary directory, most of them Russian-Polish, but also Hungarian,

jobs, insurance benefits, dowries, burials, arbitration of disputes, and medical care for dues-paying members.

This fight to control the social agencies was paralleled by a struggle to find an American version of Judaism that would be acceptable both to Jews of different origins and to American society at large.

In 1824, the first Reformed Society of Israelites was established in Charleston—at that time the largest American Jewish community. Reform became a powerful movement in American Judaism, promoted by influential German rabbis like Isaac Mayer Wise, David Einhorn, and Samuel Adler. Many Reform temples were established in the 1840s, including, in 1845, Temple Emanu-El of New York.

The Reform temples abandoned many traditional Jewish practices in an effort to be "modern" and "American." Americanizing Judaism meant making it resemble more closely the religion of the Protestant majority: services were read in English and sermons were preached, Sabbath was observed on Sunday, men and women sat together in the pews, an organ and a choir were introduced, marriage rites were simplified, and religious education was curtailed; the Union Prayer Book expunged references to the Diaspora as

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Rumanian, Austrian, and German. In 1897 there were 207 of these small but tightly knit brotherhoods, and by 1918 there would be as many as 1,000, with a total membership of about 100,000. Although membership tended to fall off among second-generation immigrants, as late as 1945 there were still about 500,000 American Jews belonging to *landsmanschaften.*

punishment and excised prayers for rebuilding the Temple and returning the Jews to Jerusalem. The implication of these liturgical changes was that Jews in America had truly arrived: this was to be the new Jerusalem.[8]

Reform was therefore hostile to any hint of Jewish separatism, and particularly to Zionism—already a powerful movement in Eastern Europe. Indeed, some Reform rabbis were forced by the logic of their position to abandon Judaism altogether, adopting what Nathan Glazer has called "a religion of progress in which the distinction between religions and peoples was of no account."[9] This impulse led to the establishment in 1876 of the Ethical Culture Society by Samuel Adler's son, Felix Adler, who declared that he could not accept a distinctive Jewish religion as valid in a modern world.

An Orthodox reaction, headed by members of the Sephardic community, led to the establishment in 1886 of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Lacking strong support among the German Jewish majority, this reaction splintered into a Conservative movement that came to represent the moderate mainstream of American Jewish social and religious sentiment.

Meanwhile, influential German Jews like Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall adopted the view that Judaism in its social dimension was identical with philanthropy. It mattered little to them whether Russian Jews accepted Conservative or Reform Judaism, so long as they did not become Socialists as a result of Jewish preaching.

Philanthropy has been called the civil religion of American

Jews. Certainly, at a time when the enormous pressures unleashed by immigration were causing deep divisions even within the established Jewish community, philanthropic undertakings were a powerful, indeed almost the only basis for Jewish unity. This was possible in part because the duty of charity was the one religious precept on which all factions could agree. However, they did not always agree on the appropriate ends and means of philanthropic programs.

In time, two sets of institutions emerged—German and Russian—their efforts often parallel but separate, each in turn developing its own more comprehensive federations. Despite the efforts of some far-sighted individuals on either side, it would be many years before the two structures would merge into a single philanthropic system. Only a series of communal crises challenging the whole of American Jewry could begin to bridge their differences. In the interim, the institutions founded by the Germans for the Russian Jews became the scene of a transformative struggle that would bring them progressively more into line with Russian needs and aspirations. And this same struggle between two Jewish cultures would, on a larger scale, result in a broader conception of American Jewish identity.

The Founding and First Era of the Alliance



Institutional Beginnings

The tide of refugees swelled considerably throughout the 1880s, and by the decade's end the German-Jewish leadership had recognized that large-scale immigration would continue for some time. In fact, it would not peak until 1906, a year in which well over 150,000 Jews entered the country. The desperate situation of East European Jews was daily exacerbated by the repressive policies of the Russian

and Rumanian governments, excluding Jews from opportunities in education, commerce, and society. These legislative measures, culminating in 1891 with the expulsion of Jews from Moscow and other Russian cities, rendered the problem insoluble from the Western point of view.

As early as 1882 Emma Lazarus, the Jewish poet, had demanded in a letter to the *American Hebrew* that on "every Jewish school and asylum in the land, religious or secular, should be grafted a system of instruction in some branch of productive industry." Steps in this direction were taken in the 1880s, but by the start of the following decade it was clear to Jewish leaders that "grafting" programs onto existing agencies would not suffice. A broader institutional approach would be required to answer the needs of the incoming immigrant Jews. Not only did they need relief, resettlement assistance, and industrial training, but also English language instruction, civics and citizenship classes, and a variety of other community services.

The deplorable housing, labor, and sanitary conditions of the immigrants plainly undermined both their physical and moral health. The Lower East Side was, in short, a disgrace to New York, and especially to New York Jews, who felt uncomfortably responsible for doing something about it. One letter to the *American Hebrew* (July 27, 1883) fervently states,

> No one can carefully scrutinize the sanitary and moral environments of those of our downtown coreligionists who are forced by their material circumstances to dwell in those

> monster buildings where disease and vice are generated; no one can observe the influences which beset the moral, intellectual, and physical development of the children that are reared in those pestiferous houses and neighborhoods, without being convinced of the grievous necessity for some intelligent and decisive measures which shall check those evils . . . in order that disastrous discredit may be averted from the Jewish people in this country.

Among the most important institutions to be founded in this period were the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the Baron de Hirsch Mechanical Training School, the Hebrew Free Loan Society, the Council of Jewish Women, the Industrial Removal Office, and the Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society. The Hebrew Technical Institute was organized jointly in 1884 by the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum, the Hebrew Free School Association, and the United Christian Charities.

The Baron de Hirsch Fund played a major role in the development of relief and educational programs for immigrant Jews. This was a European philanthropy whose American heads included Myer S. Isaacs (president since 1881 of the Hebrew Free School Association), James H. Hoffman, Jacob Schiff, Emanuel Lehman, Adolphus S. Solomons, and Oscar Straus. Throughout the 1880s the German Baron spent millions of dollars resettling Rumanian Jews in Argentine farming communities. The American branch of the Fund was established in 1890 with an astonishing endowment of $2.5 million for the aid of Russian Jewish immigrants,

and the Fund's first efforts were aimed at resettlement and agricultural training. The trustees purchased 5,100 acres in Woodbine, New Jersey, which were cleared and subdivided into farm and building lots; a whole community was built, including four large factories intended to employ and support the new residents, an electrical plant, a brick-yard, a kindling factory, an elementary schoolhouse, an agricultural school, a synagogue, and a hotel. The Fund also supported cooperative branches performing similar work in six other cities. However, when it was found that the Russian Jews preferred urban life and industrial labor to farming, the Fund diverted its colonizing efforts to job training and education.

The Baron de Hirsch Mechanical Training School, on East 9th Street, offered courses in "Carpentry, Turning, Plumbing, House, Sign and Fresco Painting, and Working in Iron." Believing that "education in cleanliness is of primary importance,"[1] the Fund established the Baron de Hirsch Baths at the corner of Henry and Market Streets, where for five cents each (three cents for children) almost 700 people bathed daily.

In addition to the Christian and Jewish mission schools, other philanthropic efforts were founded on the Lower East Side—most notably the settlements, of which the Educational Alliance is a somewhat special case. The settlement movement had begun in England in the 1860s, inspired by the ideas of the Christian Socialist circle that included Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin. The settlement impulse was held to be distinct from simple charity, which responded to the symptoms of poverty without altering its causes. The idea

was for educated upper-class persons to take up residence ("settle") among the poor, explore their problems, offer practical advice, provide a center for community activities, enlist local leaders in attacking common difficulties, and give instruction in a variety of areas.

The first such institution in America was the University Settlement, founded in 1886 by Stanton Coit on the Lower East Side. Coit's settlement grew out of a boys' club he organized in his basement apartment at 146 Forsyth Street. In 1887, having expanded considerably, the club moved across the street to larger quarters and was renamed the Neighborhood Guild. The name University Settlement was adopted in 1891; among its early financial supporters were Andrew Carnegie, Henry Holt, Elihu Root, and Jacob Schiff. It was soon followed by the Henry Street Settlement, with which Schiff was closely linked, the Grand Street Settlement, the Christie Street Settlement, Christadora House, and many others. Social activists like Lillian Wald of Henry Street and Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House became prominent advocates of the movement and its goals. The settlements were important neighborhood centers serving all immigrants. The Educational Alliance, although similar in many ways—it too was open to all neighborhood residents—was distinguished by being intended first and foremost to serve the social and educational needs of the Jewish community.

In 1885 it was suggested in the councils of the Hebrew Free School Association that a central "mission building" be erected on the Lower East Side that might conveniently house some of the

Association schools "together with other kindred charitable and educational institutions," so that their efforts might be more effectively aligned and made available to the neighborhood population. After several years and much deliberation, the decision was made to build a Downtown Hebrew Institute that would combine the social, educational, cultural, and religious services of three existing agencies: the Hebrew Free School Association, the Clara Aguilar Free Library Society, and the Young Men's Hebrew Association. With the exception of the communally-sponsored Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids in 1888, the Hebrew Institute was the most ambitious project that had yet been undertaken by the Jewish community.

In 1889 a committee of leading German-Jewish philanthropists—Isidor Straus, Samuel Greenbaum, Myer S. Isaacs, Jacob H. Schiff, Morris Loeb, and Edwin R. A. Seligman—sponsored a fundraising fair at the American Institute Hall, which raised $125,000 to pay for the purchase of land on the Lower East Side and the construction of a facility to house these three agencies. Contributions of money, labor, food, and decorations came from most of the existing Jewish groups and temples. The five-story building was erected in 1891 at 197 East Broadway, where it still stands, enlarged by the purchase of adjoining properties over the years.

According to the terms of their agreement, the management of the Hebrew Institute remained under the direction of the three constituent organizations, and their programs and activities continued to be separate. A corporation, called the Educational Alliance,

was set up to handle funds and to serve as trustee for the property, taking charge of cleaning, lighting, and maintaining the facilities. Each agency was to make its contribution in the form of rent paid to the common corporation, whose first Board of Trustees included the heads of the three organizations—Myer S. Isaacs of the Hebrew Free School Association, Manuel A. Kursheedt of the YMHA, Samuel Greenbaum of the Aguilar Free Library—and community representatives James H. Hoffman, Henry Rice, Samuel M. Schaefer, and Jacob Schiff.

The Baron de Hirsch Fund always sought to cooperate with existing agencies in carrying out its educational programs. A series of English and citizenship classes was instituted in 1890 on the Lower East Side, and in 1891 the classes were conducted at the Hebrew Institute under the auspices of the Fund, which became in effect a fourth partner. Fund-sponsored "visitors," the first use of a practice which soon became widespread among social service institutions, called on the immigrants in their homes, trying to interest parents in sending their children to the classes. The purpose of the classes was to help young immigrants qualify as quickly as possible for admission to the public schools, for which proficiency in English was required.

The visitors also tried to win students away from the Orthodox Hebrew schools, or *heders*, which the Fund (and later the Alliance) wished to eradicate. These unlicensed and unregulated schools had sprouted up all over the Lower East Side and their influence was thought to be pernicious as well as un-American. Although the

heder had been an important part of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, the American version was widely held to be a degraded form of this respected institution. Any Jew who had a smattering of Talmud and who lacked other means of employment could set himself up as a teacher of Hebrew, and in 1890 the Hirsch Fund estimated that there were 251 private Hebrew teachers or *melammedim* on the East Side (the actual number was probably higher). For as little as ten cents a week, these teachers plied their trade in airless basement rooms or worked the tenements, where they would trudge "from floor to floor, peddling Torah like other merchandise." Irving Howe reports:

> During the eighties and nineties there were frequent complaints of ignorance, sacrilege, bad manners and poor teaching; the intellectual, and sometimes the moral, level of a good many of these religious institutions was low.[2]

The task of wiping out the *heders* proved more difficult than the Uptown Jews had imagined. The immigrants insisted on a traditional religious training for their sons (they were less concerned about their daughters), and they rejected what they thought was an effort to wean their children away from Orthodoxy. Julia Richman, the formidable district supervisor of public schools (she was also a director of the Hebrew Free School Association, the first president of the YWHA, a leading member of the Council of Jewish Women, and a founder and director of the Educational

Alliance) was one of the most influential enemies of the *heders*. But her imperious manner and reputation for intolerance did little to advance her cause. She rejected an early proposal by the Reverend Clifton H. Levy that Hebrew be included in the Hirsch program itself, as a more effective means of weakening these schools and enlisting the support of parents. The plan would later be implemented with great effectiveness by the Educational Alliance.

Beginning in 1891, the Hebrew Institute offered English instruction five days a week (day classes for children, evening classes for adults), and the curriculum soon expanded to include arithmetic, geography, and penmanship. Attendance in the first year quickly swelled to 740, with a teaching staff of twenty-one. By 1891 there were eleven day classes and six evening classes; the latter, for girls who worked during the day, included courses in dressmaking and hairdressing as well as English. The instructors found their students apt and willing—although as Dr. Samuel Joseph, the Baron de Hirsch Fund's historian, has noted, to these young students, "inured to being driven by a severe taskmaster over the rugged road of Talmudical intricacies, learning under the guidance of a lady teacher must have appeared a pleasant walk over smooth pathways."[3]

A special class for *melammedim* was also instituted, in the hope that the Hebrew teachers would either drop their *heder* work completely or modernize their courses, which meant at the very least conducting them in English instead of Yiddish. Some of these men really were abysmally unqualified to teach, but many others

were highly educated individuals whose lack of English competence prevented them from pursuing other ambitions. In 1893 *melammedim* were being offered classes at the Alliance in English syntax, rhetoric and composition, American history, the history of American institutions, De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, the U.S. Constitution, *Hamlet*, standard American authors, and translations of the Psalms. The classes failed in their ultimate object—the *heders* continued to thrive—but many *melammedim* did go on to be accepted into various professional schools. In time the program was enlarged, and it became in effect a college preparatory school where men and women studied literature, civics, economics, rhetoric, history, and stenography.

In 1892 the Hirsch classes were immortalized in Jacob Riis' *The Children of the Poor*. Riis described the sight of bearded old *melammedim* struggling through their English primers, learning simple words like "cow" and "cat." They studied hard—indeed "heroically," said Riis. Meanwhile in other classrooms, he reported, Jewish children received "in simultaneous doses" their first lessons in English and in patriotism, noting with approval that "the two are inseparable in the beneficent plan of their instructors." The children "learned to speak the strange new tongue and to love the pretty flag with the stars that is everywhere in sight." The classrooms were also hung with portraits of Washington, Lincoln, and other notable Americans. Riis (a Jew himself) extravagantly praised the Jewish children for their aptitude and willingness to learn, which he contrasted unfavorably with the demeanor of

children in other ethnic neighborhoods, where, he said, "the question of who is boss has always to be settled before the business of the school can proceed."[4]

Attendance at the Hirsch classes increased until 1897, with an average daily attendance of 1,000 children and adults, decreasing thereafter to about 640 in 1899. By the end of the century, more than 5,500 children had been admitted to the public schools directly from these classes; since 1890 almost 8,000 students of all ages had been registered. The English classes were taken over by the New York City Board of Education in 1904—the same year that saw the passage of a compulsory education law. From that time, English was taught at the Alliance only in the summer, when the public schools were closed.

By 1893, dissatisfaction among the partners in the Hebrew Institute over the sharing arrangement and the lack of a central program and directorate caused various directors, Jacob Schiff in particular, to move for reorganization. The YMHA, due to financial difficulties, withdrew from the partnership and in 1900, after occupying a series of rented spaces, took up permanent residence on Lexington Avenue and 92nd Street in a building donated by Schiff.

Delegates from the remaining two agencies elected additional directors: Morris Loeb, Louis Stern, Marcus M. Marks, M. Warley Platzek, Jacob Schiff, Edwin R. A. Seligman, Isidor Straus, and Levi Samuels. On June 1, 1893, they elected Isidor Straus as president, Samuel Greenbaum and Myer Isaacs as first and second

vice-presidents, F. Spiegelberg as secretary, and Albert Friedlander as treasurer. Dropping the name Hebrew Institute—which they considered too parochial—the board adopted the Educational Alliance as the new name of the organization, which they proclaimed a nonsectarian citizenship and character-building agency devoted to the making of new Americans. An outstanding debt burden of $165,000 was partly paid off by an 1895 benefit fair, which raised $100,000, and was finally discharged through the generosity of Baroness Clara de Hirsch, who donated $100,000 in 1897.

In May 1899 the Hebrew Free School Association turned its assets over to the Educational Alliance. In that same year the Baron de Hirsch Fund formally transferred its educational trust to the direction of the Alliance, which was gratefully acknowledged in the agency's annual report of 1900 as "an evidence of confidence in our ability properly to safeguard it."[5] Columbia professor Edwin Seligman became chairman of the Alliance's Committee on Education, and applications for admission increased considerably.

Also in 1899 the Aguilar Free Library, which had outgrown its space in the Alliance building (its collection had increased from 8,000 to 24,000 books), began to seek alternative quarters. It had already sold its equity in the Alliance in 1892. In 1903 it was taken over by the New York Public Library, and this well-worn collection became the core of one of the library's most successful branches, the Seward Park division, later built directly opposite the Educational Alliance building on East Broadway.

By the turn of the century all the original partners had either

withdrawn or merged to form a single entity. The Educational Alliance henceforth assumed all the programs and activities of these agencies. The Alliance offered, in the words of its trustees, "an example to the public that in the eyes of these prudent and circumspect men the concentration of philanthropic activity is the guard against duplication and waste of funds, which is unavoidable when several associations endeavor to cover the same field."

EARLY PROGRAMS

From its inception the Educational Alliance offered the immigrant an amazing array of activities, organized under the headings Educational, Social, Physical, and Moral. In the annual report of 1893, Secretary Albert F. Hochstadter broadly defined the "essential parts of rational education" as including "fresh air, good food, manual training, the cultivation of the art instincts, physical exercise, abundant recreation and wholesome home relations." These words, and the division of activities into the four above-named branches, expressed the aim of the Alliance to promote an educational program that would answer the needs of the whole human being. From 9 A.M. to 10 P.M. the Alliance was crowded with thousands of people, the noise of their activities sometimes drowning out the raucous riot of the street.

The educational programs were the Alliance's foremost activities and were by far the best attended. The "chief aim" of these

programs, according to the Alliance's 1895 Souvenir Fair Book, was "Americanization": "the spread of distinctively American ideas on government, polity and civil life" among the Downtown population. Immigrant children who had lived in the United States less than six months received English language instruction during the day in preparation for admission to the public schools.* Evening language classes were offered for adults (along with daytime sessions for those who worked at night), and there were general courses in American history and civics, English literature, applied science, biology, and music. Commercial classes for women included sewing, stenography, cooking, dressmaking, and millinery. Lectures were given almost every night of the week: Sundays (in German) "on practical, philosophical, moral and literary topics," Mondays and Thursdays in English "as arranged by the Board of Education"†

*The Compulsory Education Law of 1904 and the adoption of new child labor laws, providing that no child under fourteen be permitted to work unless he or she had achieved a minimum set educational level, caused a revision in the Alliance program. Preference for admission was now given to children aged twelve to sixteen, and the curriculum was modified according to the new proficiency standards. Usually after two terms of instruction, with children being promoted from grade to grade within the Hirsch system, they were able both to enter the public schools and to secure working papers.

†Adult education had just begun to attract serious efforts in this period. In 1889, the Board of Education instituted a free lecture system intended to complement the free evening schools, and in 1897 more than 400,000 people attended more than 1,000 public lectures in the public schools, at Cooper Union and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The program, founded and directed by Henry M. Leipziger of the YMHA—also an Alliance director—included such

on social questions, and Wednesdays "on practical civics," with an average nightly attendance of seven hundred. Smaller afternoon talks on civics and citizenship topics were given to audiences of twenty to two hundred.

The Alliance also housed and, in 1899, took over both the thriving kindergartens and the Hebrew and religion classes of the Hebrew Free School Association. Religious education—considered at first to be "beyond the scope" of the Alliance—was conducted in the Reform Jewish mode. Isidor Straus had plainly stated in the first annual report that although its clientele was mainly Jewish, the Educational Alliance conceived of itself as a nonsectarian agency, open to all regardless of race or religious creed. But after the merger with the Hebrew Free School Association and in response to growing neighborhood demand, religious instruction was adopted as part of the regular program. After the turn of the century the prevailing Reform service was modified in the direction of Orthodoxy by Conservative rabbis trained at the reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary. Two-hour classes were offered, twice on Sunday and on weekday afternoons Monday through Thursday, with an annual registration of 2,200 pupils.

speakers as Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and William H. Harper, president of the University of Chicago. The lectures at the Educational Alliance in that year were almost all concerned with social problems: Professor John B. Clark, Samuel Gompers, Mrs. Josephine S. Lowell and Dr. Isaac A. Hourwich spoke on strikes, arbitration, trade unions, labor and politics, tenement conditions, and cooperation versus competition.

Over the years the proportion of girls to boys in these classes remained roughly two to one. The smaller number of boys reflected the preference of most immigrant parents that their sons receive a more traditional religious education in the *heder*. But the larger proportion of girls also reflected a conscious effort on the part of the Alliance to overcome the Old World prejudice against the education of women.

Other programs under the "educational" heading were the collections and reading rooms of the Aguilar Free Library. The Baron de Hirsch Fund, established in 1891, was reorganized in 1894 by the Aguilar Society. The Fund's subcommittee on education (including Manuel Kursheedt, Samuel Greenbaum, and Herman Rosenthal) had in 1890 declared the need for such a facility, "well supplied with at least 2,000 volumes in Hebrew and Russian, of a character calculated to broaden the minds of the readers and give them solid instruction, and located in a hall furnished so as to give them some idea of order and neatness."[6] The library—modeled on that of the People's Palace in London, a highly popular settlement house—was to be staffed by qualified persons who should not only advise readers on what to select but also, by their virtuous demeanor, "exercise a refining influence"[7] on them.

The recollections of library patrons provide an interesting counterpoint to these uplifting sentiments. Maurice Hindus describes in a memoir his discouraging encounter with the Alliance librarian, "a slender, grey-haired lady with tight lips" who in pursuance of her civilizing mandate instructed the immigrant boy to sit up

properly while reading. Hindus writes that he obeyed but soon forgot himself again. "In an instant she was back at my side. 'I told you to sit up straight.'" This time he ignored her, and she repeated her order several times in a loud voice that drew the attention of all in the room. "Incensed with her arbitrariness, I shoved the books off the table to the floor and dashed out of the room. Now I knew that the things I had heard about uptown people were true. Haughty and domineering, they didn't like the poor people downtown, and their attendant in a reading room wouldn't even permit a poor immigrant boy to sit in comfort."[8] Hindus never returned to the Alliance. This negative impression notwithstanding, an average daily reading room attendance of five hundred and circulation figures of over 140,000 for 1894 alone give a more accurate (if less colorful) idea of the importance of these facilities and their popularity among the Jews of the Lower East Side.

Social work, according to the 1895 Fair Book, comprised "those agencies calculated to develop the social instincts through various forms of innocent pleasure," including conversation, games, and reading, for which rooms were set aside at the Alliance. In these surroundings, "where the restraints only of good manners prevail," various social clubs developed under the general guidance of the Social Committee. A growing group of "circles" (as many as sixty by the century's end), each named for a patron author, statesman, scientist, or thinker, included the Franklin Club for Boys, the Halevy Singing Society, the George Eliot Circle for Girls, and

others devoted to Carlyle, Gladstone, and Tennyson. A corps of Alliance Cadets practiced military drill. Music classes met regularly in the crowded building: "the melodic din of rehearsing trios, quartets, orchestras, choral groups, and a children's symphony echoed through its halls,"[9] writes historian Moses Rischin. Though drawing classes attracted few students (the informal art program, organized under Henry C. McBride, was later replaced by the far more professional Art School under Abbo Ostrowsky), an art exhibit co-sponsored by the Alliance and the University Settlement in 1895 attracted an astonishing turnout of more than 100,000 in one month. Saturday evening concerts cost ten cents and Tuesday concerts cost five cents, with average attendances of 800 and 650, respectively.

Dramatic entertainments staged in the Alliance auditorium included *As You Like It* and *The Tempest*, the first English plays ever performed in the Jewish quarter, as well as traditional Purim and Hanukah plays. A Children's Educational Theater was founded in 1903 by Alliance trustee Alice Minnie Herts and became, like many other Alliance programs, a widely imitated model. Miss Herts was a committed educator with a well-developed pedagogical theory. To her, the Children's Theater was a civilizing instrument that could help build moral character by harnessing innate dramatic instincts. Involvement in theatrical productions developed social skills and cooperation in children (especially "resourcefulness, good taste, and discrimination") and "cut a safe channel" for an otherwise "undirected stream of energy."

Herts' method allowed the children to make decisions by consensus. It was really their production. Each play had four or five casts and everyone took turns at playing the lead parts, alternating with backstage or production roles. Children's Theater professional Winifred Ward observed,

> A definite educational policy governed the productions of this theatre. Standards in plays, staging, and acting were kept high. Children were encouraged to work out their interpretations of the characters they played. In the case of *The Tempest*, neighborhood families who had never read a page of Shakespeare in their lives were inspired by the enthusiasm of their children to acquaint themselves with the play before they came to see it. Sometimes a lecturer explained the plays in the language spoken by the parents and the children. . . . So valuable an institution was this educational theatre that it is a pity it existed only six years.[10]

Results to satisfy Miss Herts were soon forthcoming. At a 1905 performance of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (the play in which young Eddie Cantor had his stage debut), she reports,

> The roughest, most obstreperous boys sat absorbed in breathless interest through the tender scenes between mother and son, and we received constant applications from probation officers for tickets to this play. They told us that a boy would report steadily for six weeks encouraged by the promise of a seat for "Fauntleroy."[11]

The interest of these rough, unruly boys was proof to Miss Herts that the "stimulation of dramatic instinct toward purposeful play" could be "used as a preventive of crime." The finest hour of the Children's Theater, however, was the involvement of Mark Twain with a stage production of his novel *The Prince and the Pauper*. Twain's first contact with the program came in 1908 when Miss Herts, at the suggestion of her students, invited him "to come and see what had been done to make his story live." Twain "responded at once" and came with several friends to the first matinee performance. His interest was "immediate and unbounded," and he agreed to help arrange a special evening performance for what she called "an exceptionally sophisticated audience" of distinguished guests who came at his personal invitation. Unfortunately, the theater program was discontinued soon after, due to a protracted illness of Miss Herts. Her own account, intelligent and well written, appears in her book, *The Children's Educational Theater*.

Mark Twain was deeply interested in the settlement work being done on the Lower East Side. He appeared several times at the Alliance—once on stage with Yiddish author Sholom Aleichem (in 1906)—and had previously spoken at the University Settlement.* In 1907, Twain praised the work of the Children's Theater in an interview with the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*:

*Twain's entertaining remarks at the University Settlement in 1901 are reprinted in a recent publication of the settlement, *Legacy of Light*, celebrating its centennial.

> And now it seems that we Americans may learn how to speak the English language from the East Side, nearly all of whose citizens came to this country unable to speak the tongue of which they so soon become master. This fine enunciation of many of the young people of the East Side is due to the work of the Educational Alliance, and a great part of it is brought about by the training received at the Children's Theater, under the auspices of that organization. The work of this institution is one of the most remarkable educational developments in the country. Its influence has already spread throughout the Lower East Side. I believe it will spread to all parts of the country and be universally adopted as an educational factor. . . .

Twain went on to praise the Educational Alliance in generous and eloquent terms:

> Now, then, is there a new cult forming on the East Side? Are we to learn what true citizenship means and what true patriotism means from this new cult? Is the beginning here to extend universally? For fourteen years Isidor Straus, the president of the Educational Alliance, has devoted himself to educating these future citizens. The Educational Alliance greets them at the steamship landing and from that time onward never loses track of them. Their morals are watched; they are educated in the practical things of life—the things that make for this very citizenship which we, as a nation, have lost. We have good reason to emulate these people of the East Side.

Especially popular among the Downtown population was the

Alliance's Roof Garden, opened in 1896. On hot summer nights, the crowded tenements—malodorous, infested, often waterless—became unbearable. Some tenants put their bedding on the fire escapes,* and whole families slept on the grassy meridian of Delancey Street, bringing their mattresses with them. The rooftops were often crowded with people seeking a breath of fresh air. Open every day from 8 A.M. till 10 or 11 P.M., the roof of the Alliance was heavily patronized by immigrant families seeking relief from the heat, noise, and squalor of the slum. Potted palm trees, wooden benches, a refreshment stand and milk bar were provided (courtesy of Nathan Straus), and a brass band played popular tunes in the evening. A policeman kept order while women knitted, children played, and men relaxed or stood talking and smoking in groups (smoking was permitted at all times other than Friday night, when Orthodox patrons would be offended by the lighting of a match on Sabbath eve). Later, a branch of the circulating library was added and there were stereopticon lectures on American history and geography. Children were examined by a trained nurse, and kindergarten classes were conducted in the

*The tenement fire escape is a well-documented feature of life on the Lower East Side. Henry James, in describing his tour of the neighborhood in *The American Scene*, extended his persistent and uncomplimentary theme of likening the immigrants to swarming animals when he noted that "the iron ladders and platforms" of the fire escapes resembled most of all "the spaciously organized cage for the nimbler class of animals in some great zoological garden . . . [which] seems to offer, in each district, a little world of bars and perches and swings for human squirrels and monkeys."

mornings. Attendance at the Roof Garden was estimated by Jacob Riis in 1902 at 5,000 a day—more than 344,000 over the course of a summer season—and by Headworker David Blaustein at 10,000 a day in 1903.

Physical culture, a relatively new area of concern, was not neglected by the Alliance. In the age of sportsman Teddy Roosevelt, outdoor life and physical exercise were thought to be an important aspect of moral education. According to historian T. J. Jackson Lears, this new "therapeutic" ethos was a sublimination of the Protestant idea of salvation, combined with progressive faith in moral progress through physical improvement.[12] A fitness movement swept the nation, and Americans were urged to lead a more healthy and strenuous life. It was a question not only of individual vitality, but of social well-being. This movement was the source of many settlement programs, as well as legislation such as the Tenement House Act (1901) and the Pure Food and Drug Act (1906).[13]

The Alliance gymnasium was the largest and best equipped in that part of the city. Separate evening classes for men and women, and afternoon classes for boys and girls (on alternating weekdays), saw a more than respectable turnout for sports and exercise. Adjoining these facilities were baths and hot showers, well patronized by the neighborhood residents. The program was not confined to physical exercise. It also included outdoor and country excursions (up the Hudson River to West Point) and lectures on physiology and hygiene. As if to demonstrate their peculiar

sensitivity to the low status and questionable reputation of immigrant Jews in America, the directors stated that this program was partly intended to overcome the "lack of physical courage and repugnance to physical work" with which their Downtown coreligionists were "often charged.... Let a young man develop his body, and he will neither shrink from imaginary danger nor shirk manual work which falls to his lot."

Although the ascription of a nonathletic character to Russian and Polish Jews has been sharply criticized,* it deserves to be noted that reasonable—or at any rate inventive—explanations of this theory were current at the turn of the century. Alliance Headworker David Blaustein, writing in 1903, advanced the interesting view that "in Europe... the necessity of military service created a philosophy of unfitness as a means of escape." As subjects of an absolutist and militarist regime, he said, the Russian Jews had

*Notably by Cary Goodman in "(Re)Creating Americans at the Educational Alliance," *Journal of Ethnic Studies 6* (Winter 1979). In answer to Goodman, one might point to the prevalence of this charge against Jews at the turn of the century by representatives of the (non-Jewish) intellectual establishment. Among the most vocal opponents of unrestricted immigration was noted University of Wisconsin sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross, who worried that the Jewish infusion would transform Americans, physically and morally, rather than the other way around. Ross wrote: "On the physical side the Hebrews are the polar opposite of our pioneer breed. Not only are they undersized and weak-muscled, but they shun bodily activity and are exceedingly sensitive to pain." Ross quoted an unnamed settlement worker in support of these assertions, who stated: "You can't make boy scouts out of the Jews. There's not a troop of them in all New York." Another said: "They are absolute babies about pain. These young fellows will scream with a hard lick." E. A. Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People* (New York: 1914), pp. 289-90.

"systematically neglected" physical culture, concentrating instead on the development of intellect and piety. In America, however, where (according to Blaustein) "survival of the fittest" is the rule, physical strength was also needed.[14]

Also under the heading of physical culture was the Alliance's camping program. From a modest beginning at the turn of the century, the camps expanded dramatically to become one of the organization's most extensive and popular programs. Early camps at East Neck, Long Island, and a Pelham Bay weekend camp were organized for boys. The camps emphasized sports and military drill. In 1900, Surprise Lake Camp for Boys—then called simply the Alliance Camp—was founded when land for the purpose was located by Ferdinand Kuhn, James Frank (later an Alliance president), and Bernard M. L. Ernst. The 200-acre campsite was purchased for $2,000 by trustee Isaac Guggenheim after an enthusiastic report from Kuhn, Frank, and Ernst, who had visited the site. Ernst became the camp's first director, and he reported extensively to the board about the difficulty of managing a camp full of rebellious East Side boys. The original camp was a row of six tents; in 1907 the tents were replaced by a single long bunkhouse, and electricity was installed, among other improvements. The fee at this time was three dollars per week, including train fare. Succeeding Ernst were Morris Berk and (in 1909) Dr. R. W. Krackoweiser, director of boys' clubs at the Alliance. Two years later the camp was again expanded to accommodate boys over sixteen. In 1914 the presidents of the Alliance and the YMHA

formed a joint camp committee and opened the facility—afterwards known as the Joint Alliance-YMHA camp—to boys throughout New York. And in 1915 Edalia, a vacation home for young girls, opened in Rumson, New Jersey.

The Alliance's Moral Work program consisted mainly of a series of talks and classes on the duties of life, often derived from religious teachings. Young men were addressed on such topics as "The Marriage Question: Its Physical and Moral Sides," and young women were instructed in matters of hygiene. But the whole Alliance program was intended to exert a moral influence. According to the 1895 Fair Book, the institution was meant to be "a center of sweetness and light" on the Lower East Side: "The unfolding of character, the setting-up of higher aims and nobler aspirations, must be the ultimate goal of its work."

THE BREADWINNERS' COLLEGE

Among the many non-Jewish social and educational workers who devoted time and effort to the Lower East Side were two teachers of particular importance, Edward King and Thomas Davidson. King had been an English Chartist and a disciple of Auguste Comte—the French positivist philosopher who was a founder of modern social science. An exponent of socialist ideas, King in 1897 formed the Comte Synthetic Circle, which attracted some of the brightest young Jews of the neighborhood, both men and women.

Isaac Spectorsky was interested in this Circle and proposed to the members of the Young Men's Literary Society, which met at the Alliance, that they join King's group. Among them was one who would become a strong intellectual force not only at the Alliance but later on at City College—philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen.

Thomas Davidson, the Scottish savant and "wandering scholar," was described by all who knew him as a brilliant man of great personal warmth, possessing a far-ranging curiosity and a passionate love of teaching. William James, in a memorial essay, called him a "knight errant of the intellectual life." Davidson's enthusiasm, his idealism, and his freewheeling pedagogical style attracted a devoted corps of students. Like Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, Davidson linked education to citizenship, and like them he was a vigorous advocate of free public schooling. In England, Davidson was influential in establishing the Fellowship of the New Life and its activist offshoot, the Fabian Society. In America he met and corresponded with Felix Adler, William James, John Dewey, and Havelock Ellis, among others.

Of the Alliance's many programs, perhaps the most unusual and justly famous was its Breadwinners' College, begun by Davidson in 1898. This pioneering effort in adult education came about almost spontaneously, but was long associated with and supported by the Alliance. It was continued after Davidson's death in 1900 by Morris Raphael Cohen, who had been his friend and student.

Davidson's impact on the young Jewish students who gathered

around him at the Educational Alliance is hard to overestimate. Cohen credits Davidson with changing the direction of his life. Historian Gaynell Hawkins writes that Davidson was

> the most potent and lasting single educational influence that I have found in the whole history of neighborhood houses. By the power and passion of his knowledge he developed intellectual interests and strengths in his students, and those I have met still spiritually cross themselves when his name is mentioned.[15]

Davidson first appeared at the Alliance in December 1898, where he gave four lectures under the auspices of the People's Institute at Cooper Union.* He spoke on the topic, "The Problems Which the Nineteenth Century Hands Over for Solution to the Twentieth." He had been warned that East Siders could be lively and challenging—"a very critical audience made up largely of socialists of the Marxian type, anarchists, single taxists, who ... would subject me to a rigorous examination, and try to draw me into a dispute."[16] This is exactly what did happen.

In Davidson's third lecture, on modern education, he argued that ignorance was the root of all social evils, and that public education was the key to reform. "The higher education of the breadwinners is ... absolutely necessary not only for the well-

*The same program had also presented such distinguished speakers as Samuel Gompers, Sidney Webb, Father Edward McGlynn ("the People's Priest"), and Dr. R. Heber Newton.

being of the breadwinners themselves, but for the safety of our whole nation and its democratic institutions." He stated idealistically that "money and talent enough" existed in New York to give a higher education "to all the people, if they would but demand it." A young audience member spoke up:

> It is all very well to talk about education for the breadwinners; but how can people like us who work nine or ten, and sometimes more, hours a day, who come home tired, who have no conveniences there for study, few books, and no one to guide or instruct us, obtain any liberal education?[17]

Davidson, with characteristic buoyancy, volunteered on the spot to teach a class one evening a week if enough people were interested. The response was overwhelming. Young people crowded the lectern. David Blaustein, the recently appointed superintendent of the Alliance, who was present at the lecture, immediately offered the use of a room, and the Thomas Davidson Club thereafter met every Saturday evening for the inspired Socratic sessions that Davidson informally called "A Class in History and Sociology."

Morris Raphael Cohen was also present at this lecture. Then a City College undergraduate and an ardent socialist, he had heard that Davidson was advancing an individualist and ethical response to social problems. Cohen was convinced that only radical reform in social and economic structures could effect an improvement in the lot of mankind. The young man, "confident of the failure of the individualistic philosophy from the days of Martin Luther to

those of Herbert Spencer . . . thought it would be a good idea to go to heckle the professor."[18] Davidson surprised him with an unexpectedly friendly response to his heckling, and Cohen later went along—still theoretically hostile—to some of the Saturday evening classes. There Davidson took a warm and very flattering personal interest in him. As Cohen tells the story,

> After one of the meetings, Davidson came over to me and said, putting his hand in a friendly way on my shoulder, "You have a fine mind. You ought to cultivate it." I was startled. It was years since anyone had paid me such a compliment. I asked, "What makes you think so?" And he said, "I am an old schoolmaster and I have never met anyone whose eyes are as far apart as yours who did not have a good mind."[19]

Cohen continued to attend these classes and he and Davidson pursued many philosophical subjects in private conversation. In the summer of 1899, Cohen was invited to visit Davidson's home at Glenmore in the Adirondacks, where the educator maintained a Summer School of the Culture Sciences. Many distinguished American scholars came to lecture at this school. During that summer Cohen studied Kant and Hume under Davidson's tutelage, and their relationship "became like that of an affectionate father and son."[20] At one point Davidson even proposed to Cohen's father that he adopt the young man legally (as he had done with at least one other favorite student) and send him to Germany for a doctorate in philosophy.

David Blaustein also spent a week at Glenmore, and together he, Davidson, and Cohen planned the expansion of Davidson's class into an evening school for men and women interested in pursuing cultural studies. Davidson continued his Saturday class with an attendance of about 150, David Muzzey taught a small section in Greek language and literature, and Cohen, still an undergraduate, gave a course of thirty lectures on the history of civilization. Blaustein started a course on the evolution of religion, but found his duties as superintendent too pressing to allow him to continue. A number of students were preparing for college, and at their request Cohen organized a special class in elementary mathematics, which was later divided into two sections. A course in philosophy for City College undergraduates was added at the request of some of Cohen's friends, concentrating on the pre-Socratics and the Platonic dialogues. The classes were held at the Alliance Extension located on East 5th Street, where daytime children's classes were conducted, and which came to be known simply as "Branch B" of the Alliance.

Toward the end of 1899, Davidson's health began to deteriorate. He underwent three cancer operations in a five-month period and died in September 1900. He was buried at Glenmore, and his Adirondack neighbor Felix Adler delivered the funeral oration. Speaking at a memorial service at the Alliance a few weeks later, Cohen recalled his teacher's ideal of a Breadwinners' College and expressed his determination to continue this important work. He exhorted his fellow students to help found an institution "which

will teach men and women to become public-spirited, generously cultured, pure and high-minded, an institution which will help more than anything else to banish ignorance and moral poverty."[21]

Cohen and his colleagues formed the Thomas Davidson Society and devoted themselves to establishing a comprehensive course of free instruction for adults at the Alliance. Elementary education was not offered during the normal school year, but during the months when public schools were closed, high school and college-preparatory classes were offered in English grammar, composition, United States history, geography, and arithmetic. Later this department was organized into a regular evening high school that provided a "culture course" emphasizing history, literature, civics, and economics, with subfields in science, mathematics, and language training. The program's aim, said Cohen, was "to make the pupil broadminded, willing and able to take an intelligent and active interest in the various important questions of life."[22]

But elementary and secondary instruction was only incidental to the main work of the Breadwinners' College, which consisted of a series of classes in philosophy, cultural history, literature, and social science. Among the many eminent scholars who lectured were Charles M. Bakewell, Josiah Royce, and William T. Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education. A course in the origins of modern thought began with "a year's study of the Hebrew prophets in relation to the contemporary scene,"[23] followed by a second year of Greek philosophy and culture, and afterward the Roman and medieval elements in modern civilization. Great poems were

studied from the sociological or ethical point of view. Percival Chubb, associate leader of the Ethical Culture Society, came on alternate Saturdays to read Tennyson's *In Memoriam* with the class. Rabbis Kaufman Kohler (president of Hebrew Union College and editor of the first Jewish Encyclopedia) and Joseph Schulman also participated in the class on biblical culture and gave a favorable report of the school to the Alliance directors.

The Davidsonian approach to education proved remarkably successful—"beyond even the most optimistic expectations," as the directors stated in the annual report for 1903. In that year, a total of 1,395 young people were registered at Branch B. In 1904, the elementary school offered ten courses and the high-school division thirteen. The "Davidsonians" who taught in the college also held daytime jobs, and some (like Cohen, who earned $500 a year as principal) were doing graduate work. Some also managed to do "neighborhood work," visiting the tenements as unofficial social workers for the United Hebrew Charities; they tried to interest underprivileged Jews in higher education and sometimes helped them find employment.*

The Breadwinners' College was a model of adult education and directly inspired the evening session at City College, adopted in 1909, the first such program leading to a bachelor's degree. Branch B continued to function successfully until 1917, when New

*One student of the college took his first English lessons at Branch B, and not long afterward had his plays produced at the Educational Alliance. Playwright Samuel Schiffman would later be known to Broadway audiences as Sam Shipman.

York City established an adult education program. This was another instance of a pioneering program developed by the Alliance and institutionalized by an outside agency. As early as 1902, notes historian Sherry Gorelick, the New York City school superintendent praised the Alliance "for exerting a significant influence in the public adoption of programs such as vocational training, recreation centers, kindergartens and adult immigrant education."[24] The Children's Theater and the Alliance camping programs are other examples from this period.

HEADWORKERS

In the days before the professionalization of social work, the lines of authority between the Alliance's staff and its directors were often vaguely drawn. The board itself was far from passive. As individuals, the trustees were strongly committed to the institution and deeply involved in its work; and as the major financial contributors they naturally guided its policy with a firm hand, sometimes to the detriment of the Alliance's effectiveness, and frequently (especially in the early years) causing friction with the staff.

Nor did the board members by any means always agree among themselves on an approach to social programs. The Alliance, however, has been favored from its origin with extremely energetic and devoted headworkers (as executive directors were then called),

and each of them seems to have made a strong impression on the agency during his tenure. Over time, and especially with the rising level of professionalism in social work, the respective roles of board and staff have become more clearly defined, with a concomitant growth in mutual confidence and overall efficiency.

The Alliance's job description for an agency headworker (in the 1895 Fair Book) called for a man "who shall give his entire time and study to the problems that present themselves, and to the practical execution of the many details which hourly appear. . . . Only an earnest, cultured gentleman, imbued with the spirit of the work and possessed of executive ability, is worthy to hold such an office."

The first man appointed was Isaac Spectorsky (headworker from 1893 to 1898), a Russian-born Jew who came to be widely respected on the Lower East Side. Spectorsky spoke Yiddish and was open-minded toward the strong currents of radicalism prevalent among the new immigrants. Isaac M. Rubinow, a highly educated, left-wing Russian immigrant and an acute observer of Jewish life in New York,* described Spectorsky in 1903 as "a young man of Russian extraction who was in full sympathy with the aspirations of the Russian Jew. He was popular in the ghetto, and among the intelligentsia he was progressive enough to speak calmly and without pathos about philanthropy and, therefore, was able to

*Rubinow emigrated from Poland at age eighteen. A physician, economist, and social worker, he was also a leader in the American social insurance movement and is known as "the father of Social Security."

smoothen some of the rough spots and to maintain peace and tranquillity in this institution."[25]

It may seem surprising that the directors appointed a Russian headworker "in full sympathy" with the immigrant Jew; as it turned out, Spectorsky did not succeed very well at mediating between the directors and their Downtown clientele. He was removed in 1898, in part for his policy of allowing radical groups to meet in the building. He later became the head of the Council Educational Alliance in Cleveland, which reached the height of its popularity under his management.

Spectorsky's departure was a shock to some East Siders. The Alliance had quickly become the real educational and social center of the neighborhood, and its policies and actions were naturally matters of interest to the leaders of the immigrant community. Boris Bogen, an immigrant who became an influential social worker, noted that the change seemed "sudden and uncalled for" and aroused considerable criticism.[26]

Spectorsky was replaced by an ordained rabbi, David Blaustein, also Russian-born, a popular and energetic leader with progressive (though not radical) ideas. Blaustein had gone to Harvard, where he favorably impressed classmate Jesse Straus (Isidor's eldest son). Because Blaustein had financial problems, the young Straus organized a loan for him which, when repaid, was to become a revolving scholarship fund. After his graduation from Harvard in 1893, Blaustein served as rabbi of a synagogue in Providence, Rhode Island, and in 1898 he was recruited by his informal patron Isidor

Straus as superintendent (as the office was alternatively known) of the Educational Alliance.

Loyalty to Spectorsky created a strong initial resistance among East Siders to Blaustein's appointment. There was even some determination to block the progress of this newcomer, who, it was thought, had been brought in "to undo, rather than to develop, all the previous efforts of the Alliance and change the policy of an institution with which the Ghetto had so much concern,"[27] reported Boris Bogen. But Blaustein quickly overcame this resistance by making himself a highly visible participant in many East Side movements and organizations. Bogen observed,

> [Blaustein's] idea of utilizing the existing movements and tendencies in shaping the policies of an educational institution was original and unique. Blaustein did not fall into a routine, so common among social workers; he did not copy blindly the methods of similar institutions; he did not imitate the non-Jewish agencies, but, on the contrary, endeavored to study the existing needs and tried to adjust the activities of the Alliance to the actual demands that were pressing.[28]

Although more experienced as a rabbi than as a social worker, Blaustein pioneered the use of now-standard techniques. One of his first acts as headworker was to make a detailed survey of the neighborhood, and he later conducted a census of immigrant families as a means of determining the scope and extent of their actual needs. Bogen notes, "Since then this has become a popular

method, but with him it was new, and, in fact, never received due consideration by his supporters."[29] In 1905 he formed and became the first president of the Society of Jewish Social Workers of Greater New York. Blaustein also served as president of the National Jewish Social Workers' Association and was active in local and national Zionist organizations.

Blaustein, like Isaac Spectorsky, spoke Yiddish and took a strong interest in both the religious and the secular culture of the immigrants. He plainly understood their need to retain these modes of feeling and expression in America, and he went a long way toward improving relations between the Uptown benefactors and their clients. Blaustein hoped to make the Alliance a kind of anvil on which to hammer out the differences between Uptown and Downtown Jews, forging a unified community out of these disparate elements. According to Bogen,

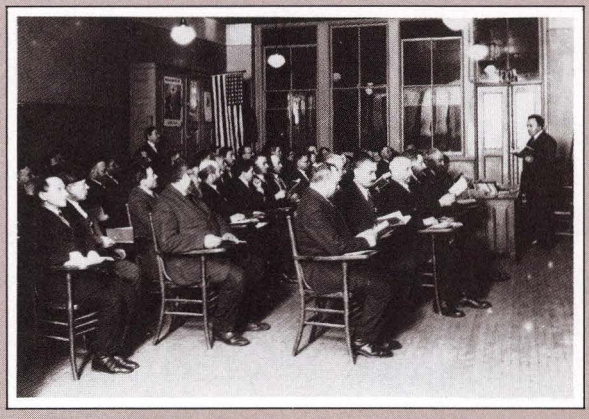
> [he] proposed to make the Alliance the melting pot of ideals—he wanted the orthodox to come nearer to the reformers, the socialists to come in contact with the zionists, the radicals to mingle with the conservatives. . . . He did not claim that Americanization or Zionism was the only remedy, he did not make the Alliance stand for one or the other specific tendency, but tried to introduce educational and social features that would exert a wholesome influence and, in their sum, reach every possible group of the entire East Side.[30]

Blaustein's ambition was a noble one. But in the end it proved

impossible to find a middle way between the competing demands of all parties, and finally in 1907 he too would be dismissed amid disputes with the board over institutional policy.* Nevertheless, Blaustein's contribution to the Alliance was of lasting importance. Irving Howe calls him "one of the first to reflect seriously upon the problems of Jewish social service . . . [and] one of the first public figures on the East Side to move past the fixed rhetoric of Jewish ideology and . . . confront the particulars of immigrant experience."[31] After leaving the Alliance he became for two years the superintendent of Chicago's Hebrew Institute, where he had considerable difficulty with radical elements in the Jewish community. Thereafter he lectured widely—at Harvard and Amherst among other places—on the goals and methods of social work. Blaustein died suddenly in 1912 at the age of forty-six, and memorial services were held for him all over the country.

*Miriam Blaustein, editor of her husband's *Memoirs*, questioned the board's actions when she wrote: "Those who contribute to the financial support of philanthropic and charitable institutions deem it within their province to shape the policies and outline the scope of work of their respective institutions. This may be their prerogative, we admit, but . . . it is not to be expected that a 'layman' has given the time or forethought to social problems of the day, such as the trained worker has been able to do." If the boards are determined to be overbearing and "to administer affairs as they see fit—then why the necessity of having a trained worker in charge? Could not a clerk carry out the wishes of his board more punctiliously?" Blaustein resigned in 1908, she wrote, because "he could no longer stand the strain of contention against those who would have guided his actions." *Memoirs of David Blaustein*, p. 82.

Neighborhood Dialectics: Criticism and Response



Americanization in the Progressive Era

The massive influx of immigrants, swamping the German Jews as they had swamped the small Sephardic community, raised the question of whose culture would predominate. The Germans had become an integral part of American society, but it was now becoming clear that the Russian immigrants would soon displace them as the leaders of American Jewry. Would the Russian Jews become Amer-

icans, too, or would the whole American Jewish community be "Russified" instead? The Russian Jews showed little interest in adapting to American society. Already by the early 1890s practically the whole institutional structure of Jewish life in Eastern Europe had been transplanted to New York. The immigrants appeared to be creating a separate Jewish world Downtown, a ghetto like the ones that they had left behind in Europe.

Isaac Rubinow, comparing Jewish life in New York to that in Russia, declared that Jews did not experience direct or painful social ostracism in America for the simple reason that they did not look outside their own community for acceptance: "The term ghetto which made the European Jew blush when it was mentioned does not embarrass the Jew here, because the ghetto is a voluntary one."[1] But to the established New York Jews who lived Uptown such developments were ominous. These Jews of an earlier migration had come to terms in their own way with American society, and they believed that the establishment of Old World institutions and a fervent Yiddish culture with leftist inclinations would obstruct assimilation. It was better for the immigrants, they felt, to abandon foreign customs altogether and wholeheartedly embrace the American way of life.

The social gospel of Reform—its spirit embodied in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which had declared Jews to be "no longer a nation but a religious community"—had articulated an "ideological nexus" (as historian Naomi Cohen has called it) between Americanism and Judaism that the German Jews wished

to preserve. Even the most far-sighted among them—particularly Jacob Schiff, who saw a need to groom the immigrants for a share in communal leadership—assumed the nature of the task would be to remake them in the German Jews' own image. They believed that it was their responsibility to mediate the difficult transition to American society—to speed it up if possible—but above all to ensure that it was accomplished without rupturing the balance that they had achieved between the principles of Judaism and those of American citizenship. It did not at first occur to them that the Russian Jews might find their own way to be Americans, a way that would differ from theirs yet still represent an acceptable compromise from the viewpoint of American society.

Central to this process of adjustment was the public school—the great equalizer—where immigrant children of all nationalities learned the language and history of the new country. The importance of getting immigrant children into the American school system was recognized early, and the Baron de Hirsch Fund's English classes were conceived for the purpose of achieving this end as quickly as possible.

American social philosophy of the Progressive Era (as the period around the turn of the century is called) attached the highest importance to education and environment as determinants of character.* A range of then-respectable racialist and environmental

*Among other initiatives, kindergartens and a movement to establish public playgrounds were developed under the influence of Progressive pedagogical

theories—advanced by leading intellectuals like John W. Burgess, president of Columbia University—supported these assumptions. The extent of their diffusion is evident in many sources, among them a letter circulated in January 1895 by Isidor Straus, then President of the Educational Alliance, appealing to a number of potential supporters. In it he stated that it was a principal object of the Alliance's activities to prepare immigrant children for attendance in the public schools—where it was felt they would quickly absorb the new culture—and "to familiarize the young and old with the duties and privileges of American Citizenship."

> If you are not conversant with the conditions that surround these people, you can scarcely form a conception of the difficulty and importance of the task we have undertaken. It is not charitable work in the ordinary conception of the term, but rather philanthropic in its broadest sense.

Straus' sentiments here reflect the best impulses of Progressive philanthropy. What follows may be said to reflect what has appeared to some a darker aspect of that benevolent environmentalism. But Straus merely expressed a common sentiment among middle-class reformers of the Progressive Era when he added,

> Let me assure you, unless something is done to counteract the natural tendencies of these people, they, by reason of

theory. Both types of social program were promoted by the Educational Alliance from its inception.

> their numbers, will become a menace to our children, to an extent that to me is appalling to contemplate.

Circumstances formed the character of men, and they could not fairly be blamed for what society had made them. Once formed, however, human character could be most intransigent. Though not impervious to change, it seemed, the subject must be willing to cooperate. The question of the day, therefore, was what new set of ideals to uphold, and how to persuade the intended beneficiaries that the philanthropists had their best interests in mind.

The Alliance promoted a model of the American Jew that was based on its directors' own religious, social, and political ideas, many of which were adapted wholesale from the mainstream of American self-consciousness. It was a model many immigrants found difficult to swallow. "American" to Isidor Straus—as to Andrew Carnegie and Theodore Roosevelt—meant English-speaking, law-abiding, patriotic, "clean," hard-working, and disciplined, with religion remaining entirely a matter of personal choice—as long as one *was* religious in some formal sense. Their instruction in social philosophy took the form of an almost worshipful reverence for American institutions. But this overbearing patriotic emphasis arose at least partly in response to the fundamental attack on those institutions by Jewish radicals. The Alliance went out of its way to discourage all the "isms"—socialism, anarchism, Zionism, Bolshevism, unionism, Yiddishism—that either fomented internal divisions or encouraged Jewish separatism. In so doing, the trustees

of the Alliance were guided by the thought that what the immigrants desired was swift acceptance in American society—and many of them did. But many others preferred to remain as they were, seeking if anything to bring American society more into line with their own expectations.

Some East Siders were offended by the upper-class airs and "watered-down" religion of the German Jews, and by their evident disdain for Yiddish culture. Others, like *Daily Forward* editor Abraham Cahan, a Socialist firebrand, were incensed by the Americanization program itself; in one indignant editorial, Cahan mocked the Alliance for teaching Jewish children of the ghetto to observe the Thanksgiving holiday "in every detail, even up to the eating of turkeys which they have not got."

Patriotism and social etiquette were indeed the main educational fare for children at this time, and the papers often carried reports of class exercises at the Alliance in which children waved flags and recited the pledge of allegiance in groups of five hundred or more. The English writer H. G. Wells, one of many distinguished visitors to the Alliance, saw "a big class of bright-eyed Jewish children, boys and girls, each waving two little American flags to the measure of the song they sang." Wells called this display "the most touching thing I had seen in America," although he noted his belief that the patriotic feeling thus instilled was "no more than an emotional attitude toward the flag."

At this time, no ideology of cultural pluralism existed to trouble

the minds of American Jewish philanthropists. As Naomi Cohen has written, "Few Jews or gentiles crusaded for the preservation of ethnic mores; the retention of separate languages and habits, as President Roosevelt had asserted earlier, was unacceptable."[2] In line with this approach, Yiddish had been banned from the premises of the Alliance in the early years. Only English or German were to be spoken there.

The result was that the Alliance appealed mostly to the unaffiliated youth of the neighborhood. The Jewish elders tended to be Orthodox and Yiddish-speaking; the intellectuals tended to be either secular radicals or Zionists. The emphasis on patriotic exercises and "acceptable behavior," the weak religious impulse of Reform, and the initial ban on Yiddish therefore alienated a good portion of the Downtown population.

The Alliance's Americanization program has sometimes been criticized as blindly—even coercively—assimilationist. In reality the German Jews sought to inculcate a mixed sensibility, at once American and distinctively Jewish. Acting under the prevailing environmentalist assumptions of the Progressive Era, the German Jews sought to replace the old forms of Jewish life with new ones, forms that would create a new American Jewish "content" in the malleable raw material of the Lower East Side. The German Jewish philanthropists did not at first concern themselves with the possible *loss* of Jewish content that might follow this uprooting.

Jewish institutions of the period all express the tension between

these two poles of Jewish identity. All of them had to determine to what extent they ought to support the Jewish identities of the people they served—or whether that task should be left to the synagogues. From the beginning, then, the question that animated policy debate at the Alliance was whether the agency's function was to Americanize Jews (and if so, how) or to preserve their Jewishness. The initial view favored Americanization, but this approach proved less than adequate.

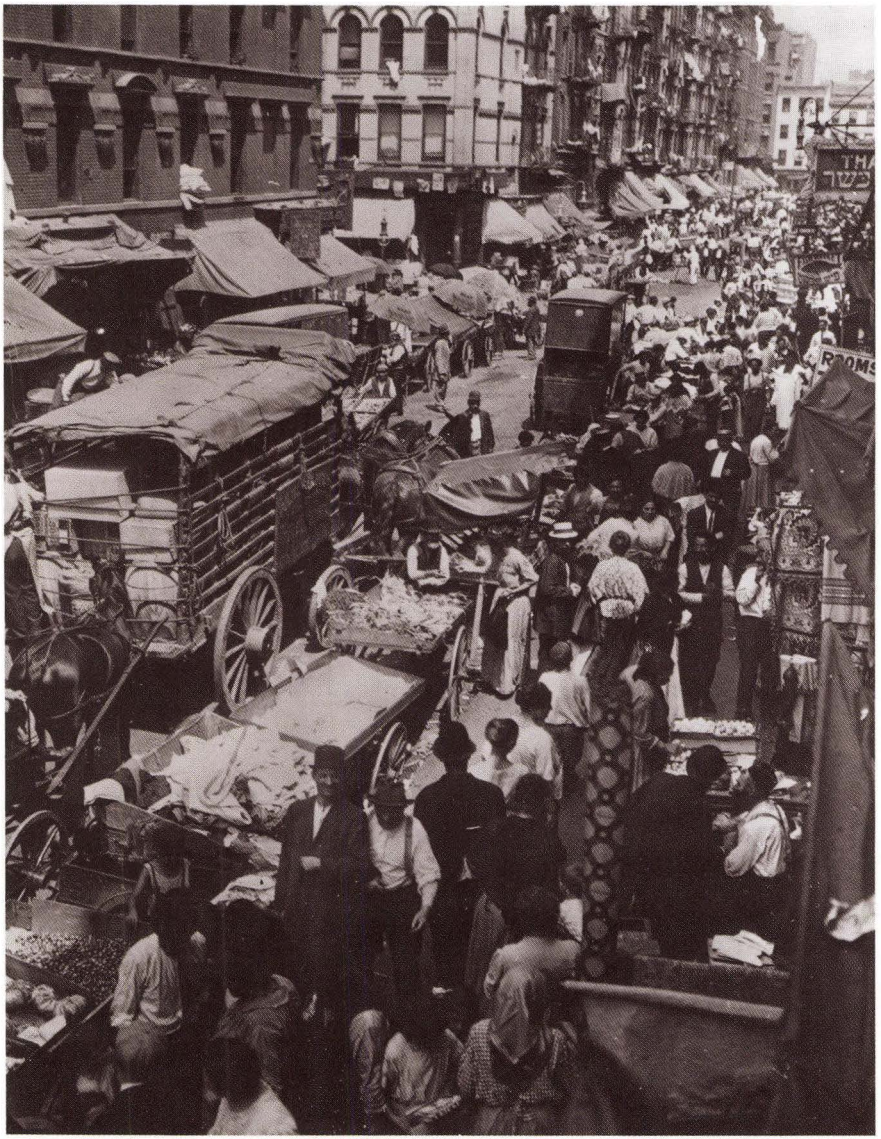
THE QUESTION OF CONTENT

Leading the attack on the Alliance and its Americanizing mission was the popular Yiddish playwright Jacob Gordin, a Russian intellectual who often used the theater to propagate his socialist ideas. In 1901 Gordin and other East Side leaders formed a new association called the Educational League, expressly constituted as an alternative to the Alliance—although interestingly enough David Blaustein praised this effort of immigrant Jews to establish an East Side educational institution of their own. The founders of the Educational League, writing to the *American Hebrew* in July 1900, expressed their disenchantment with both the public schools, which neglected adult education, and the Alliance, which was preoccupied with patriotism and etiquette. They objected to the fact that only five of forty-six higher Alliance staff members were Russian Jews, and they averred that it was better for the immigrants to help



During the second half of the nineteenth century, a flood of immigrants, primarily Jews from Eastern Europe, poured into New York, most of them settling on the Lower East Side.
(The Granger Collection.)

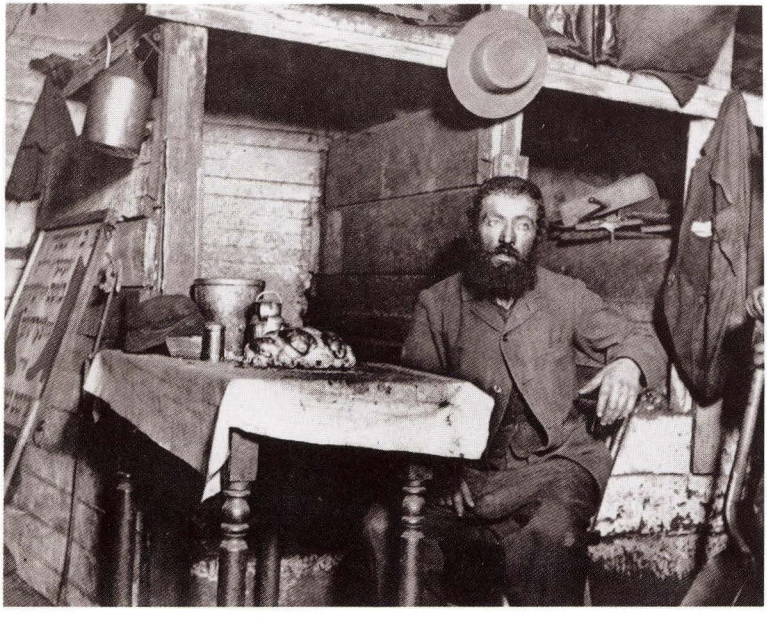




The streets downtown were crowded with pushcarts, garbage, and indigent children. Many of the new citizens earned a meager living as peddlers or in the sweatshops of the garment industry. (The Bettmann Archive.)



By the end of the century, the Lower East Side bulged with as many as seven hundred people per acre. Many lived in tenements without electricity, heat, or plumbing, and disease was rampant. (Photo by Lewis W. Hine, The Granger Collection.)



Russian immigrants came from a rural background, where life still centered on Orthodox ritual. In this eloquent Jacob Riis photograph, a cobbler prepares for the Sabbath Eve in a coal cellar. (The Granger Collection.)



Following the impulse of American Progressivism, many German Jews were attracted to Reform Judaism. Temple Emanu-El, one of the leading Reform synagogues of New York, counted many founders of the Educational Alliance among its congregation. (Photo by Eidletz, The Bettmann Archive.)



Jacob H. Schiff, wealthy enough to make loans to foreign governments, was typical of the powerful German-Jewish elite. Schiff, a major force in the founding of the Educational Alliance, provided crucial support to many other New York Jewish philanthropies as well. (The Granger Collection.)



The Henry Street Settlement was another of Jacob Schiff's favorite charities. The Settlement provided classes and medical services, and served as a center for Lower East Side immigrants. Above, a visiting nurse speaks to a group of East Side children. (The Bettmann Archive.)



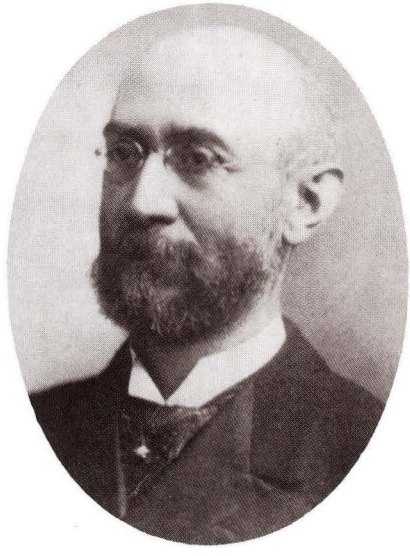
The settlement movement espoused the idea that educated, upper-class citizens could exercise a helpful influence on the poor by living among them and offering direct assistance. Pictured here are East Side children about to go to camp. (The Bettmann Archive.)



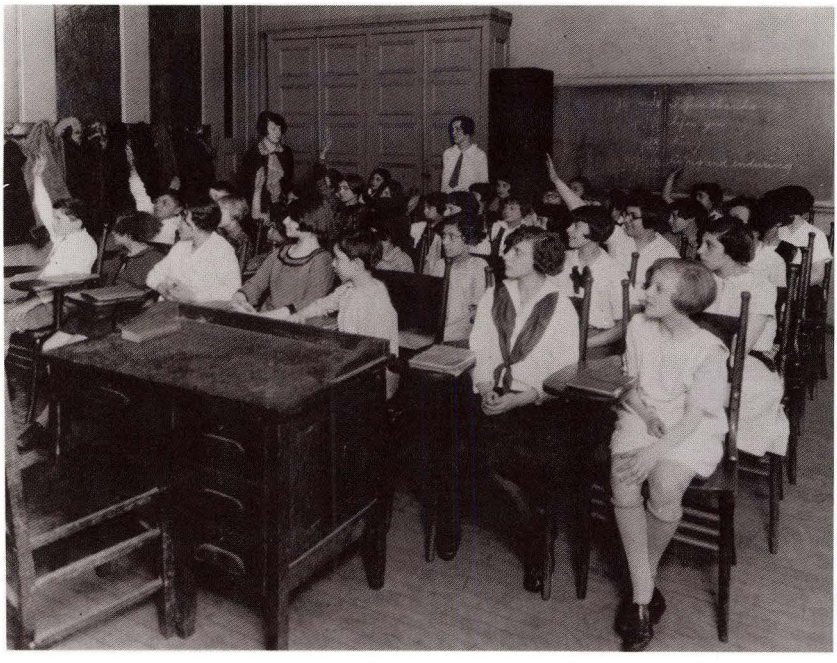
Like Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, another founder of the Alliance, was an influential German Jew and played a key role as a shtadlan, *or mediator, between New York's Jewish and non-Jewish communities.* (The Granger Collection.)



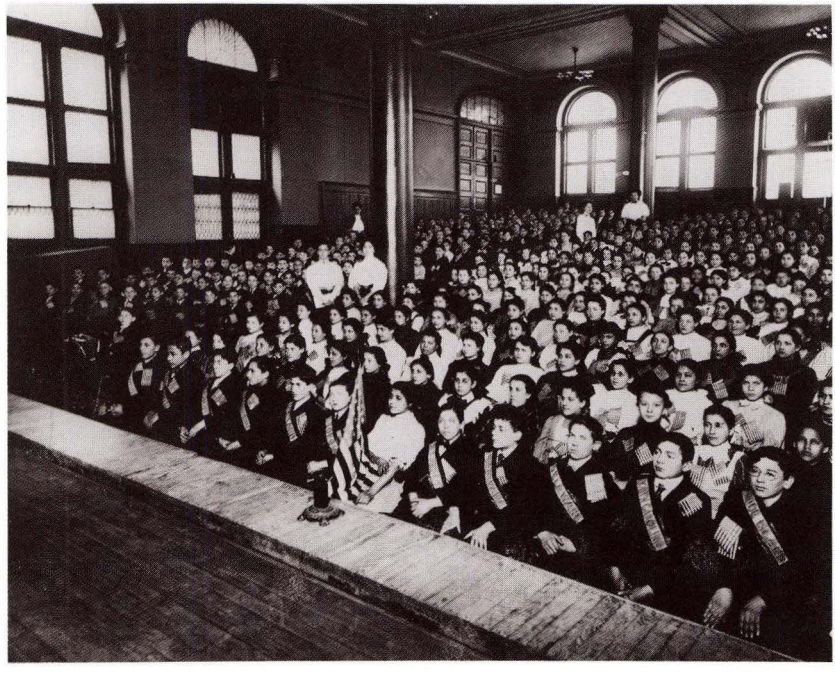
German Baron Moritz de Hirsch created a fund that helped many immigrants. The American branch of the Fund was established with an endowment of $2.5 million and a New York-based board of trustees. (The Granger Collection.)



Isidor Straus was a member of the committee that established the Educational Alliance and served for many years as president of its board of directors. (The Granger Collection.)

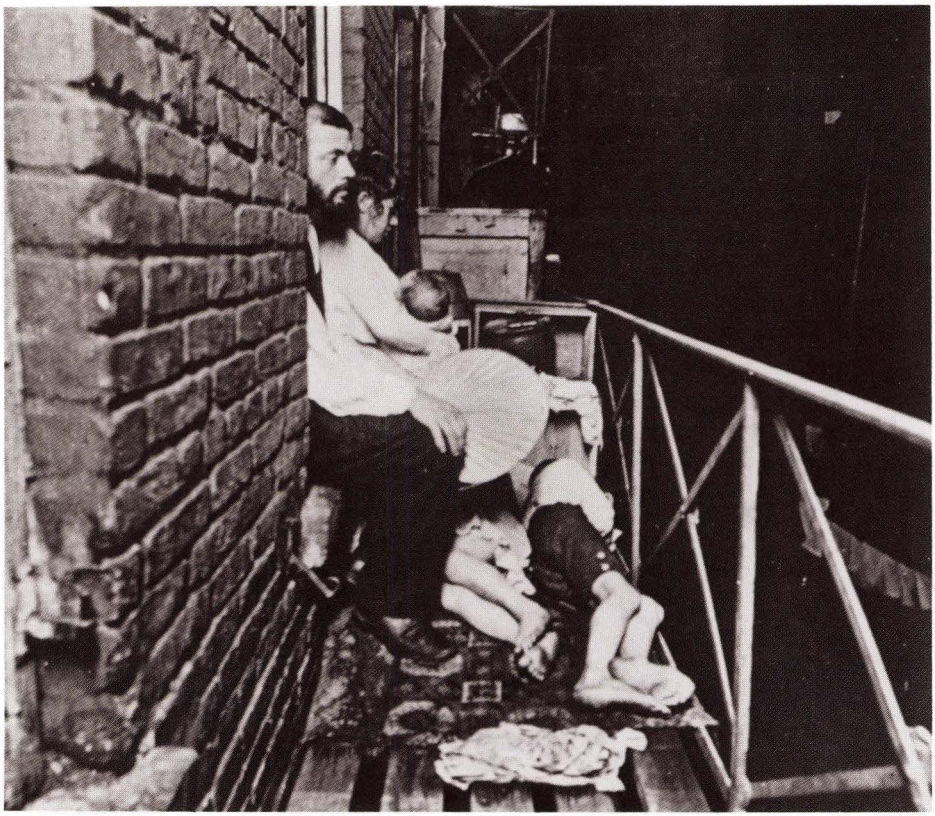


English classes like the one above were sponsored by the Baron de Hirsch Fund to help immigrant children gain access to public education. Language instruction was typically combined with "Americanization" lectures, like the one pictured below in the Alliance Auditorium. (YIVO Institute.)





Uptown benefactors were anxious to eradicate heders, *the unlicensed Hebrew schools that were popular throughout the Lower East Side. Julia Richman, first president of the YWHA, was not alone in her adamant belief that the* heders *were pernicious and un-American.*



When summer temperatures climbed, tenement life became unbearable. Entire families relocated to fire escapes and rooftops. (The Bettman Archive.)



In 1896, the Educational Alliance opened its Roof Garden, an oasis for sweltering Lower East Siders. Thousands of people visited the Garden every day. (YIVO Institute.)



Morris Raphael Cohen was a philosopher whose life was shaped by the Educational Alliance. It was there he met his mentor, Thomas Davidson. Later Cohen would devote himself to establishing an adult education program at the Alliance. (The Bettmann Archive.)



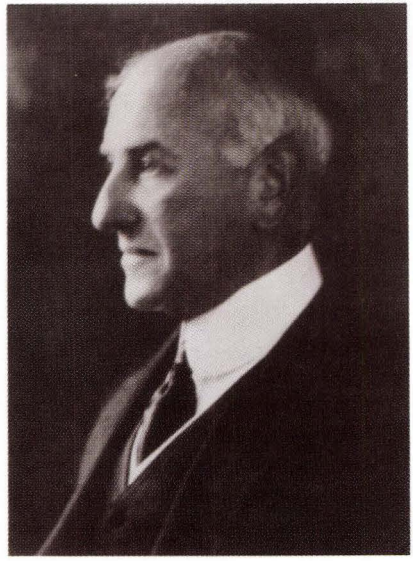
The construction of the Williamsburg Bridge displaced many Delancey Street families, but also provided the Jewish community with means to expand into Brooklyn.



An important area of activity was the Art School, reorganized in 1917 and since then a vital part of the Educational Alliance. The Art School provided a professional environment for students.



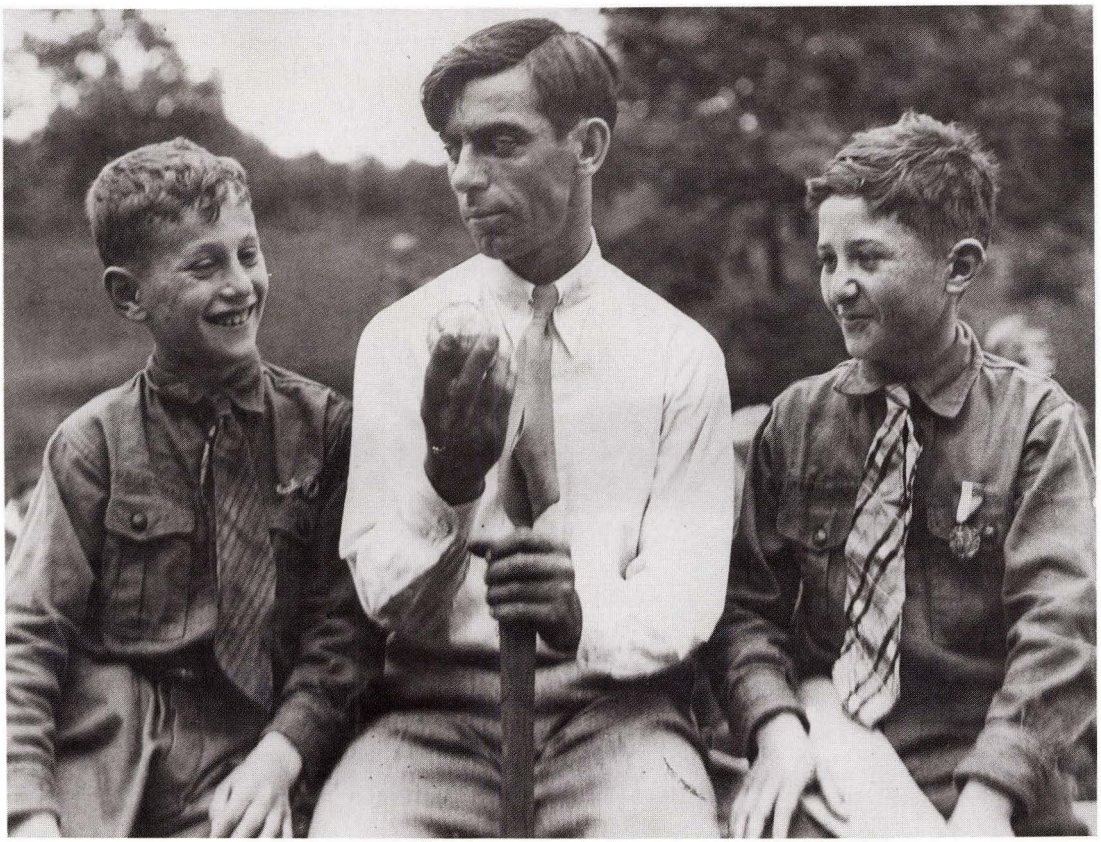
In the beginning of this century, Jewish philanthropies made an effort to centralize fundraising. Alliance trustee Felix Warburg opened his home to an ad hoc committee that articulated basic funding policies; he later retired from the board to head the new Federation. (The Granger Collection.)



In 1940, a group of leading citizens celebrated the Art School's twenty-fifth anniversary by sponsoring a major exhibition and publishing a handsome book. Patrons included philanthropist Solomon Guggenheim. (The Granger Collection.)



Women participated in a wide variety of clubs, such as Hospital Service, Progressive Mothers, and Home Study. While there were no formal clubs for men, many enjoyed visiting the Reading Room. (YIVO Institute.)



Camping, always important to the Alliance, dramatically expanded between the world wars. Comedian and singer Eddie Cantor, who attended the Surprise Lake Camp as a boy, was deeply loyal. For years he ran benefit performances that provided significant support for the Alliance camping programs.

themselves than to accept the Uptown charity that came with strings attached.

In 1903, there was a particularly bitter meeting between the Alliance's Board of Directors and some leading Downtown intellectuals. Isaac Rubinow tells the story:

> One fine morning ten to fifteen members of the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia [the leader of this group was Joseph Barondess] received letters of invitation to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors [of the Educational Alliance] to discuss the matter of improving the work of this useful institution. . . . Those who were invited to the meeting were not given an opportunity to express themselves. They were merely requested to contribute to its [the Educational Alliance's] support. When one of the invited Jewish labor leaders [Barondess] politely made an attempt to speak about the need for some reforms he was not permitted to talk. . . . It is easy to understand what effect this incident and its outcome had when news of it spread the following day among the Jews of the ghetto.[3]

A few weeks later, the League held an annual fundraising ball at which amateur performances were staged. The ball featured a play by Gordin, called *The Benefactors of the Upper East Side*, in which the Uptown Jews were satirized. Rubinow reports,

> When the play was read by the members of the board [of the Educational League] it evoked a great deal of Homeric laughter. From the literary point of view it was one of the

> weakest of Gordin's productions, mostly because it was written per order to illustrate a definite idea. It was a passionate, sarcastic, and very clever pasquinade of the meeting to which the representatives of the intelligentsia had been invited.[4]

The play was set at the home of a Jewish millionaire, where certain notables had gathered to discuss ways of improving conditions on the Lower East Side. The characters were easily recognizable to the East Side audience: philanthropist Ashley Jefferson Yoshke was modeled on Jacob Schiff; rich lawyer Moses Herring was Louis Marshall, who had assumed the role of *shtadlan** in Jewish communal affairs; and Dr. Knobel ("garlic" in Yiddish), the new head of the Jewish Theological Seminary, was Rabbi Solomon Schechter. In the play, these Jewish notables resolve to sponsor cooking classes, cultivate musical taste, and establish model bathhouses where the immigrants would be taught how to use soap and water. Herring recommends a vigorous program of physical culture in order to counteract crime on the Lower East Side, which he believes is caused by flabby muscles. Following

*The *shtadlan* was traditionally an educated Jew who negotiated on behalf of the Jewish community with upper-class Christian authorities. Marshall, "the single most effective publicist in behalf of free immigration," according to Irving Howe, "worked best behind the scenes, through well-argued and well-mannered appeals to public officials. . . . The Jewish socialists, favoring mass pressure rather than private persuasion, were always dubious, often scornful of Marshall's methods—though it must be admitted that their hostility was partly the result of a refusal to adapt themselves to the workings of American politics."

these evident expressions of contempt for East Side Jews, Goldberg, a young Jewish labor leader who is also present, makes an impassioned speech in which he tells the "benefactors" what he thinks of them. The play was applauded enthusiastically by an audience of two thousand East Siders, and for months the Jewish press debated the incident.[5]

The students of the Educational League consisted mainly of elderly men, middle-aged women, and teenage boys and girls. Its directors wished it to be "an absolutely free platform, permitting the teaching of science, without any restraint, without censorship," and courses were offered on a variety of subjects. However, as one former student reports,

> Its fine liberal spirit tended to degenerate into a mere absence of system and order. . . . [T]eachers and students alike were too interested in the lectures and discussions on literary and social matters to give much attention to the exercises in orthography.[6]

The Educational League soon collapsed, and the observations of Boris Bogen, a founding member of the Educational League Committee, on the East Side intellectuals in general may help explain the reason:

> [The] leaders of the East Side were, practically speaking, indifferent to the matters pertaining to their immediate neighbors. They were busy with higher ideals; they were

> engaged in the strife of world-wide movements; they were combating each other; they were divided into factions, groups, constantly fighting, constantly quarreling.[7]

Jewish intellectual leaders were better able to criticize the failings of the Alliance than to duplicate its efforts. The day-to-day administration of a settlement was of less immediate importance than conducting ideological battles. Hence the Educational League was short-lived. But regardless of the fate of this experiment, criticism of the Alliance continued, and the lines of debate became ever more sharply drawn.

In February 1903, Morris Loeb, New York University professor of chemistry and a long-time Alliance trustee, wrote in the *American Hebrew* that the heart of the Uptown-Downtown conflict was really the question of whether it would be the leaders of American Jewish society or the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia who would guide the destiny of East Side Jews. Loeb opined, perhaps naively, that the struggle was really one "between Eastern and Western civilization," whose ideals are "diametrically opposed." Representing more or less reliably the viewpoint of the Alliance, he wrote of the recent immigrant,

> It is our duty to care for his speedy Americanization even more than for his physical welfare. . . . [E]ntry to the land will be forbidden, if it becomes clear that they want to eat American bread, without acquiring American ways.[8]

Although it expressed a reasonable apprehension, Loeb's unfor-

tunate article fueled the debate and led to further outcries against the haughty attitudes of upper-class Jews.

In 1904 A. H. Fromenson, an editor of the Yiddish *Tageblatt*, strongly attacked the Jewish agencies, including the Alliance, at the fourth annual National Conference of Jewish Charities. Fromenson charged that the Jewish agencies had alienated many immigrants by their unresponsiveness to neighborhood needs and obstinate emphasis on Americanization. In the face of pressing problems such as poverty, disease, criminality, and a rising rate of juvenile delinquency, he argued, social etiquette and patriotic uplift were irrelevant. The source of immigrant antipathy, Fromenson stated, was the lack of Jewish content in the settlement programs; without this element, the "regenerative work" of the settlements could not be achieved. Fromenson's own proposed program was scarcely more progressive from the modern point of view: he favored military drill and greater emphasis on competitive sports and religious observance. But his passionate criticism sounded the keynote for a general revival of concern with Jewish culture among East Side social agencies.

ACCOMMODATION AND ADJUSTMENT: LEADING FIGURES

Beginning with David Blaustein's appointment in 1898, the Alliance began to shift from its initially negative view of religion and

Yiddish culture to a more accommodating posture. Partly at Blaustein's insistence, the ban on the so-called Jewish jargon was lifted: Yiddish books and newspapers were introduced into the library, and Yiddish societies were permitted to meet in the building. The gradual adjustment of the Educational Alliance to the needs of the Downtown community was brought about partly by pressure from neighborhood leaders, partly by changes in the surrounding cultural climate, and partly by an influential core of liberal Alliance board members.

The new insistence on respect for Jewish culture was strongly supported by a rising appreciation of its dignity. Several factors may account for this new attitude. Jewish immigration since 1900 had included greater numbers of professional and literary men, especially after the failed Russian revolution of 1905; these representatives of a highly developed, secular culture arrived with established reputations and did much to elevate American (and American Jewish) awareness of the sophistication that Jews had achieved in Eastern Europe. Writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1903, Charles Rice observed,

> Nothing trashy, no printed matter below a certain literary level will appeal to them. An American of culture, of fine discrimination, should he once gain an intimate familiarity with this class of Jews, would be astonished to find how superior their literary taste is than that of many a college-bred reader of magazines.*

*From the *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1903, pp. 254-60. Hutchins Hapgood

At the same time, a new generation of Americanized immigrant Jews had begun to take up a responsible role in Jewish affairs, frequently acting as links between the Uptown and Downtown communities and helping to mediate the many shades of varying opinion in between. In addition, a series of crises drove Uptown and Downtown leaders to find common ground on many issues, and a number of broader-based communal institutions were founded that strengthened the still-uncertain community spirit.

Paul Abelson, the first Russian Jew to earn a doctorate from Columbia's Teachers College, and an Alliance staff member (he divided his time between the Alliance and the Henry Street Settlement), played a vital role in immigrant education. A close associate of educator Thomas Davidson and his famous student, Morris Raphael Cohen, Abelson stressed the need for empathy with the poor and for a spirit of personal service among settlement staff. Abelson favored continuing the agency's Americanization work, but opposed a too-rapid process of assimilation, particularly with regard to Jewish children. He argued that the main task before the Jewish social agencies was the Americanization of adults. In line with this view, he completely restructured the Alliance evening program in English and civics, employing Yiddish texts of the

was even more enthusiastic. He promoted a new image of the Russian Jew as a moral and political idealist: "They are free of the stupid Philistinism of the dollar," he wrote. "Their poets sing pathetically of the sweatshops, of universal brotherhood and the rights of man. . . . In their excitement and extremeness they resemble the spirit of the French intellectuals of 1789." Hutchins Hapgood, *The Spirit of the Ghetto* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1967), pp. 47-8.

Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and Ben Franklin's autobiography. He also instituted a system of twelve grades, grouping the students according to level and background, and Saturday and Sunday classes were added. An average of five hundred attended daily with a waiting list of twice as many.* The revised curriculum was later adopted by the Board of Education's adult evening-school division, "both humanizing and easing immigrant adjustment,"[9] in the words of historian Moses Rischin.

Other prominent figures in the revival of respect for Yiddish culture included Chaim Zhitlowski, who established a Yiddish forum for the discussion of cultural and political topics on the Lower East Side, and Adolph M. Radin, Rabbi of the People's Synagogue at the Educational Alliance and founder of the highly active Russian-American Hebrew Association, which he brought to the Alliance as well.

These rising immigrant leaders found important allies among the more liberal Germans Jews, and together they did much to create new links between the extremes of the Jewish community. Thoughtful Germans realized that the problem was not so much one of Americanizing immigrants as of forging a Jewish community out of disparate elements. Voices began to be raised, some from within the Alliance, warning social workers not to "overdo" Americanization at the expense of Jewish identification.

*Abelson's assistants included Charles B. Stover and James Hamilton of the University Settlement, Alexander Harkavy of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Hirsh Masliansky, and Peter Wiernik.

The widening gap between parents and children and the observable disintegration of the Jewish family (wife-abandonment was common, and the strain of ghetto life led to a notable rise in juvenile crime) were now blamed not only on poverty and hardship but on the speed at which the children were encouraged to adapt by the Jewish social agencies themselves. One noted consequence of this rapid assimilation was a "generation gap" that undermined the traditional basis of paternal authority. Children learned the language and culture of the new country far more quickly than their parents; along with this new knowledge there often came a troubled individual relationship with long-held Jewish customs and beliefs. Morris Raphael Cohen writes movingly of this conflict in his memoirs:

> Now, for us at least, the walls of the ghetto had been removed. . . . What ensued was a struggle between old and new ideals, resulting in a conflict between the older and younger generations fraught with heart-rending consequences. Homes ceased to be places of peace and in the ensuing discord much of the proverbial strength of the Jewish family was lost. There was scarcely a Jewish home on the East Side that was free from this friction between parents and children. This explosive tension made it possible for the same family to produce saints and sinners, philosophers and gunmen.[10]

It has been noted that the Americanization of East European Jews was far more rapid than that of other immigrants arriving in

this period, and its effects were consequently more severe. The process was made more rapid by the German-Jewish social institutions, but on the whole it was an outcome of the natural desire of Jewish parents that their children gain access to the opportunities of American society.

An Uptown liberal who played a crucial role as a self-appointed *shtadlan*, or go-between, in Jewish communal affairs was Louis Marshall, a brilliant lawyer and a leading Constitutional scholar. Marshall joined the Alliance Board in 1897, was briefly a member of the New York State legislature, and served as president of the American Jewish Committee from 1912 until his death in 1929. His intervention was invaluable in numerous instances, but three are outstanding: he persuaded President Taft to reject extension of the Russo-American Trade Treaty of 1912 as a protest against Russia's refusal to grant entry visas to American Jews; he persuaded President Wilson in 1918 to support Jewish minority rights in Eastern Europe; and he waged a relentless campaign against Henry Ford's anti-Semitic newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*, resulting in a retraction and apology. Marshall was (according to Irving Howe) "one of the first Educational Alliance trustees to transcend German Jewish elitism and anxious assimilationism." He taught himself Yiddish and started a short-lived Yiddish newspaper (over which he exercised careful, rather conservative editorial control), and was instrumental in bringing famed Yiddish lecturer Hirsch Masliansky to the Alliance. He also helped develop a People's

Synagogue at the Alliance that was more attuned to neighborhood religious sentiments.

Like Paul Abelson, Marshall was a proponent not of assimilation but of acculturation: he advocated a gradual process of adjustment as opposed to the previous swift plunge into Americanism. Speaking before the National Assembly of Jewish Charities in 1908, Marshall sounded the new note of Jewish philanthropy when he called for "a distinctively Jewish tendency in the conduct of Jewish educational institutions." Religious instruction and observance and the teaching of Hebrew should be instituted in orphanages, reformatories, and settlements, he said. The Jewish agencies had originally settled on a secular approach, emphasizing Americanization and leaving religious life to the synagogues. Marshall's speech recast their mission as a dual one: "to find a place for the immigrants in the general American scene, and to create a distinctly Jewish place in it."

The new concern for Jewish content led to the institution of new programs at the Alliance. With Marshall's backing, Adolph Radin and David Blaustein broke Alliance precedent in 1898 by inviting Hirsch Masliansky, "the Yiddish Henry Ward Beecher," to lecture at the Alliance, which he continued to do until his retirement in 1929. Masliansky's Friday evening sermons, enormously popular, extolled democracy and frequently pitted Russian autocracy and darkness against American freedom and light (symbolized respectively by Ivan the Terrible and George Washington). Masliansky routinely attacked socialists and radical leaders as

ambitious demagogues and invidious disturbers of the peace, and he was frequently attacked in turn by the socialist press, particularly the *Daily Forward.* Characterized by a hostile Abraham Cahan as a kind of Jewish Uncle Tom, a Russian Jew who toed the Uptown line, Masliansky nevertheless significantly departed from Alliance policy by his espousal of Zionism, which he preached enthusiastically in spite of opposition from some members of the board. But this did not prevent Alliance trustee Israel Friedlander from praising him at the agency's twenty-fifth anniversary celebration as "one of the most important factors in bringing about that union between old and new which is the indispensable prerequisite for the solution of the Jewish problem in America."

Social worker Boris Bogen observed that beginning around 1912, Jewish settlements in a number of American cities began to respond to the demand for Jewish content by instituting programs of religious study and holiday observances. The Alliance's Committee on Religious Work had been formed in 1902 to expand various aspects of Jewish religious services, marking an earlier shift from the more secular focus. Now the Committee reformed and expanded the People's Synagogue and conducted eight other congregations during the High Holy Days, with a total attendance of 25,000—"and, judging by the applications for seats, it probably could fill two or three times as many more,"[11] Bogen wrote. The People's Synagogue, in 1917, had a year-round membership of about six hundred, each member contributing three dollars yearly.

The other eight were special organizations, Bogen reported, "arranged for Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur only."

The institution of religious services at the Alliance was a welcome change. These services signaled an accommodation to the wishes of the Downtown population that was greeted with enthusiasm. Still, the religious activities were conceived as an aspect of the Americanization program. Alliance leaders Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall in particular believed that the best method of Americanizing the Russian Jews would be to de-emphasize religion in their lives. Schiff, devoutly pious himself, had no intention of "de-Judaising" them—although this charge was often made—only of moderating their Orthodoxy.

However, the Reform Jewish service of temples like Emanu-El had not appealed to Downtown Jews. A model Reform service, conducted by the Temple Emanu-El Brotherhood in a settlement located on East 5th Street, failed to attract the Jewish elders and had little impact on the young. Efforts to transfer the Jewish Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday had been pursued in the late eighties and nineties (Emanu-El took it up as early as 1874) but, as Philip Cowen puts it, "[i]t cannot be said that the movement was ever popular."[12] Even less so were the Christmas observances instituted at settlements in Jewish neighborhoods.

Solomon Schechter's appearance as director of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and as an Alliance board member, marks a significant step both in the accommodation of Uptown and Down-

town Jews and in the struggle to find a basis for a viable American version of Judaism.* Rumanian-born, trained in Germany and England, a renowned biblical scholar who was also an Orthodox Jew, Schechter exemplified the ideals of the new seminary by his very personality and background. He seemed the perfect figure to mediate between the Reform Jews on the Seminary's board and the East Europeans they sought to attract. Schechter "heartily endorsed" the Americanizing intention of the seminary, and under his leadership it became an important institution and the center of Conservative Jewish theology. But Schechter strongly disagreed with many Jewish leaders on the purpose and direction of the Conservative movement. When Schechter resigned from the Alli-

*In 1901 Cyrus Adler, along with Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall, reorganized the ailing Jewish Theological Seminary to minister to the massive Downtown population. As historian Evyatar Friesel puts it, "Their intention was to transform the seminary into an instrument capable of working toward the Americanization of the future religious leadership of the East European community." The seminary's rabbinical training program set out to synthesize modern scholarship with religious traditionalism. A B.A. was required and candidates were expected to be well grounded in secular studies. Friesel writes, "Courses in homiletics, elocution, and pastoral work taught the rabbinical candidates to conduct decorous services, to deliver sermons in English, and in general to function as modern ministers." On the other hand, Sabbath was kept in the Orthodox fashion and dietary laws were observed. And an intensive program of Jewish studies appealed to the East European reverence for learning. Although Solomon Schechter, a renowned Rumanian-born biblical scholar, was recruited as the new director, Orthodox immigrants remained suspicious of a religious institution directed by Reform Jews and refused to support it, nor did many Russian-born rabbinical students return to the Downtown ghetto.

ance at the end of 1912 he submitted a letter which stated his view that Americanization must give way to preservation of Jewish culture as the main task of the Jewish settlement. "The great question before the Jewish community at present," he wrote, "is not so much Americanizing the Russian Jew, as his Judaising. However," Schechter added, "my views on this and cognate matters are not shared by the Board."

Also at this time another class of Jewish leaders emerged—men like Israel Friedlander, Stephen S. Wise, and Judah L. Magnes—who "represented social and cultural elements midway between Russian and German," writes Moses Rischin, "aspir[ing] to link uptown and downtown in bonds of fellowship."*

*Stephen S. Wise, son of Isaac Mayer Wise, was a figure of considerable importance in the New York Jewish world. A charismatic Reform rabbi and social activist, Wise was invited by Louis Marshall to assume the pulpit of Emanu-El, but found the terms of the appointment too confining. He preferred to found (in 1907) his own Ethical Culture-oriented Free Synagogue. Wise had taught at the Alliance in the late 1890s, and he sought to make his Synagogue into a similarly comprehensive agency. Always a champion of liberal causes, Wise hoped to inspire his congregation to become active in the fight to meet Jewish communal needs. High on his list of priorities was to instill more Jewish content into the programs of the charitable agencies and to counter both the de-Judaising and depersonalizing aspects of social service professionalism. Judah Magnes was an energetic German Jewish rabbi with strong connections in both the Uptown and Downtown communities. Born in San Francisco, Magnes attended Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and studied in Germany, where his ardent Zionism was mixed with an impulse toward Orthodoxy. Returning to America, he studied Yiddish in order better to communicate with the arriving immigrants. He helped to found the Jewish Self-Defense Association (organized to assist the victims of Russian pogroms) and was president of the new Zionist

Polish-born and German-educated, an eminent scholar with a deep interest in Hasidism and the mystical tradition, also an ardent Zionist, Israel Friedlander was recruited by Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff, and Cyrus Adler for the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1903. He joined the Alliance as a trustee in 1913 and served for six years. Friedlander has been called "perhaps the most pivotal person in the rapprochement between German and Russian Jews." This important role may be ascribed to the fact that he alone among Alliance leaders advocated cultural pluralism, an approach that he had begun to develop well before the better-known Horace Kallen,* and he won a respectful hearing at the Educational Alliance for the core values of *yiddishkeit*. At the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1915, Friedlander, speaking in Yiddish, outlined his ideal vision of the Educational Alliance, espousing a true cultural

order, B'nai Zion, which had a largely immigrant membership. Magnes made his New York debut in 1903 when he organized the first protest march in American Jewish history, leading 150,000 East European Jews up Fifth Avenue on the occasion of the Kishinev pogroms. In 1906 he accepted the post at Emanu-El that Wise had turned down. Louis Marshall, his sponsor and soon-to-be brother-in-law, hoped that he would appeal to the younger members of the congregation.

*Kallen, a Jewish philosopher, proposed in the 1920s that American Jewish life should build on all varieties of Jewish expression, not on religion alone. According to Nathan Glazer, Kallen "envisaged a community in which Jews would be educated in Jewish history and culture, Jewish political movements would flourish, Jewish art and culture would be encouraged, Jewish philanthropy would take care of special Jewish needs, and religion would be only one of the possible expressions of Jewishness." *American Judaism*, p. 89. The rise of the Jewish Center in the twenties and thirties is closely linked with this broadened conception of Jewishness.

synthesis of East and West—adaptation to American society without abandoning tradition. An active member of the board, he advocated appointing neighborhood residents to board vacancies, and proposed Yiddish literary evenings, observance of religious customs (kosher food, adherence to Sabbath rituals, avoidance of anything that might offend the Orthodox), plus suggestion boxes and candid evaluations of the agency's work. Friedlander inevitably fell out with some of the more conservative board members—notably Samuel Strauss, who had asserted that loyalty to America should take priority over loyalty to Judaism—and he resigned from the board in 1919. But the contribution he made toward "liberalizing" Alliance policies was of fundamental importance.*

Men like Magnes, Marshall, Schechter, Wise and Friedlander expressed a new spirit of liberal optimism in Jewish America, and through them this spirit made its mark on the Alliance. Their ardent Zionism (they admired Ahad Ha'am, who spoke of developing a Jewish spiritual center in Palestine) was balanced by an equally ardent Americanism—bolstered by the views of men like historian Simon Dubnow who advocated Diaspora Jewish auton-

*Boris Bogen, then director of Jewish charities in Cincinnati—a Russian immigrant employed by Germans in the capital of Reform—disputed Marshall and his movement to instill more Jewish content in the philanthropic social service programs. Bogen thought it better to adhere to the nonsectarian guidelines first established by the German philanthropists, which had freed the social agencies from synagogic control. Religion and charity could not mix, in Bogen's view.

omy.* These so-called cultural Zionists became an influential mediating force: to them, a unified Jewish community was a desirable end in itself, and they considered its preservation "a value transcending in importance all particularistic conceptions of Judaism."

To these leaders, American society seemed to represent an almost providential circumstance—informed as it was by the "Anglo-Saxon" ideas of political liberty and religious tolerance—for the free development of a new Jewish culture. This vision, shared by many Reform theologians, was cogently expressed by Friedlander in the following terms:

> Is Judaism compatible with Americanism? Judaism and Americanism will not be intersecting, but concentric circles. In the great palace of American civilization we shall occupy our own corner, which we will decorate and beautify to the best of our taste and ability, and make it not only a center of attraction for the members of our family, but also an object of admiration for all the dwellers of the palace.[13]

If it were possible anywhere to develop "a harmonious union

*American Zionists were among the most prominent leaders in the new communal enterprises of the period. The majority of teachers at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the organizers of the American Jewish Congress movement, and practically all the bureaus of the New York Kehillah—especially its department of Jewish education—were Zionist-dominated. But theirs was a Zionism characterized by Evyatar Friesel as "cultural" rather than "political." In this respect, it was a distinctly American Zionism, peculiarly adapted to American conditions—an ideology that emphasized the spiritual and revitalizing meaning of Judaism, adopted a positive attitude toward the Diaspora, and was socially active.

between the culture of the Jewish people and that of other nations," Friedlander said, it would be in America.

CRISIS AND CONSOLIDATION: NEW INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS

The 1901 American Jewish Yearbook lists 593 charitable societies, 415 educational and fraternal organizations, and twenty-two national organizations serving one million American Jews. The fantastic growth in the number of Jewish social agencies in this period created serious problems in regard to both funding and program priorities. The resulting disarray, including duplications of services and multiple funding appeals, seemed certain to send the whole charitable system of New York City into bankruptcy, and accordingly preliminary moves were made after the turn of the century to establish a federation of Jewish charitable agencies. Morris Loeb—speaking for *shtadlanim* like Marshall, Schiff, and Warburg—wrote that such a federation was essential, and he suggested that "the example of our country should be followed" in the search for a workable structure. A federative body with "sufficient elasticity" might be able to unite the many feuding, overlapping social agencies competing for support in the Jewish community.[14]

However, the size and complexity of that community frustrated early attempts to find a common ground. Ingrained hostility between

German and Russian Jews led in many American cities to the establishment not only of separate social agencies but of separate federations as well, one for "Yidn" (East Europeans) and one for "Yahudim" (Germans).* "Doctrinal differences and competing interests were almost certain to doom long-range, large-scale planning unless it could be proved that there were specific financial and functional advantages to federation,"[15] writes Milton Goldin, a historian of Jewish philanthropy. Forty-five agency heads met in 1908 to determine the feasibility of consolidating their programmatic and fundraising efforts, but unity was not achieved. Instead, the Council of Communal Institutions was formed as a loose association of twelve agencies, the largest of which was the Educational Alliance, with Lee Kohns, a long-time Alliance trustee, as its delegate. The Council's mandate was restricted to formulating recommendations for communal action.

In this same period, however, a series of crises increasingly brought Uptown and Downtown Jews together in a search for common ground. An outbreak of pogroms in Russia and Poland,

*"Beginning with Boston in 1895, Jewish communities in ten cities had developed federations that usually consisted of a hospital, a relief organization, and two or three educational institutions. Among the benefits discovered was that recalcitrant contributors could no longer claim gift budgets exhausted by previous callers from individual agencies. . . . The ten federated cities proved that a modus vivendi between Yahudim and Yidn was possible, albeit difficult. . . . Beneficiaries were overwhelmingly Yidn, but contributors had the option to earmark gifts for agencies. Yahudim generally controlled affairs, and federations raised more for constituent groups than the . . . groups had been able to raise individually." Milton Goldin, *Why They Give*, p. 66.

culminating in the bloodbath at Kishinev in 1903, stirred Western sympathies and unleashed a new wave of immigration; the failed Russian Revolution of 1905 also stimulated flight from Eastern Europe. Tens of thousands of new refugees poured into American ports; efforts to restrict Jewish immigration were renewed, and had to be resisted.

The Kishinev pogroms led to the first serious fundraising effort among American Jews for the relief of foreign victims. At the same time, calls were heard for the formation of a national body dedicated to protecting Jewish rights throughout the world.* There were demands for an American Jewish Congress—an open democratic assembly that would freely elect Jewish representatives and devise an apparatus that could carry on the business of the whole Jewish community. This proposal was strongly resisted by Louis Marshall and B'nai Brith president Adolph Kraus, who rejected the idea as doomed to failure, given the fractious nature of the American Jewish community. Instead, an American Jewish Committee was formed in 1906, concerning itself primarily with issues of Jewish defense, and it became an influential force in public life.†

*"[V]irtually the only arena where American Jews had achieved anything approximating unified national action was in responding to threats to Jews in other lands. The Damascus blood libel of 1840, the abduction and baptism of Edward Mortara in Italy in 1858, and the pogroms in Russia in the last decades of the nineteenth century each stimulated initiatives toward concerted action and coordinating institutions." Jonathan S. Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 29.

†Although Marshall argued for broader ties between the Committee and

The Jews of New York also rallied together when, in 1908, Police Commissioner Theodore A. Bingham claimed in print that 50 percent of the city's criminals were Jewish.* In an article entitled "Foreign Criminals of New York," Bingham wrote,

> It is not astonishing that with a million Hebrews, mostly Russian, in the city . . . perhaps half of the criminals should be of that race. . . . They are burglars, firebugs, pickpockets and highway robbers—when they have the courage; but though all crime is their province, pocket-picking is the one to which they take most naturally.[16]

Needless to say, response to these insensitive remarks was swift and vocal. Uptown Jews considered the charge a confirmation of their view that immorality was rampant on the East Side, but believed that Bingham had grossly overstated the problem. Downtown Jews considered it a blatant anti-Semitic slander, and both groups were united in their apprehension of irreparable damage to the Jewish reputation in America. Jewish newspapers across the

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local constituencies, the American Jewish Committee remained a small and highly exclusive body until the 1940s, when it began to reach out for members beyond the German community.

*Bingham's high crime statistics mainly reflected arrests for Sunday violations and unlicensed pushcart peddlers—there were at least 10,000 unlicensed pushcarts in New York. It has also been observed that Bingham was not so much bent on insulting the Jewish community as on getting an increased budget for his department for policing the Lower East Side, where he wanted to set up a "secret service" of Yiddish-speaking police officers specially trained to deal with Jewish problems.

spectrum branded Bingham an anti-Semite and called his article a downright fabrication. A joint committee, chaired by David Blaustein, was organized to address this issue, but it floundered. Finally, Louis Marshall intervened and engineered a retraction.

The strong collective response to the so-called "Bingham incident" led directly to the establishment in 1909 of the New York Kehillah—a highly significant chapter in the history of Jewish life in New York City, and a critical step toward the formation of a true federation of Jewish communal organizations. The idea for a Kehillah was first proposed by Judah Magnes, in the hope that such a central communal authority would "wipe out invidious distinctions between Eastern European and Western European . . . and make us realize that the Jews are one people with a common history and common hopes." One of the first and most successful rallies in support of the Kehillah was held at the Educational Alliance and was attended by prominent Jews from across the social and political spectrum. The Yiddish press hailed the meeting as a family gathering of Jews who had joined ranks to save the Jewish reputation in America. The movement was also recognized as a significant turn from a defensive posture of protest to a constructive posture of community-building.

The *kehillah* had been the traditional instrument of communal authority in the ghettos of Eastern Europe. While its primary functions were religious, it had also cared for many social, economic, and political needs of the community. Now the institution was revived in an American context, and infused with Progressive

content. Constituted as a partner in local affairs with the American Jewish Committee,* the New York Kehillah was comprised of various bureaus devoted to different aspects of Jewish life: religious affairs, education, social problems, and philanthropy.

To address the problem of criminality, a bureau was established with support from Jacob Schiff and other Uptown Jews. Schiff contributed $5,000 a year for an anticrime agency to be administered by the Kehillah, and Mayor William Gaynor of New York guaranteed police cooperation. The Bureau of Social Morals employed a team of investigators who closely followed criminal activities on the East Side and provided information to the police. A Bureau of Information with offices in a number of Jewish communities throughout New York funneled intelligence to the investigators. A local office was located at the Alliance, and in time it became the central East Side office of the Kehillah's anticrime bureau.†

The names and locations of gambling dens, brothels, horse-poisoning rings, poolrooms, gang hangouts, fences and pickpockets, as well as corrupt policemen, were given to Magnes, who gave them in turn to the police or, if no action was taken, to the Mayor

*The Kehillah's 25-member Executive Committee constituted District XII of the American Jewish Committee.

†At the instigation of Judge Greenbaum, the Alliance directors (in January 1913) allocated $5,000 and agreed to help raise an additional $20,000 for anticrime activities. "In return, Magnes agreed that supervisory control would rest in the Alliance's committee on legal affairs and that a committee of nine chosen by Magnes from among the contributors would retain final authority." Goren, *New York Jews*, p. 165. Also at this time Lawrence S. Greenbaum, a young lawyer (and Judge Greenbaum's son), joined the office at the Alliance.

himself. At the end of a year, Magnes reported to Schiff and other sponsors that 103 "illicit establishments" had been shut down and two hundred thieves and other criminals arrested. But with Mayor Gaynor's sudden death and subsequent replacement, the Bureau of Social Morals no longer received the same level of cooperation from the police; Schiff's interest faded and his contributions dropped, while Magnes had shifted his efforts to opposing U.S. entry into World War I. The Bureau languished and died out with the Kehillah in the early 1920s.*

Above all else, the Kehillah's major effort was the revival and reform of education. With a gift of $75,000 from Schiff and the New York Foundation, a Bureau of Jewish Education was established in 1910, with Alliance trustee Israel Friedlander as chairman of the board. Its mission was to increase and organize the demand for Jewish education, to raise funds, train men and women, publish textbooks, develop curricula and managerial methods, and coordinate all efforts in the field. A staff of eighteen Teachers College graduate students surveyed hundreds of Orthodox *hederim* and wrote dissertations on Jewish education and Americanization. The work of the Talmud Torahs and *hederim* was standardized, and a Board of License was established along with an Extension System for Jewish education with centers all over the city—one of them

*This outcome did not displease the Alliance directors, who had been most closely involved with the project—among them Judge Greenbaum and William Salomon, the Alliance's largest contributor—who had expressed misgivings about the Alliance's intervention in what was properly police business.

at the Alliance, which was among the first Jewish agencies to cooperate with the Bureau of Jewish Education.

In 1915, after much difficulty, a Bureau of Philanthropic Research was established jointly by the Kehillah and the Council for Jewish Communal Institutions. The proposal had been resisted by some members of the Council, notably the Alliance, which favored strengthening existing and traditional immigrant institutions rather than forming a commission to recommend new ones. But with the strong support of prominent Alliance trustees like Adolph Lewisohn, the Bureau became a reality. During its first year the Bureau conducted an exhaustive study of charitable activities in New York. It surveyed the condition of Jewish day nurseries, investigated credit unions, and examined charges brought against an East Side orphan asylum for soliciting funds under false pretenses, among other activities.

The Bureau of Philanthropic Research paved the way for the subsequent movement toward a federation of Jewish charities—an idea that had been "insistently advocated" by Kehillah representatives. The insularity of the older philanthropic institutions had been softened in the struggle, and, despite the difficulties encountered in the Kehillah experiment,* the rational efficiency of the

*For nearly fourteen years the Kehillah provided educational and welfare services for the Lower East Side, with offices in the United Hebrew Charities building. One reason for its ultimate failure is that while the European *kehillah* had been supported by governmental authority, the American version was voluntary and could never wield coercive powers as its predecessor had. Another cause was the diffusion of support. Each bureau financed its own operations,

federal approach made sense to German Jewish leaders. The World War also brought pressure to bear on American Jews whose shared concern for the plight of European Jews drove them to overcome their domestic differences and take steps to centralize fundraising and distribution.

In 1914 the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was established—called by historian Jonathan S. Woocher "a landmark in American Jewish history"[17]—and in 1915 an ad hoc committee recommended to Alliance trustee Felix Warburg that a New York philanthropic federation should be organized. The basic tenets of philosophy and funding were agreed on in a series of meetings at Warburg's home. Warburg in particular insisted that Downtowners be represented in the new federation's high councils "to unify the community and to prevent, at all costs, the formation of a second federation of Yidn."[18]

The final plan proposed an initial fundraising goal of $2 million and promised to reward constituent members with a distributive return of at least $200,000 over and above their membership dues. The bylaws restricted membership to welfare agencies, excluding those considered to be religious in purpose, and provided for the absolute independence of the constituent agencies in their internal affairs.* The capital campaign, conducted with tremendous energy

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and decentralized fundraising led to a series of financial crises and ultimately to dissolution.

*The borough of Brooklyn had had its own Federation of Jewish Charities since 1909. The Brooklyn Federation did not merge with the Greater New York

and thoroughness by committee members in 1917, yielded more than the projected amount, and was twice as much as the separate agencies had been able to raise on their own the year before. Declaring the new federation a success, the committee voted itself out of existence and a board of trustees was appointed with Warburg at its head.

Nineteen seventeen was a year in which Jewish life everywhere underwent tremendous changes. In Russia, where a revolution had occurred, the Kerensky government lifted anti-Semitic restrictions; but Jews were nevertheless cut off from the West by hostilities, and thousands were killed and uprooted on the Eastern front where the German and Russian armies were engaged. Meanwhile, Turkey was deporting Jews from Palestine in large numbers. In that year the Balfour Declaration was issued and a Jewish Legion was recruited to fight under the British in the Middle East. As a result of these upheavals, worldwide Jewish leadership shifted to America. A massive American Jewish War Relief drive, led by Jacob Schiff, raised $10 million. Louis D. Brandeis now headed the world Zionist organization. Stephen S. Wise and Louis Marshall helped to organize the American Jewish Congress, which concerned itself with the rehabilitation of Jewish refugees, and in 1917 300,000 American Jews selected delegates to the first meeting of the Congress in Philadelphia, which was chaired by Nathan Straus. Also in 1917, the National Jewish Welfare Board was founded to address the

Federation until 1937 when, Milton Goldin notes, "joint fundraising became imperative."

material and religious needs of Jewish soldiers. In this environment, the New York City Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropies was born.

Historian Milton Goldin notes that the success of Federation "signalled a new order of things" in New York, socially as well as financially. "The upper social levels of the Jewish community began to include a downtown elite. High status at federation was possible despite origins in the Pale."[19] After so many years of tension, Federation institutionalized the integration of Uptown and Downtown and represented the first real step in the establishment of a unified Jewish community.

THE ALLIANCE AT TWENTY-FIVE

In 1912 Isidor and Ida Straus were drowned in the *Titanic* disaster. Straus' death was much lamented in New York, among both the Uptown and Downtown communities. Memorial services were held at the Alliance and many distinguished speakers expressed their regrets, praising the philanthropist. David Blaustein, who would also die before the year was out, spoke on this solemn occasion. His remarks may serve to sum up the whole initial "movement" of the Educational Alliance, from its founding to the end of its first quarter century.

Blaustein's period of service had been "a time of storm and stress" at the Alliance, he said. The institution "was not clear as

to what its aim and object was, and it was therefore a house divided against itself." Blaustein was referring not only to the division of work among the original constituent agencies, but to the differences among leading philanthropists as to what the ends and means of social service ought to be. Blaustein characterized the institution that had emerged from these organizational struggles as being united in intention but divided on important issues—particularly the great question of Jewish content. Under Straus' leadership, however, Blaustein said, "the Jewish ideas have prevailed at last." He credited Straus with providing key support to the revival of respect for Yiddish and to its adoption as a language of instruction. Straus had also supported the expansion of "social work" (then understood as recreational activities) in opposition to the more practical concerns of other Alliance board members. His "broad-mindedness and tolerance" were especially visible in his support for the People's Synagogue, which appealed to "the conservative element of the neighborhood," and for the Thomas Davidson Society, "which stood for the intellectual and social development of progressive young people."[20]

Blaustein characterized his patron's philanthropic spirit as partaking of the highest traditions of *tẓedekah*. Straus, he said, "did not for a moment press himself individually upon the people of the neighborhood; his hands were not seen in his work, though his spirit was always felt."[21] Blaustein's comments hint both at his own problems with the board and at the range and sensitivity of Straus' philanthropic concern:

> In my duties as Superintendent of the Educational Alliance I was very often called upon to minister to the needs of individuals, and when members of the directorate said I had no right to concern myself with individuals, as it was not the duty of the Alliance to minister to those needs, the generosity of both Mr. and Mrs. Straus enabled me, in an unofficial way, to aid individuals, and in this way to strengthen my usefulness in the institution.[22]

Blaustein's testimony—as well as his record of service—indicate that despite the emphasis on efficiency and centralized effort, the "personal touch" was not lacking at the Alliance so long as men like Straus were on the scene.

The Alliance's annual report for 1913 showed a daily average attendance of seven thousand. Classes in domestic art and science, physical culture, adult English and civil service were heavily patronized. Yiddish and English lectures in history and civics drew hundreds of listeners. The Legal Aid and Desertion Bureau reported over 3,000 consultations.* Religious work had been diversified to

*The Legal Aid Bureau was first established around 1902 and was staffed with Yiddish-speaking lawyers and clerks. Some of the problems the immigrants faced stemmed from their limited ability to communicate in English; others were due to unscrupulous landlords and employers. Numerous cases handled by the Bureau in those days dealt with the exploitation of immigrant workers in neighborhood sweatshops, where the owner often bilked the employees of the little they earned. Young women who were employed as maids were sometimes discharged on the flimsiest pretext when their wages were due. Pushcart peddlers were helped to obtain licenses, and those who were arrested for peddling without a license were represented in court by the staff of the Bureau. Later a Desertion

include religious classes, the People's Synagogue, a Young People's Synagogue, Holy Day observances, and services on Sabbath afternoon. Entertainments (including films, lectures, and concerts—291 events in all) showed a total attendance of 200,000. More than 4,000 people a day visited the Roof Garden. There were eighty-three clubs, a summer camp for boys and a vacation home for girls, indoor and outdoor play for children, and Social Rooms for women, men, girls, and boys. The Reading Room had an average daily attendance of over 800, and Branch B continued to function with classes and clubs. Expenditures of just over $100,000 showed a deficit of less than 10 percent.

The gala celebration of the Alliance's first quarter century, held in 1915, drew many distinguished guests and speakers, including Mayor John Purroy Mitchel, settlement worker Lillian Wald, District School Supervisor Julia Richman, Manhattan Borough President Marcus Marks, former City College president John H. Finley, and New York Supreme Court Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo. Israel Friedlander, speaking in Yiddish, described the institution as a bridge between two worlds, one that was dedicated to bringing about "a real and lasting harmony between the former and the present environment in the life of the immigrant Jew." Friedlander spoke respectfully of the separate Jewish "cultures" that the

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Bureau was created, which merged with the Legal Aid Service and dealt with cases of abandonment—notably common in the immigrant quarter—using all available resources to locate the deserting husband and father and in the meantime obtaining help from the United Hebrew Charities to ward off starvation and eviction for the family.

immigrants had brought to America, but he insisted that these were mainly "accidental varieties" that we in America had "no right to preserve" at the expense of Jewish unity. Rather he looked forward to the emerging "Jew of America" who would represent all that was best in these Jewish traditions. Communal institutions should assist in the birth of this new Jewish type by "a gradual, gentle and sympathetic treatment of the problems involved" and thus effect a real "alliance" of tradition with contemporary needs and aspirations.

Judge Samuel Greenbaum, then president of the Alliance, spoke directly to the agency's critics when he identified its "underlying purpose" as an attempt to provide "opportunities for self-betterment" to the immigrant, adding, "It does not seek to patronize him." Greenbaum pointed to the role of the Alliance as a pioneer of what one historian has called "demonstration projects"—programs initiated by the Alliance and taken over by municipal or private agencies. "Indeed, this institution has served the City as a social laboratory," he said, citing the absorption of the Aguilar Free Library into the Public Library system, the adoption of immigrant English instruction by the Board of Education, the establishment of public kindergartens, and the passage of cultural instruction to the Thomas Davidson School (and then to the adult evening program at City College).*

*New York's Mayor Mitchel also said, on the same occasion, "It is a splendid thing that there should have been demonstrated here the necessity for many of the services that the city government has taken up; and the government of the city should make acknowledgment to the Educational Alliance of that service."

Greenbaum also claimed, correctly, that the Alliance had indirectly inspired many similar institutions throughout the city. Indeed, the Alliance had become, as Hirsch Masliansky went on to say, "a national institution" and the "father" of many others of the same type. Among the many Jewish centers that were modeled on it were the Council Educational Alliance in Cleveland (headed for some years by Isaac Spectorsky), the Chicago Hebrew Institute (headed for two years by David Blaustein), the Educational Alliance of St. Louis, the Detroit Hebrew Institute, the Jewish Educational Alliance of Atlanta, and the Jewish Educational Institute in Kansas City.

The Alliance had also gone a long way toward bridging the gap between its first conception of itself and the needs of its constituents. Lillian Wald, founder of the Henry Street Settlement, in her remarks confirmed that the Alliance had succeeded in linking past and present, showing itself responsive to the needs of the neighborhood, serving as a useful social laboratory, and displaying the degree of flexibility that would help it face the future and its problems.*

Local confirmation came in the form of an approving April 1916 editorial in the *Tageblatt*: "We who have criticized the Alliance

*The sincerity of Wald's praise may be attested by the fact that she did not hesitate to offer a mild rebuke to the Alliance for its failure to support Women's Suffrage, which had been passed into law that same year. However, she said, "In all other respects the Alliance has indicated its recognition of the changed condition of women by preparing girls for shop life and professional life, as well as home life."

in the past are happy to pay it the tribute it now merits," the editors wrote. "The present activities spring from the people. . . . It is now felt that nothing is gained by the uprooting of things that are bone and flesh of millions of people." And Isaac Berkson noted in a Teachers College publication in 1920 that "a delightful change in attitude toward the immigrant" was discernible in the twenty-fifth annual report.

At the Alliance's annual meeting on January 7, 1917, the action of the directors in affiliating with the new Federation was approved and ratified by the members, and the retirement from the Board of Felix Warburg to direct the Federation was announced. The report to the membership drew attention to new Alliance activities begun and older ones no longer called for, succinctly noting, "Vitality is evidenced by powers of adjustment." Judging by this standard, the report went on, "you will perceive that we are not only vital and alive to our task, but possessed of an enviable institutional health."

Justice Benjamin Cardozo, in his remarks at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration, pointed out that the really unusual thing about the Educational Alliance was its mixture of activities: "Almost everything that is done here is done somewhere else, if you split up the work and treat the elements separately; but the great and original feature of this work is that here all these elements are brought together just as they are in life." This characteristic was one source of the Alliance's vitality and certainly of its flexibility—its power to evolve, to shift its emphasis, to drop and add activities as the need for them arose.

With the birth of Federation, the Alliance entered a new phase of its existence. No longer dependent on individuals, it was chiefly supported by communal distributions, membership fees, and interest on investments, and a new vision of the Alliance as an independent social service agency, free from the taint of upper-class philanthropy, could be realized.

In an interesting footnote to his discussion of the shift toward greater pluralism at the Alliance, Isaac Berkson particularly praised David Blaustein's intermediary efforts, alluding to his ill-fated struggles with the board over institutional policy. Berkson judged him "a man with an unusually fine insight into the problem" of Jewish social work, and suggested that Blaustein's "dream of a People's Palace" might be regarded as the link between two phases of the Jewish social agency itself: "the bridge between the older humanitarian conception of the Settlement and the modern democratic notion of the Community Center." Blaustein did insist on the distinction between settlement and synagogue, a view not inconsistent with his call for a new generation of communal institutions for Jews all over the country, "centers . . . that shall be both American and Jewish." And this was the developing trend in Jewish social institutions. Indeed, the emergence of the community center out of the settlement movement was the dominant theme of Jewish social service in the period between the two world wars.

Through the Depression and World War II



Changes on the Lower East Side

With the restrictive U.S. immigration laws of 1921 and 1924, the Lower East Side, which for more than sixty years had been the scene of ceaseless demographic change, became more stable, less frenetic. The Jewish population in the neighborhood leveled off and began to decline.*

*Jewish population on the Lower East Side was 353,000 in 1916, 257,832 in 1920, 121,000 in 1930, and 98,400 in 1948.

Many families who had arrived in the forty-year peak immigration period had prospered, and moved to other parts of the city where middle-class neighborhoods were being established. Construction of subways and increased prosperity enhanced geographical and social mobility. The opening of the Williamsburg Bridge—the construction of which encouraged the trend to relocation by destroying hundreds of homes around Delancey Street—created an instant Jewish community in Brooklyn, and many more families moved north to the Bronx and Harlem. Later they settled in Washington Heights, Riverside Drive, and finally Central Park West.

The old neighborhood, though still predominantly Jewish, was also now home to Italians, Greeks, Turks, Spanish, and Irish. The social service institutions that had grown up on the Lower East Side were challenged to adapt, and in this period some underlying differences between the Educational Alliance and other settlement houses began to emerge.

The settlements had understood their mission as providing an oasis of culture in the desert of "despair and degradation." Primarily they sought to speed the Americanization of the immigrants, especially the youth. By the 1920s, however, thoughtful leaders in the movement had realized that the most effective Americanization program was a gradual one of cultural adjustment. American society had its own ways of accomplishing the process: immigrants absorbed the new culture through newspapers, movies, the street, and above all the public schools. With the halt to immigration, the

overwhelming pressure to assimilate immigrants quickly by force-feeding them new ideas no longer dominated social service policy.

As a rule, the settlements found it difficult to modify their outlook and programs, and after the 1920s no new settlements were founded. The Educational Alliance, with its mixed character and greater ability to adapt, was a notable exception to this trend. During this period the Jewish community center began to emerge from the seedbed of communal institutions that were founded in the immigration crisis, and the Alliance increasingly saw itself in this light.*

While primarily patronized by Jews, the Alliance served all community residents. Although its programs still emphasized Americanization and the inculcation of patriotic sentiments, more attention was now paid to preserving the traditions of the immigrants.

David Blaustein had distinguished the Alliance from other settlements by a comprehensive approach and by the absence of any effort to promote spiritual values. Dr. Henry Fleischman, director of the Alliance from Blaustein's resignation in 1908 to 1938, distinguished it from other institutions by an emphasis on serving not just children, who had the benefit of public schooling under the Compulsory Education Act of 1904, but adults as well.

*In 1921 the National Jewish Welfare Board added the neighborhood Y's and Jewish Centers to its membership; by 1950 there were some 350 of these affiliated with the Board in the U.S. and Canada.

Fleischman stressed that public education often increased the gulf between parents and children. The home life of the child, he said, was dominated by an "Oriental" influence, while the culture acquired outside the home was "Western." "Very few institutions have taken sufficient note of this dual life of the child," Fleischman said. The consequent disruption of the home was something that the Educational Alliance would seek to heal by embracing in its work the whole immigrant family.

A liberal or pluralistic attitude had lately arisen in America that supported the new emphasis on preserving the distinctions of immigrant culture. This broadened conception of Americanism allowed a more liberal approach to Americanization. At the same time, however, intensifying labor struggles and a growing sense of menace from the "Bolshevik" ideas that had toppled the Czarist regime produced bitter hostility in America to left-wing sentiments. The Russian immigrants were viewed with particular suspicion by the American establishment, and in 1919 during the famous "Red Scare" thousands of immigrants (supposed Communists) were deported to Soviet Russia. All American Jewish organizations were affected by the general atmosphere of patriotic fervor, and in the 1920s Americanization once again became a prominent feature of their social service programs. Throughout this period the Alliance continued its citizenship program with an eye to counterbalancing the proliferating radical influence and emphasized group activities that brought parents and children together.

ALLIANCE PROGRAMS

Although programs of the Board of Education and City College had largely taken over the functions of both the English-language training for children and the Thomas Davidson (Branch B) adult education classes, the Alliance remained particularly active in the field of education in these years. A Citizenship Department staffed by three New York City teachers (headed by Meyer Padve, a Brooklyn high school principal) offered basic English for adults and courses in American history. The department was considered an extension of the evening program at Public School 147 on East Broadway. Padve gave a series of Saturday night lectures on history, civics, and current events in the Alliance's Open Forum (the program was initiated in 1920). The program also assisted immigrants in obtaining their citizenship papers.* When need abated with the end of immigration, the evening program was dropped, although the Board of Education continued to supply two English teachers for day classes.

A pre-kindergarten school replaced the East Side Day Nursery and was housed on the sixth floor with easy access to the roof. Dorothy Lees conducted the program, which was offered as a service to working mothers. An average of thirty-five children, aged two to five, arrived daily at 8:30 A.M. and were picked up by

*In 1953 the screenwriter Paddy Chayevsky, who had attended the Alliance in the forties, wrote a script for the Philco-Goodyear Playhouse television series based on this program, called *The Reluctant Citizen*. A copy of the script may be found in the Alliance archives.

family members at about 3:30 P.M. The fee was fifteen cents a day, and the program consisted of simple games and music, outdoor play, and visits to the neighborhood firehouse, the police station, and the Children's Zoo in Bronx Park.

In 1940, Miss Lees observed that the nursery program had evolved from a service to working mothers to a place where the child's social and intellectual education begins. Her remarks at this time reflect the degree to which Alliance activities had been professionalized in the period between the wars. The program activities emphasized training in self-control and self-expression, she wrote, and cooperation with the family was stressed (a home visit by a staff member was a prerequisite for admission). The nursery school also played an important role in neighborhood health and disease control, retaining a physician to examine sick children and to advise the parents on proper care and treatment. A series of parents' groups were organized that held bi-monthly meetings and addressed problems common to a given age level. The Alliance program, Lees concluded, had helped prove that nursery school children "possess a greater sense of responsibility, independence, and initiative" than others who do not attend such schools.

For older children, elementary arts and crafts were taught, including painting, sculpture, coppersmithing, leather work, and pottery. A textile design class was developed by Ella Ostrowsky, who also taught this subject at the YMHA.

The Alliance Concert and Lecture Department offered events every night of the week. Mondays were a catch-all devoted to

various programs; on Tuesdays there were health lectures; Wednesday was movie night. On Fridays, religious services were held early in the auditorium, followed by the Reverend Masliansky's popular series of lectures in Yiddish, which continued until his retirement in 1929. His talks on moral and ethical subjects were "spellbinding," according to witnesses, and the Straus Auditorium was always filled to capacity. The lectures were translated into English each week and made available to interested readers. On Saturdays Meyer Padve gave his citizenship lectures; these evening sessions developed into a popular open forum on current events, and they were usually marked by lively and spontaneous discussion. Sundays were reserved for entertainment: musical and theatrical performances were given by noted performers, often scheduled to appear the following week at Carnegie and Town Halls. Chamber ensembles, string quartets, vocal and instrumental soloists all performed without fee, and the admission charge of ten cents was used to pay the ushers. In addition, an amateur neighborhood symphony group gave concerts at the Alliance and in the Central Park Mall. Comic operas by Gilbert and Sullivan were staged by the Alliance's Savoyard theater group with professional costumes and scenery.

Religious work continued, with a schedule of classes conducted by a staff of four instructors. Hebrew classes ranged from kindergarten through the elementary and secondary levels (including Bar Mitzvah training), with an evening school of Jewish Studies for adults.

The Judge Samuel Greenbaum Reading Room and Library, on the Alliance's fourth floor, was usually filled to capacity by college students and the general public. Overcrowded homes were not conducive to studying, and the local public libraries were not open on Sundays and closed at 8:45 P.M. on weekdays. Therefore, Mondays through Thursdays, it was not uncommon for college students to leave the Seward Park Library at closing time and cross over to the Alliance, where they could continue their homework until 10 P.M. In addition to various encyclopedias and reference books, the Reading Room offered the daily *New York Times*, Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers, and English, Yiddish, Hebrew, and German periodicals, which most people could not afford to buy during the Depression.

Adjoining the Reading Room was a Study Hall for elementary and high school students. The Study Hall provided a light, cheerful room in which to work, and students could obtain help with their homework (which their immigrant parents could not provide) from the attendant in charge, since those who served in this capacity were college students or graduates.

THE ART SCHOOL

A particularly important area of educational activity at the Alliance was the Art School, which was started in 1917 with Abbo Ostrowsky

as head.* Conceived (according to Ostrowsky) as a "community art center" dedicated to exploring "the inherent cultural potentialities" of its students, it provided a highly professional environment for serious students and gained prestige for fostering the "Ashcan" school of art. The Art School offered day and evening classes in painting, drawing, sculpture, and etching, and many famous artists were trained and later taught there, among them the sculptor Chaim Gross, who, like other graduates, dedicated enormous personal effort to the Alliance art program over many years. Other well-known graduates of this school include Elias Newman, Philip Evergood, Ben Shahn, Leonard Baskin, Concetta Scaraviglione, Moses and Isaac Soyer, Joseph Margulies, Jo Davidson, Dina Melicov, Leo Gottlieb, Peter Blume, and Abraham Walkowitz. The sculptor Jacob Epstein was an East Side boy who first studied drawing at the Alliance under Henry McBride, and he exhibited a small group of paintings there. Epstein went on to study sculpture in Paris and finally settled in London, where he acquired an international reputation and was ultimately knighted.

Annual exhibitions were held featuring the work of these accomplished artists as well as that of art students. In 1940 a major exhibition commemorating the Art School's twenty-fifth anniversary was sponsored by a group of leading citizens headed by Governor Herbert H. Lehman, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, Manhattan Borough President Stanley M. Isaacs, and a list of patrons that included

*An earlier, informal version of the school had been conducted at the Alliance under the direction of Henry McBride.

Maxwell Anderson, Benjamin Buttenweiser, Solomon Guggenheim, Rockwell Kent, Arthur Lehman, Samuel Lewisohn, James Marshall, Joseph Proskauer, James Speyer, Sol Stroock, A. H. Sulzberger, and Felix Warburg. The show was held at the Associated American Artists Galleries on Fifth Avenue, and a handsome exhibition book was published.

The Alliance sustained the Art School on its own budget with assistance from the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies. In addition, a Workers Art Traveling Scholarship program was established by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, enabling qualified students to study abroad.

Abbo Ostrowsky continued to run the art program until 1955. During this period the Modernist movement that produced the New York School began to achieve recognition and finally came to dominate the American art scene. Ostrowsky was a traditionalist who believed that artists should have a basic education in figure drawing and anatomy. Despite the rise of abstract painting he held to his belief that formal and figural training gave a student the ability to chart his own creative course, "steer[ing] clear from all momentary and superfluous influences." He prized above all "independence of thought and sincerity of conviction," and he asserted that the guiding spirit of the program "was and still is a religious feeling for the value of the work."

Nevertheless, Ostrowsky's outlook came in time to seem old-fashioned to his students, and attendance figures dropped as the

most talented among them began to look elsewhere for more up-to-date instruction. The Art School languished, and the question of what to do about this trend was much debated. Ostrowsky was finally replaced by Alexander Dobkin, an accomplished painter with a more "modern" approach. Dobkin soon restored the school to vigorous activity, though nothing as yet has matched its "golden age" in the years between the wars.

THE SOCIAL CLUBS

One important aspect of the community work sponsored by the Alliance was embodied in the various clubs and circles that met under its roof. These were divided into three main categories, distinguished by sex and age: Girls', Boys', and a Mothers' Department. The Girls' and Boys' Departments were divided into Juniors (7-10), Intermediates (11-14) and Seniors (15-18). The Girls' Department was housed on the second floor, the Boys' Department on the third, and the Mothers' Department was on the fourth.

The boys had their athletic teams, a playroom with ping-pong and billiards, and a large Boy Scout division that sponsored hikes and outings. There were also a variety of literary, social, and debating clubs. The season concluded with an outdoor meet, usually sponsored by the Alumni Association and held in the Seward Park High School athletic field. The boys formed up outside the Alliance

in their trunks and jerseys and, preceded by the Boy Scout fife and drum corps, marched to the field at Essex and Hester Streets. These were colorful, well-publicized events, often attended by distinguished alumni and sports or entertainment personalities.

The girls pursued a wide range of interests in the clubs, among them choral singing, costume parades, and a doll and toy exhibit with a contest that was held around Hanukah and Christmas; the dolls and toys were afterward distributed to children in hospitals and orphanages. A large "domestic science" division for girls included cooking and sewing clubs, while women could take advanced dressmaking lessons. A fashion show was always held at the end of the season. Also, on Saturday and Sunday night, co-educational dances were held in the gym. These dances were carefully supervised, and no drinking or unseemly behavior was allowed.

The activities of the various girls' clubs were typically well structured. They usually involved an hour of manual work, followed by games and "a short ethical talk by the teachers." The talks dealt with sex and personal hygiene and with topics like "What makes a home?" In the afternoons, the girls were taken to the "model flat" maintained by the Alliance and given practical demonstrations of housekeeping methods. Club leaders were Uptown "society ladies," generally friends of the trustees, who volunteered their time.

The mothers' clubs comprised informal groups of women who met and freely discussed whatever subjects of general interest most

concerned them. They were designed to disseminate information concerning child care and family management. In the interest of preserving the immigrant family from disruptive influences—particularly those emanating from the street, where the children ran wild—club leaders, Dr. Fleischman said, "try to show the mothers the necessity of keeping a more watchful eye on their children, explaining to them just what is happening around here." Hygiene and diet were discussed, and classes in "American cooking" and preservation methods were conducted. Among numerous others, there were a Home Study Club, an Ida Straus Club, a Child Study Club, a Mothers Service Club, a Hospital Service Club, and a Progressive Mothers Club. In 1922 a vacation club was organized by the Mothers Department, and in 1925 the Alliance rented a house in Highlands, New Jersey as a summer home for women.

One of Dr. Fleischman's special projects was the "model flat" that was set up on the Lower East Side as an Americanizing aid. Fleischman told a *New York Times* reporter,

> I am thinking of going over on Hester Street . . . and renting a flat there—just an average, typical east side flat to be furnished in typical east side fashion. I am going to have a woman in charge to show the mothers the proper method of keeping house. I saw one the other day—every room beautifully light, all with windows on the street, lovely, light and airy rooms, hot and cold water, white enamel tub—with everything that 99 percent of these people never have. That is not my idea at all. I am going to teach the women here to keep house with what they have, with

> conditions as they exist, not in a model flat where conditions are entirely different from the average dark, dingy, cold-water, walk-up sort of flat such as these people rent. The idea is to show the mothers how to get the best possible result under these conditions.

The stigma of upper-class condescension has sometimes been attached to Fleischman's program. It has been argued that the attitude implicit in these classes was a patronizing one, with an assumption that the immigrants were ignorant of cleanliness and principles of hygiene. This charge is not borne out by testimony of the period, however. Evidently, for those who had no choice but to remain in the ghetto, Fleischman's was often a useful approach.

Fleischman told the *New York Times* that the Alliance was "dedicated to doing its share in allaying the general unrest," by which he meant the intensifying radicalism then prevalent among immigrants of the laboring classes. He made no bones about his mission in the neighborhood, which was "the making of fine American men and women, right thinking, straight dealing men and women." The Alliance, he said, "proposes to continue in that path, undeterred by any so-called 'neighborhood sentiment'; and it will not be diverted from its path by any feeling that may be displayed by the most ardent red radicals."

This determined attitude on the part of the Alliance trustees naturally led to friction with some community elements. But it had long been clear that no program of Americanization could ever

please the whole community. Some factions would always be found to resist and complain. Nevertheless, accommodations had been made wherever possible. For as Judge Samuel Greenbaum told the same reporter, "the Educational Alliance long ago realized that Americanization is not brought about by the mere teaching of English, American history and government. The task is far more subtle. Ways and means must be adopted which gradually and unconsciously lead to a comprehension of American institutions."

Fleischman also reformed the boys' clubs, some of whose activities, he said, were without substantial value. "I am going to insist that every club for boys in this building have as its basis for existence some technical or manual work. . . . I have in mind things as varied as Venetian iron work, electric wiring, practical astronomy, and the study of botany—some concrete, definite thing." Fleischman criticized past practice in the clubs—especially their emphasis on conveying American political ideas through constitutional procedure. Activities in the literary and social clubs, he said, had been limited mainly to organizing dances and "squabbling about the balance in the treasury," while the debating clubs produced little more than empty arguments on subjects the boys knew nothing about and which made for "a peculiar type of mental sophistry."

Something of Fleischman's personal vigor is conveyed by these remarks on club reform:

> The leader will be the leader, just as in the old days, but instead of these boys wasting their time with "Mr. Chairman

> this and Mr. Chairman that," and suspending the constitution and reinstating the constitution according to a manual, the manual is going to get kicked out of the front door. It has been the bane of my existence here. Whenever someone thinks something is unconstitutional they suspend the constitution—we are tired of it.

Dr. Fleischman devised his own *Manual for Club Leaders*, a fascinating document that outlines his philosophy of leadership and at the same time conveys a vivid impression of his skeptical, pragmatic mind. Fleischman wrote, "It is well to remember that boys and young men do not, generally speaking, organize for any very definite purpose, in spite of the elaborate and high-sounding phrases which frequently abound in the preambles of their club constitutions." The club will therefore tend to "drift from one momentary interest to another" unless the leader gives direction and coherence to its meetings. "The boys furnish the power—the leader must construct the machine." Fleischman stated that the clubs exist for social (moral) purposes, and should not attempt to duplicate the intellectual work that is done in the schools, specifying that the clubs should be "based upon some strong and permanent interest of the members." Returning to a favorite theme, he wrote,

> Those who direct clubs of Jewish young men will soon note that so-called parliamentary practice and verbal dialectics exert so powerful an influence, that unless great caution is exercised they will tend to become an overpowering and permanent interest (or affliction) to the

> exclusion of practically everything else. This tendency must be resolutely opposed, if social work of a higher kind is to receive attention.

The widely noted Jewish passion both for social organization and for critical dissent had ample play throughout this period. Fleischman's experience at the Alliance may have seemed to him a microcosm of that larger, more contentious Jewish world outside the gates. It was apparently his hope that the young men who emerged from this institution would not perpetuate the problem, but would lend themselves to more constructive ends.

There were no men's clubs as such, but men attended the gym for athletics and games and went to the Reading Room in large numbers. The gym was used intensively. A fine boxing program produced several local champions, including Ruby Goldstein and Ben Jeby. At least one tournament was staged, supervised by famous athletes who were Alliance graduates. A weight-lifting program was popular with men, and basketball and handball teams (each boys' club had one) held interclub and interagency competitions. Banners and trophies were proudly displayed in the Alliance lobby.

Also worthy of mention is the Seward Park Gardening Club. By arrangement with the Parks Department, Dr. Fleischman had secured a plot of ground in Seward Park, just opposite the main Alliance building, where every summer about one hundred boys and girls were taught how to garden. The Parks Department

supplied both seeds and instructor, and the children grew vegetables and flowers in plots four feet square. A small but well-publicized harvest festival was held every year in the fall.

ALLIANCE CAMPS

The Alliance camping program is perhaps the best example of the shift from activities typical of a settlement to those of a Jewish Center. Camping was a major thrust of most Jewish neighborhood houses and Y's. But while other Jewish Centers served a middle class community, the Alliance continued to meet the needs primarily of lower-middle and working class families.

During the infantile paralysis epidemic of 1916, Edalia became a convalescent home for girls.* In the same year, the Alliance reported that almost 2,000 boys and men had spent their two-week vacations at Surprise Lake. The staff had grown to include social and athletic directors, instructors in manual training and agriculture, and eleven leaders. Activities included sports and athletic tournaments, dramatic entertainments, religious talks and lectures, and

*During the polio epidemic of 1916, the roof garden served as a neighborhood medical checkpoint. According to the Annual Report for 1917, "Every child applying for admission to the roof garden was required to fill out a card giving its name, address, age, grade in school, number in family, father's and mother's name and signature. These cards were then compared with the lists received daily from the Board of Health. . . . Children coming from infected houses were . . . refused admission." Others were admitted to the roof only after a compulsory shower.

even a camp newspaper. Medical and dental clinics were also established. During World War I the Alliance offered Surprise Lake to the Army as a training facility.

Alliance camps expanded greatly in the period between the two world wars, and became a favorite object of support among alumni. Sizable bequests were made to the Alliance for this purpose, and distinguished former campers made contributions of personal time and effort as well. Eddie Cantor, who had attended Surprise Lake as a boy, became deeply involved in its support. For several years he ran a benefit performance in a theater in Cold Spring-on-the-Hudson, whose proceeds he donated to the camp (he raised a total of about $10,000 a year). An Eddie Cantor Camp Committee was thereafter formed to continue and enlarge the financing of this program. In 1917 a winter camp for undernourished boys was opened, with three New York City teachers providing educational services. In 1917, Surprise Lake became an independent entity.

In 1921 Mrs. William Salomon contributed $20,000 as a memorial to her husband with which a campsite was purchased in Holmes, New York.* The Alliance vacation homes in Rumson and Highlands were combined at Camp Salomon, which initially housed about 180 women, girls, and babies. The camp was subsequently

*In 1921 William Salomon left $25,000 to the Educational Alliance in his will, without restrictions. Salomon had made an earlier gift of some acreage in Carmel, New York. Alliance trustees met with Mrs. Salomon, and as a result she contributed $20,000 to a memorial fund. In 1927 Mrs. Salomon left another $50,000 to the Alliance in her will, and three years later a campsite of 197 acres was purchased in Patterson, New York with these funds.

expanded, and in the summer of 1939 it served 883 people. The camp was eventually sold and a larger campsite purchased when the demand for these facilities continued to increase.

DEPRESSION AND WARTIME ACTIVITIES

The Alliance continued to respond to neighborhood needs with flexibility and timeliness. A good example is the Legal Aid Bureau, re-established at the Alliance in 1916 after a hiatus of some years, which in its first two years settled 5,000 cases. By 1923 the Bureau had a staff of three attorneys, a process server, and two secretaries. The Bureau handled domestic and commercial grievances and the kind of employment disputes that would later be increasingly handled by the labor unions. Cases were settled if possible by conciliation, or by litigation if necessary. The consultation fee at the Alliance was twenty-five cents, and while court costs were paid by the litigant, the Alliance took no percentage of the claims that were collected. In 1925 the Bureau handled 3,000 cases, gave advice in 1,800 others, and collected more than $20,000 for its clients; two years later, a report to the board put the number of cases handled yearly at five thousand. In 1932, consulting attorney Louis Stone cited the effects of the Depression on working men and their families, including evictions, foreclosures, employment disputes, and "saddest of all, a tremendous increase in the number of

matrimonial difficulties." During this period, the Bureau's work was taken up and finally superseded by the Legal Aid Society, which handled criminal cases as well. The Alliance program, though much needed and well used, was a constant drain on the budget and was finally discontinued in 1932, with all cases referred to the City's Legal Aid Society. But it is another example of a "demonstration program" pioneered and developed by the Alliance and later institutionalized by a government agency.

The Depression had increased the need for counseling services, and after the Legal Aid Bureau was closed, it was found that many people still had problems that could not be referred to the Legal Aid Society. Thus, in 1937 the Neighborhood Service Department was opened, addressing a wide range of family and community needs from domestic problems to jobs and housing. A staff worker was engaged to interview complainants, offer them advice and encouragement, and refer them to the appropriate agency. The Neighborhood Service Program continued until the Cohen Survey of 1948 recommended that it be abandoned, although a similar service would later be reinstated.

Another pioneering program first established at the Alliance was the Speech Clinic, started in 1931 by Matthew Diamond. This was the first clinic in New York to treat speech defects psychologically. Diamond worked alone in this office for six years, conducting twice-weekly meetings of a group of about fifteen people. By 1938 the clinic had become a separate department, and by 1940 it had a staff of six full-time speech therapists, an eminent board of

consultants, and a treatment load of sixty cases daily. In 1943, Diamond was drafted into the Army, and the clinic was discontinued.

When the Works Progress Administration came into existence, the Educational Alliance became its neighborhood headquarters. Ella Ostrowsky was Supervisor of the Federal Art Program on the Lower East Side, and at her direction many activities were undertaken, including children's art exhibits at uptown galleries and in Central Park. With WPA staff, the Alliance also offered typing, stenography, and bookkeeping classes, and English classes for the foreign-born included preparation for the Citizenship and Literacy Test, administered by the naturalization authorities as a prerequisite for voting. A "job hunt" program run by William Karp sent teams of neatly dressed young people out to canvass prospective employers. Eleanor Roosevelt, a strong supporter of the Educational Alliance who made several appearances there during this period, addressed one such group with an inspirational lecture.

Like everyone else in the country, the Alliance pitched in wholeheartedly to assist the war effort. The mothers' clubs were extremely active: they provided breakfast send-offs for the soldiers going to Europe, rolled bandages and made clothing for the Red Cross, sold War Bonds, and made many other contributions to the national effort. Women and men sewed and knit hundreds of garments for the Red Cross. Art students turned to salvage,

converting discarded materials into useful articles. Alliance Scouts were trained as air raid messengers, and a Red Cross Disaster Station was established in the building.

The Alliance also engaged in direct fundraising efforts, contributing in 1942 over $11,000 from the sale of war stamps and bonds and collecting an additional thousand dollars for the USO, Red Cross, and other Allied relief agencies—a testament to the level of patriotic feeling among immigrants in the district. Mr. Samuel S. Fishzohn, executive director at the time (1938-1945), reporting this total to the *New York Times* in November 1942, remarked, "That may not be very impressive compared with Wall Street figures, but in this neighborhood, thought of in terms of nickels and dimes, it is a tremendous amount of money."[1] Fishzohn attested to the Alliance's ability to respond adaptively to current needs when he remarked, "All we had to do was add war activities to our basic program and focus the attention of all groups on defense work." Among other activities, a Teenage Canteen was set up in January 1944, under the supervision of Billie Schiffres (later Billie Schiffres Rosen, an Alliance board member). Canteen members participated in various fundraising activities, including dances and auctions; during one week of the U.S. War Bond Drive (December 18-25, 1944), they raised $5,000. They also sent mail and packages to members in uniform, and a large Honor Roll was posted listing all the Canteen members serving in the Armed Forces. In 1946 a Veterans Service Center was set up to provide

social and educational activities. The Center also offered job counseling, aptitude tests, and a course in small business.

Like other settlements, the Alliance experienced a drop in attendance during the war. Records show that in 1943 the Alliance served a daily total of about 3,300 people. Alliance publications of the period notably display an upbeat democratic and assimilationist (or pluralistic) tone.

In 1915, efforts had been made to form an Alumni Association. But the attempt did not succeed until 1924, when dues were first collected and a modest range of activities began. The Association remained largely a social club that made occasional contributions to the Alliance, presenting its winning athletes with medals and trophies. In 1939 the Alumni Association was reorganized and incorporated, and a membership drive brought in many new alumni. Alumni rooms were established in the building with annual dues of two dollars collected from the membership. Boy Scout uniforms were purchased, and food and clothing distributions were made in the neighborhood. In 1940 the Alumni Association held an "Americanism Rally" at the Randall's Island Stadium, hosted by Eddie Cantor and featuring an Americanization program put on by the Jewish War Veterans of New York State. Celebrities in attendance included Al Jolson, Martha Raye, Milton Berle, Victor Moore, Jack Dempsey, and others who are less well known today. A baseball game was also played between teams from two rival film companies, Paramount Pictures and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Professionalization of Social Work

In the period between the two world wars, social work became increasingly professionalized and the older spirit of voluntarism was replaced by a more methodical approach. But debate and disagreement were endemic in the field for many years. A dispute arose, for example, around the question of Jewish content in graduate training. A Graduate School of Jewish Social Work was established at New York University in 1924, under the direction of Maurice J. Karpf, whose program reflected a compromise between those who saw no distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish social work and those who thought there was a need for a positive cultural ideology for workers concerned with Jewish neighborhood problems. Technical courses were given by the New York School of Social Work, while the Jewish part of the curriculum was handled by the Graduate School. The program disappeared in 1940.

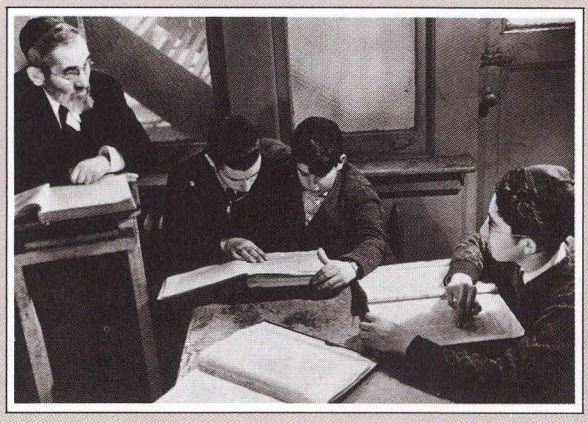
The Jewish Welfare Board also attempted to inject Jewish content into social work training by underwriting special courses at existing schools, but these efforts were mainly rebuffed. In 1941, a short-lived Training Bureau for Jewish Communal Service was established to prepare experienced social workers for executive positions. In the 1950s the Yeshiva University in New York started a more successful social work training program, conducted under Jewish auspices.

The establishment of graduate schools in social work led to

the adoption of a psychological orientation with an emphasis on objective procedural and assessment techniques. The Alliance at first resisted these new tendencies, remaining for many years a preserve of the older voluntarist spirit. The change, however, was inevitable. A certain amount of friction resulted from the shift, and various complaints have been recorded. According to one anonymous staff member, for example, the Alliance gymnasium began to fall into disuse when, "with the advent of professional social workers, competition was frowned upon and the incentive thus withdrawn brought about the gradual decline of interest in gym activities." The same observer notes that the annual boys' clubs athletic meet was discontinued in the era of "the new social work theory and concept" which frowned on individual competition and emphasized group work and sociability.

In short, the Educational Alliance did not emerge overnight from the settlement phase of its existence to embrace either the new social group work orientation or the modern conception of the Jewish Community Center. Rather it remained somewhere in between. But much as it had in the past, this indeterminate identity actually enhanced the Alliance's ability to adapt to its changing environment.

The Postwar Era



Changes in the Neighborhood

The Lower East Side in the years immediately after V-J Day was in many respects little changed from the same neighborhood at the end of the previous world war. It was still a massive slum, with a population density more than three times that of any other New York neighborhood. Though perhaps one-sixth of its residents now lived in the high-rise middle-income housing projects that rimmed the

area, the majority inhabited decrepit, overcrowded, and unsanitary nineteenth-century tenements; the average rent was the lowest in Manhattan. Tuberculosis still ravaged the poorest families, with 886 cases officially registered in 1948—a rate exceeded only in Harlem—and during the war, many East Side boys and men had been turned down for military service due to health-related problems.

Yet there had been major demographic shifts in the generation since immigration had ended in 1924. The Lower East Side, once one of the most crowded neighborhoods in America, had seen its population drop from half a million people in 1910 to just over 200,000 by 1940, where it stayed in the coming decades. In what had been an area with a large Jewish majority, the number of Jews had steadily decreased to about 40 percent of the overall East Side population by 1946 (though the Jewish population actually increased somewhat in the next decade). While the community was still heavily foreign-born, poor, working-class, and at least nominally Orthodox in religious sympathies, as it had been since before the turn of the century, its cohesiveness had disintegrated, and there was no real Jewish leadership to speak of.

Moreover, this Jewish population served by the Educational Alliance included a younger native-born generation that was now somewhat alienated from the world of its fathers. The tendency of Jewish identification to fall off among the children of immigrants had been noticed early in the century, but now with the second and third generations the problem was reaching new proportions.

Even among the teenage and young adult members of the Educational Alliance, according to an in-house study, two out of five had no synagogue affiliation at all, and only one-third kept *kashruth*.

A distinctly new immigrant group was also entering the neighborhood in these years, and in some ways displacing and disturbing the settled and aging community of Jewish people. From 1947 to 1949, the hitherto little-noticed Puerto Rican population mushroomed from 4,000 to 11,000 and thereafter grew at a rapid rate. The Puerto Ricans faced a host of problems common to any new immigrant group—problems of language, the impact of urbanization, and cultural adaptation. Due to a citywide housing shortage in postwar New York, population outflow from the Lower East Side had been temporarily halted, and tensions were visibly rising as competition increased for jobs, housing, and community services. The Puerto Rican immigrants were often blamed by members of the older community for deteriorating conditions in the neighborhood.

The newcomers moved into the worst tenement blocks in the heart of the Lower East Side. Many of these buildings, often the same ones Jewish residents had finally managed to escape from, were close to the Educational Alliance, the key center of Jewish community life.

Concurrently, two more shifts in population occurred in the late forties and early fifties: while many of the neighborhood's aging Jewish residents moved to Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the suburbs, younger, middle-class Jewish people began to move back

into the new cooperative apartment buildings, many of which were close to the Alliance. Another influx, less noticed at the time, was of extremely Orthodox East European Jews. Although the majority of these postwar refugees settled in various Brooklyn communities, significant numbers came to the Lower East Side.

JEWISH SOCIAL WORK: THEORY AND PRACTICE

By 1947 it was clear to its trustees that the Alliance would have to adapt to new circumstances. Not only was the neighborhood in flux, but Jewish philanthropic attitudes and models of social work practice were also changing.

The Holocaust in Europe and the ensuing struggle to establish a Jewish state in Palestine had acted powerfully on the consciousness of American Jews. The impact was felt in every area of Jewish life, and in philanthropy especially. An influential report commissioned by the National Jewish Welfare Board in 1947 (written by Dr. Oscar I. Janowsky) emphasized the theme of group survival and stressed the need for Jewish institutions to inculcate Jewish values.

Janowsky was in general agreement with the views of "cultural pluralists" like I. B. Berkson and Horace Kallen, who regarded the community center as a democratic institution where "diversity" would flourish. But in the postwar crisis atmosphere, the emphasis on Jewish survival had come to outweigh the simply pluralistic

impulse. Janowsky insisted on the community center having a Jewish character. So long as such institutions were supported by the Jewish community, they must serve its higher interests first and foremost. With respect to the mixed case of "Jewish settlements" (of which the Educational Alliance was the premier example), Janowsky wrote:

> Jewish group work agencies, however denominated, must be Jewish or they have no reason for existence. . . . a nonsectarian Jewish settlement or educational alliance [sic] is a contradiction in terms. . . . nonsectarian agencies should be under nonsectarian direction, they should not be sponsored and financed exclusively or predominantly by the Jewish group.[1]

Janowsky also recommended a more centralized approach to philanthropic policy and funding in the interest of coherence and efficiency. And most existing Jewish settlements did eventually reform themselves along the lines of the Jewish community center.

Acting on Janowsky's recommendations, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York spearheaded the movement to organize all Jewish community centers in New York as explicitly Jewish institutions under one administration and Board of Trustees. The Alliance's Board of Trustees nearly split on this issue. However, a majority decided that the agency should maintain its autonomy, recognizing its Jewish background and orientation but also

its traditional commitment to serving all the people of the Lower East Side.

Another significant problem that confronted the Alliance's leadership was the continuing evolution of social work theory and practice. The 1930s were a watershed for social work, and during this period four basic approaches developed: social case work, social action, community organization, and social group work. Most Jewish agencies emerged from the Depression as professionalized centers of social case work, centered on the family and its economic and psychological problems. Family-life education programs (at the Alliance and elsewhere) had previously taken the form of mass lectures and informal meetings with parents. In the late thirties and early forties, as the group work concept gained ascendancy, family programs became more refined—typically structured as ongoing discussion groups directed by a qualified (accredited) professional.

But the problem of developing a specifically Jewish branch of social work was far from settled. While American society had offered conditions that tended to encourage the development of Jewish philanthropy in general, other factors worked almost simultaneously to diminish the growth of sectarianism in social service. One such factor was the movement of federal and state agencies into social service on a massive scale, "virtually eliminating relief as a function of voluntary social service," as historian Herman Stein observes, and "limiting private philanthropy to special fields."[2] Another factor was the avowedly "secular humanist" ideology of

social workers themselves, including Jewish social workers, who regarded any sectarian impulse as foreign to the nature and values of the profession.

Although most Jewish community centers agreed on the idea of the group work process as a means of leading individuals to more "democratic and socially adaptive behavior," they differed widely—often bitterly—on the question of Jewish values in the field. According to Stein, "Many group workers felt that a strictly sectarian emphasis was antithetical to the underlying non-sectarian and humanistic values of social work."[3] The aim of social work, from this perspective, was to persuade the individual to reach out beyond his own group and participate in an ethnically diverse community life—especially important if the ultimate goal was to encourage social action. Stein concludes that the "radically uneven" commitment to Judaism among Jewish community centers persisted for many years and was partly responsible for the Janowsky Report.[4]

In the years between the wars, the Alliance had largely remained aloof from the increasing professionalization of settlement house work as a branch of social science, preserving its volunteer status and maintaining its focus on the Americanization of the neighborhood's mainly Jewish youth. Without ignoring current trends, the Alliance had successfully relied on traditional mass recreation and club-work activities—manifesting the tendency of all institutions to persist in established methods, so long as they are adequate to the institution's fundamental mission. But in the forties the agency

found itself increasingly pressed on every front to redefine its self-conception. Among other things, the delay in professionalization was beginning to produce adverse consequences: in particular, the Educational Alliance, with its traditionalist program, was unable to secure recognition as an accredited site for field work by students in graduate social work departments and thus could not avail itself of a basic resource upon which other agencies had long relied.

But in the decade after World War II, the Educational Alliance underwent a momentous reorientation, responding to these changes within and outside the community, both in its practice and in its philosophy as a Jewish philanthropic institution. One measure of this transformation is that in subsequent decades the Alliance was repeatedly cited as the nation's largest center for the training of student social group workers.

THE COHEN SURVEY

The changing neighborhood demographics and a desire to redefine the Alliance's basic mission led the Board of Trustees in 1948 to commission Dr. Nathan E. Cohen of the New York School of Social Work at Columbia University to prepare a comprehensive survey of the agency, including recommendations for overall direction and specific internal reforms. After two years of intensive examination, Dr. Cohen recommended a sweeping reorientation of the Alliance's basic social work practice, a new and pluralistic

definition of its overall mission, and a complete administrative overhaul that would at last bring the agency's vast array of programs into a single, integrated structure.

Most significantly, in terms of the Alliance's day-to-day work, Dr. Cohen proposed a sharp shift away from the old-fashioned programs of mass recreation toward the basic social work technique of group work, aimed at developing the full potential of each individual within his social context. The long-established clubs of the Educational Alliance, primarily mothers' groups, with their emphasis on personal ties and formal procedures, and run by familiar agency staff who usually lacked any professional training, were to give way to smaller groups focused on purposeful activities under professionally trained social workers. Piecemeal community assistance work was to be abandoned in favor of specific therapeutic programs designed to meet scientifically determined needs, leaving "case work" and community organizing to more appropriate private and city agencies.

Equally important, at a time of intense and painful self-examination for American Jews in light of the Holocaust, as well as America's new global role, was Cohen's vision of a center with a self-consciously Jewish orientation that was at the same time pluralistic and committed to bringing people of widely varying backgrounds together. This "intracultural" approach, as he called it, bridged the gap between the existing definitions of the nonsectarian professional agency or settlement house and the wholly sectarian Jewish community center. In the words of a follow-up

study, *Between Two Bridges*, conducted from 1953 to 1954 by New York University's Center for Human Relations Studies, the Alliance needed to be both a "community of believers" and a "community of neighbors."

Cohen's analysis of Alliance membership revealed that the majority were either adults over fifty-five or children under fourteen. Over one-fifth of the membership now lived in Brooklyn. Attendance had declined from a high of 79,000 in 1940 to a wartime low of 36,000 in 1945, had climbed for the next two years, and displayed a worrisome drop of 14 percent in 1948. Further, teenage membership was steadily declining, and adult male membership had not increased. Most adults under fifty-five were women, and the ratio of women to men overall was two to one. (Cohen accounted for this difference by the popularity of Mothers' Clubs and the poor condition of the Alliance's physical education facilities.) Non-Jewish members represented about 25 percent of the total, but the bulk of them were in the youth and children's age groups and were mostly engaged not in clubs but in classes and special interest groups—what Cohen termed the "vestibule" activities of the agency. No substantial rise in adult membership was noted among non-Jews, despite the rising numbers of new immigrants and the Alliance's official open-door policy. According to workers in neighboring settlements, the Alliance was regarded as "a Jewish house" by most East Siders.

Cohen devoted a good deal of attention to the problem of declining youth membership, observing that social service agencies

would have to devise new means for recapturing the interest of young people, especially Jewish teenagers, who might offer the potential for a reinvigorated Jewish community "if they are given the opportunity to grow and develop." The estrangement of this teenage group from traditional culture, and from Jewish agencies like the Alliance, was seen in the prevalence of "cellar clubs" throughout the neighborhood. These were private jazz and social clubs, maintained by members' contributions, where young men and women (a large percentage of them Jewish) escaped the constraints of both home and settlement house—where the rules were "too restrictive"—to listen to the radio "without interference," dance, drink, play cards, and socialize much like other American youth.

The East Side Federation of Cellar Clubs reported a membership of fifty clubs in 1948, and Cohen noted that there were many unaffiliated ones. This federation of clubs had sponsored or was planning a considerable range of activities, including sports competitions, a newspaper, socials, community action on the neighborhood housing problem, and a new children's playground conceived as a war memorial.

Cohen argued that the exodus of young people from the Alliance to these clubs reflected the fact that their needs were not being met by the agency, and he questioned whether the "leadership and general climate" of the Alliance clubs—seen as unduly paternalistic by teenagers—might not be guilty of provoking the natural rebelliousness of youth. Although the cellar clubs were not them-

selves "asocial," Cohen pointed to the prospect of an increase in vandalism and delinquency, as well as other problems stemming from the mounting ethnic tensions in the neighborhood, combined with the lack of adult supervision and inadequate social services. This anticipated growth in gang activity would very soon be realized. Already by 1947, as Cohen noted, Alliance records attested to the fearful attitude of local residents, ranging from an aversion to "rough boys" to the perceived need of some members actually to arm themselves as a matter of self-protection.

Cohen recommended the creation of a Young Adults division, and advocated reaching out to cellar club members by means of a Junior Alumni group and a special consultation service. He also suggested that cellar clubs be encouraged to make use of the Alliance auditorium for presenting events and performances. Mainly he called for a "professional approach" to youth activities that would take into account the special psychological and social problems faced by young people in the urban environment.

The survey strongly criticized several Alliance departments and made suggestions for improving them. The Neighborhood Service department, organized in 1937 "to assist those in the community who need help," had come to be regarded as a regular place of resort for any need that might arise, from child care, housing, and employment problems to camp placement, veterans assistance, and vocational guidance. Cohen regarded the department as "an agency within the agency" performing case work functions that deviated from the Alliance's main purposes. A more useful and appropriate

course, he said, would be to institute a professionally-staffed membership service department that would centralize intake, referrals, and placement. It would also keep individual records and perform an ongoing study of membership needs.

Of the Alliance's traditional programs, Cohen singled out the People's Synagogue and the Art School as being farthest out of step with the newly recommended focus of the agency. The People's Synagogue had been established under the terms of the Alliance's founding charter—a document, he noted, that "may not have much bearing on the present needs of the community or on the present program of the agency"—which stated that the Alliance should respond to the religious needs of its constituents. But according to Cohen, the name People's Synagogue had been "a misnomer from the beginning," as it was not a synagogue in the technical sense. Of the three traditional functions of the synagogue—as house of worship, house of study, and house of assembly—the Alliance fulfilled only the first, and that sporadically. Moreover, the congregation had no voice in its administration and no responsibility for maintaining it. Cohen suggested that the Synagogue be detached from the Alliance and allowed to run separately, although continuing to make use of Alliance facilities.

Instead of trying to minister to the neighborhood's spiritual needs, Cohen said, the Committee on Religious Work should focus on a program of religious education through "a modern Hebrew school," to be directed by the head of the religious department. This person, Cohen stipulated, should be a professional educator

and not a rabbi. Attendance at religious classes had reached its nadir in 1945 at 154 (down from a turn-of-the-century peak of 3,500). In the following five years the number had increased by nearly 70 percent—due mainly to the construction of new housing projects for middle-income Jewish families, but also to the reawakened interest in Judaism inspired by the cataclysmic events of the decade.

Cohen noted that although the school's purpose had been consistent from its origin, "one great change" in its philosophy was evident in its position on Zionism. Whereas in 1927 Zionism had been taught in "a purely objective way," now it had become "an integral part of the curriculum" and was taught "more subjectively than objectively." Emphasis was placed not so much on a traditional Hebrew education as on giving children "happy associations with the Jewish religion" in the framework of Conservative Judaism "so that these children will as adults be able to be Jews in America." The curriculum consisted of holiday celebrations, arts and crafts, dramatics, music, dancing, free reading, and children's Sabbath services.

As for the justly-famous Art School, Cohen's view was that a pre-professional art program had no place in a leisure-time agency like the Alliance. The "new approach" to art education adopted by the advocates of group work was strictly nonprofessional. Art was understood as an experience in personal development, at least within the context of the social service agency. While acknowledging the Art School's right to continued existence on the basis

of its past distinction, Cohen nonetheless advised that it either be brought into line with the new group work orientation or detached from the agency and treated as a separate entity.

Of all Alliance programs, Cohen felt the best developed were those in the children's division. Of the program that had grown out of the original East Side Day Nursery (taken over in 1928 by the Alliance), Cohen said approvingly, "The Nursery School is not only a day-care center, but in the spirit of recent developments in the nursery school field is a school stressing educational principles . . . interested in the total personality and physical development of the child." A sliding fee scale allowed for a mix of economic backgrounds, and although the school was "basically Jewish" (90 percent), no child had ever been excluded because of race, creed, or color. Emphasis was placed on Jewish content—the children said the Hebrew prayer over bread before lunch—but American holidays were also celebrated. Cohen stated that the school had had "a healthy development and growth during the years," and noted with approval that its director had "endeavored to bring into the school the new ideas and current processes recognized by authorities in the nursery school field as important." Not only was the staff "a professional one," but they continued now and then to take "refresher courses . . . in order to keep abreast with the new trends." His suggestions for the school were mainly of an organizational and administrative nature.

Cohen also praised the kindergartens (administered by the Religious Department): "The minute one enters a kindergarten

session, one feels that one is participating in an excitingly new chapter in Jewish education." Although the Alliance had not been a pioneer in this area, Cohen felt it should receive "due credit" for providing such a service. The English and Hebrew curriculum components were well integrated and the children learned easily and with evident enjoyment by means of stories, songs, and games.

He also applauded the approach taken by the religious school in general as being rightly dedicated not to the transmission of a given body of knowledge so much as to the development of "a wholesome, harmoniously integrated personality" and a responsive, willing attitude toward Jewish education. He did criticize the curriculum as insufficiently experimental and lacking in emphasis on the "universalistic, idealistic and moral purposes" of the Jewish tradition. "This school, like most other Jewish schools, has aimed to equip the students with traditional knowledge but has forgotten the Talmudic maxim that 'knowledge which does not lead to action is worthless.' " Cohen recommended higher salaries for kindergarten teachers, greater integration between the school and agency staff, and a concerted attempt to engage the parents in the educational process, as well as in setting goals and standards for the school.

There is no question that the new direction taken by the Alliance on the basis of Cohen's recommendations caused some friction in the agency. Such a momentous shift in the direction of professionalization of services could not be implemented overnight, nor did everyone approve of it at once. And it is clear that some

agency workers found the new social work emphasis too impersonal. But these stresses were typical of what was occurring in social agencies everywhere, as the voluntarist ethos was replaced by a more professional approach emphasizing rationality, efficiency, and method.

A broad-based opinion survey conducted by Cohen gives perhaps the plainest picture of the different camps that made up the Alliance and the contrasting views and attitudes of board, staff, and membership on many questions of importance. Among the more interesting observations to be drawn from the survey are these: the membership ranked highest overall the idea that the Alliance should "combat delinquency"—a reflection of neighborhood sentiment—while board and staff felt this priority to be less urgent. Both board and membership felt strongly that the agency's main purpose was to promote "the American way of life," while the staff hardly felt this at all. And while the membership and staff strongly agreed that the Alliance should "promote better understanding between Jews and Gentiles," the board gave this a low priority. Board and staff ranked highest the idea that the Alliance should help "develop the total personality" of its members, while the members themselves ranked this aim lowest of all.

There was general agreement that the Alliance should serve as a center for Jewish activities; less so on the question of its serving as a kind of informal town hall (the board appearing to think this *more* appropriate than either staff or membership). As for promoting Jewish identification, the board ranked this lowest overall—in

contrast to staff and membership, who thought it somewhat more important. On the question of whether the Alliance should be open to all or only to Jews, the board and younger members were practically unanimous in preferring the open-door policy, while staff and adult members were divided. Cohen concluded that this difference of opinion reflected a "philosophic" debate that went back to the beginnings of the agency, between the ideals of separatism and assimilation.

This same debate, said Cohen, was reflected in the tension between the contrasting ideals of the Settlement and the Jewish Community Center. While Jewish Center advocates wanted to promote "the American way of life" in a context of multiple, discrete ethnic groups, each maintaining separate institutions for this purpose, Settlement advocates wanted "to help individuals prepare for and exercise their rights to self-determination" as citizens simply, *outside* the context of an ethnic or religious affiliation. Indeed, the tendency of this view—in contrast to the "cultural pluralism" of the Community Center ideal—was to envision the eventual submersion of these separate ethnic groups into a "multi-ethnic" culture containing elements of all. Thus, Cohen commented, the Settlement ideal tended to view the world as a collection of neighborhoods rather than "peoples."

The key question, of course, was whether democracy was better served by the promotion of groups or individuals. The Alliance—which was affiliated with both the National Jewish Welfare Board and the National Federation of Settlements—would

have to integrate these overlapping and sometimes conflicting impulses. But Cohen expressed his own preference that the agency should favor the "intra-cultural" idea, which regarded American society "not as the sum of its parts, but rather a dynamic whole which is constantly changing, as are the groupings which contribute to it." As vital participants in an overall American culture, Cohen concluded, ethnic cultures have "neither meaning nor value" if treated separately or viewed "in static rather than dynamic terms." Later on, refinements would be added to this view by Daniel Dodson, who also advanced the concept of a "dynamic" ethnic culture, defining itself anew in every generation according to its needs by drawing on its own traditions as well as on accepted or indigenous American ones.

BETWEEN TWO BRIDGES

The Alliance's board paved the way for a new era of growth by accepting most of Dr. Cohen's proposals and rapidly instituting them in many areas of the agency's work. Not all were adopted, of course—the Art School, for example, continued as before—but it is notable that many more of his suggestions were accepted by the Board than would later be adopted after subsequent reports.

Thus a scientific intake procedure was established in the first years of the new decade, enabling the agency more consciously to meet the needs of every member; membership cards were issued,

signaling the switch from the previous "client" relationship. Innovative programs were initiated in 1950-51 to address the changing nature of the neighborhood, including a Social Adjustment Consultation Service (later the Counseling Services Department), with a psychiatric group worker and a consulting psychiatrist; an Older People's Program, led by a professional group worker, that integrated various existing activities; and a Summer Playschool for five- to eight-year-olds, plus a Day Camp for nine- to twelve-year-olds instead of unorganized activities on the Alliance's roof as in the past. The Cohen Survey was followed by a year's "residency" in the agency by Professor Gertrude Wilson of the University of Pittsburgh, who devoted her attention to organizational questions, particularly intake procedures and methods of group evaluation. Credited by Alliance workers with having played a vital role in the professionalization of the staff, her recommendations—implemented by Executive Director A. Harold Murray—were generally in line with the tendency encouraged by Cohen and resulted in the establishment of a Membership Intake Department, a monthly statistical recording system, and a Social Adjustment (consultation) Service.

But while the agency had embraced the group work method and had streamlined and integrated its programs in order to improve the delivery of social services, its character as a Jewish community center was still in question. A staff memo circulated in early 1952 by Louis Berkowitz (later director from 1960-1980) emphasized the need to build a more diverse Jewish membership, one that

would represent all religious affiliations and income levels within the community. Staff were asked to be aggressive and recruit these healthy elements; and Jewish content overall was to be "enriched." A Board subcommittee, meeting in April 1953 to discuss the purposes and goals of the Alliance, agreed that its status as a Jewish Center was increasingly compromised by the shifting social make-up of the neighborhood. Board members were concerned to strike a "democratic" balance between the demands of the Jewish Center and those of the Neighborhood House, and it was noted that some staff members were still confused about membership policy. Further, there remained some disagreement about what should constitute "Jewish content" in Alliance programs, given the still considerable variety of local Jewish groups. Nor was it entirely settled that the new group work approach could be balanced with the agency's Jewish emphasis.

In 1955 a major study of the neighborhood, *Between Two Bridges*, was published by New York University's Center for Human Relations Studies. This report focused as much on the Lower East Side community—the area served by the Educational Alliance—as on the agency itself. According to a foreword by Alliance president Donald Straus, the report sought to determine both "what the community thinks of itself" and "what [it] thinks of social agencies in general and the Alliance in particular." In justifying the expenditure of charity dollars on social research, Straus articulated a theme of central importance to the traditions of the agency by stating: "In the desirable teamwork of government and private agencies,

the challenging job of pioneering new approaches falls almost entirely on the shoulders of private boards who have both the flexibility and motivations for financing creative research," adding, "If [this report] encourages other boards to venture into this exciting area of responsibility, it will have served a purpose."

The survey team was led by social work professionals Daniel Dodson and Rhetta Arter of New York University. An underlying concern of the team, according to Straus, was (yet again) the re-examination of the agency's sectarian program in light of changing neighborhood conditions. This was especially important now, as with the surge of new arrivals there was suddenly real competition for local goods and services. The Puerto Rican population had dramatically increased by 20 percent from 1949 to 1950, and the study also identified a somewhat unexpected influx of new Jewish residents into the neighborhood. Meanwhile, housing remained critically short and in poor condition. The tenements—most of them built around 1910—were badly overcrowded, and many still lacked baths or steam heat. Even in the better-kept buildings, according to Dodson and Arter, the occupants "were engaged in a continuous struggle to keep them livable." As for local services, "Under the pressures of readjusting to meet new needs, some . . . have bent, some have broken, others have held firmly though flexibly."

As always, the fundamental question was how to strike a balance in the agency's programs between Jewish content and general community service. The NYU study confirmed that in the

face of the demographic changes, many long-time neighborhood residents felt displaced, while new arrivals often felt unwanted. Although some advantages were cited to living in the neighborhood—primarily low rents and community feeling—disadvantages included insecurity, dirt and deterioration, and undesirable neighbors. The Puerto Rican group was mainly (if unfairly) held responsible for overcrowding and the perceived decline of personal safety and comfort. Neighborhood associations in general became more exclusive, and the survey noted that youth groups of various kinds, including gangs, had formed apparently through a sense of common need for self-protection. Although there had as yet been no reports of "episodes of overt intergroup conflict," tensions were high and relations appeared to be worsening.

On the other hand, there was much evidence of a positive response in the community as well; many survey respondents expressed a surprising degree of understanding, tolerance and sympathy for those of other social groups. A fair proportion of long-time residents were quite prepared to see the Puerto Ricans as simply another immigrant group, similar in many ways to other new arrivals, and needing time to adjust to their conditions. The NYU report stressed the need for the Alliance to pursue the opportunity for rapprochement afforded by these sentiments and strengthen it wherever possible. The study recommended that the agency attempt "to steer the processes of social change to circumvent the types of conflict which ordinarily beset changing neighborhoods," specifically by helping to establish a strong neighbor-

hood council and by organizing community members such as store owners and business associations, in cooperation with other social agencies, to work for better integration.

The Alliance itself fared well in the survey among those who had heard of it or had some contact with it. One striking discovery was that Puerto Rican youths were highly conscious of discrimination and often had thought about the reasons for the social rejection they experienced. Many had concluded that it was important to become "Americanized" as quickly as possible, and that they must actively seek out agencies that might help them in this effort. Accordingly, the study recommended the general expansion of teenage and adult services, emphasizing greater neighborhood participation in program development and more inter-group and inter-agency initiatives, under the rubric of the agency's traditional concern with training for citizenship.

JEWISHNESS AND CULTURAL DEMOCRACY

As Nathan Glazer notes in his history of American Judaism, the theory of democratic diversity known as "cultural pluralism" was, properly speaking, a phenomenon of the 1920s and 1930s and could be confidently pronounced dead by 1955—as it was by Jewish writer C. B. Sherman, who declared that since American society tended to eliminate the independence of ethnic groups, the

theory of cultural pluralism (with its notion of minority rights) could no longer be considered valid.[5] The demise of this theory left American Jews with the problem of finding a new basis for a secular community in the face of the Holocaust, and a new ground for continued participation in American democracy after the founding of Israel.

Although these ideological questions were much belabored in some circles, the Educational Alliance was somewhat removed from such high-flown distinctions; the agency had a pressing set of practical problems to deal with, and the various competing philosophies elsewhere in the Jewish community appear to have left the trustees largely unmoved.

The NYU study reflected the sophisticated multi-ethnic vision of American society embraced by Dodson and Arter, and their recommendations confirmed the Alliance in the dominant tendency established by Cohen several years earlier, though they did register some minor philosophic differences. In light of the later concern—typical of the Alliance today—with "de-Judaization," Dodson's theoretical ground for the modern Jewish Community Center warrants some attention here.

"No nation can merit the distinction of being democratic if it does not make allowances for cultural diversity," Dodson asserted. And what was the proper role of a sectarian agency operated by a non-proselytizing minority group in a changing neighborhood? In the past, when the neighborhood had been predominantly Jewish, a sectarian program had been at the same time an effective

community program; this sectarian emphasis was reinforced by the generally close integration of Jewish religion and culture. Now that the neighborhood was ethnically diverse, with Jews becoming a minority, the problem most to be avoided was that of "group self-hate" among a minority people lacking an independent "cultural ground." Dodson therefore saw a strong need for institutions supported by and devoted to minority groups: "One must possess security in his own group before he can operate as a secure person in other groups."

Dodson went on to hypothesize that "an agency operated by the group itself, catering to its own," best satisfies the needs of minority youth, and it was in this context that an agency like the Alliance found its main justification. Cultural differences must not simply be tolerated but encouraged, as must the pursuit of "autonomous goals," in order for democracy to have any value. In terms reminiscent of the Americanization debate of the early 1900s, Dodson asserted that "the preservation of historical continuity is necessary to personality development," adding, "it is doubtful if [such continuity] can be preserved without institutional resources, such as community centers."

On the other hand, group institutions must not become parochial, contributing to personal dependency and "ghettoizing" their members. They must be more than just "a haven for self-segregation, a shield from the outside world." Dodson identified the Alliance's philosophy as lying somewhere between what Cohen had called cultural pluralism (which could lead to rigidity) and

what he preferred to call "cultural democracy." In this view, the individual was free to discard whatever elements of his cultural tradition were no longer needed for inner consistency. "It is as undemocratic to force minority children under pluralistic umbrellas when such do not meet needs as it is to force them under the umbrellas of dominant cultural uniformity irrespective of need." In Dodson's view—ascribed to the Alliance by the NYU report—each generation reinterprets its cultural inheritance in a way that meets current requirements. Social agencies that failed to permit or encourage this revisionary process, "isolate those served from the main currents of life and [lead] to stagnation."

Dodson went on to outline several possible directions for the future. The Alliance could intensify its sectarian emphasis, inevitably leading to group isolation and irrelevance; or it could abandon that emphasis, leading to a loss of specific identity; or it could take responsibility for redeveloping the neighborhood and become a community leader by demonstrating concern for all groups. If the Alliance could rise to this opportunity, Dodson said, it would offer an important demonstration of successful multi-ethnic cooperation, as well as of the contribution that sectarian agencies could make to democratic life.

These reflections indicate the degree of refinement which the pluralist philosophy had attained. The case for an expanded mission on the Lower East Side was now being made in terms of the multi-ethnic environment of the Jewish members themselves. If the agency's clients were part of a diverse community, the agency too

must reflect that diversity. Thus, a more active concern for excluded minority groups was really a function of the agency's commitment to the Jewish individual, seeking a stable identity in a constantly changing multi-ethnic context.

NEW PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Beginning in the early 1950s and continuing in various forms through the present, the Alliance has committed itself to leadership in wide-ranging community organization, as well as to increasing partnership with other state and local agencies. In October 1952 the Alliance merged with Stuyvesant Neighborhood House, the community center of the largely Jewish-populated Stuyvesant Town housing projects that had sprung up along 14th Street on the Lower East Side's northern border. In 1954, spurred by the NYU study and dedicated to playing a greater role in uniting the community, the agency joined in forming one of the most important community coalitions of the entire post-war period in New York, the Lower Eastside Neighborhoods Association (LENA). A major focus of LENA was combating the rise in juvenile delinquency and drug abuse among the alienated children of the working poor. Two similar efforts, organized in the Educational Alliance's immediate service area, were the Good Neighbors Council and the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, which sprang from the Lower East Side Remedial Reading and Recreation Committee, and which

early on brought parents of different backgrounds together to fight for quality education in the neighborhood's deteriorating schools as well as for improvements in housing, health care, and employment opportunities.

In the mid-1950s, the Educational Alliance established a range of regular programs to meet the neighborhood's most pressing needs, such as a Housing Clinic, which offered free advisory assistance and support to neighborhood residents in landlord-tenant disputes. The Alliance also helped spur a new cultural dynamism through such projects as the Tercentenary Celebration of the arrival of Jews in America in 1955. A commemorative program held in the Straus Auditorium on March 27 of that year included such celebrities as Steve Allen and Don Ameche, and the festival as a whole attracted over 10,000 people.

As of 1956, a majority of the Lower East Side population was still Jewish, mostly of the second and third generation, left behind for a variety of reasons by the emigration outward to more affluent neighborhoods. Although a substantial middle-class Jewish population existed, and was even increasing, those less fortunate were characterized by an Alliance brochure in 1956 as "defeated, frustrated, and in need of guidance." In relation to its new non-Jewish clientele the agency still saw its role as an Americanizing one, but in a slightly different sense. "It is not enough simply to open our doors to a throng of eager men, women and children thirsting for knowledge and culture," this official publication asserted. "We must also go out into the streets of the Lower East Side in an

effort to capture the hearts and minds of youngsters before they become enmeshed in teenage delinquency."

Indeed, Executive Director Dr. Simon Slavin, in a report to the board of that year, noted that group tensions had markedly heightened, and that gangs were forming—just as Cohen had predicted six years earlier. "Not only has one of the gangs participated in a killing of a teenager in the Bronx," Slavin wrote, "but the dread beginnings of gang syndication and increased . . . narcotics use seem evident. Personal attacks and robberies have become more frequent, and the carrying of guns and knives more common."

The Alliance was not long in responding to the problem. Operation Street Corner, begun in 1956 by the Alliance in cooperation with LENA and the New York City Youth Board, was a path-breaking early effort to reach out to troubled youth. Using trained social workers to sway burgeoning teenage gangs from casual violence, petty crime, and narcotics addiction via person-to-person daily contact on the streets, the Alliance created a model for effective antipoverty activism. Youth workers set up shop in neighborhood hangouts—candy stores, street corners, cellar clubs—in what the Alliance described as "a preventive program designed to influence unaffiliated groups before they have hardened into delinquent gangs." Other youth activities included a teenage day camp in Staten Island and a planned "work camp" in Brewster, New York.

The proportion of senior citizens was higher on the Lower

East Side than the national average—about 10 percent in 1956—and programs for the aged and mental health services accordingly became a major focus of Alliance activity in this decade. Beginning in 1950 an Older Adult Division was established, headed by a professional social worker and offering a variety of special interest activities—"from choral and dramatic groups to stamp collecting, arts and crafts and other hobbies." Two hundred senior citizens attended Camp Salomon for two or three weeks every summer and, in addition, a special pre-camp trip in June was initiated for senior citizens (at Federation's request) as a demonstration project. The Alliance senior program was conducted in partnership with the Department of Welfare, and in 1956 the Alliance initiated a joint program, co-sponsored by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, for newly retired workers residing on the Lower East Side. A Local 22 Club was formed, led by a graduate social work student, with a varied program that included a club newspaper. Club Local 22 continued to be active for about ten years, and its members participated in many other Alliance activities.

Referring to its program in mental health services, the Alliance proudly called itself in 1956 "a first line of defense against mental illness." The Consultation Service (established in 1951 with a grant from the State Mental Hygiene Department) employed a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist to advise the staff on handling cases of disturbed behavior. The Community Mental Health Board added funds to the program, allowing an expansion of staff and more effective client service, although the agency restricted itself to those

who could be helped through group work activities as a medium for personal adjustment. All others were referred to appropriate psychiatric case work agencies.

Remedial Reading classes (in cooperation with the Board of Education) assisted children with substandard skills, while the agency's Junior Division worked to involve them in other activities and counseled their parents. Slavin called this program "an example of a private and a public agency working together to accomplish a task that neither could do alone as effectively." Both agencies regarded it as a pilot project that might be applied elsewhere in the city. During the late 1950s a full-day program for children with cerebral palsy was instituted, co-sponsored by United Cerebral Palsy of New York and run by two staff persons (both with Master's Degrees) who had cerebral palsy themselves; and in 1966 a program for young adults was added. The Association for the Help of Retarded Children has partially subsidized a variety of programs at the Alliance for children and young adults over the years, and since 1970 SPARC (Special Program for Autistic and Retarded Children) has provided a graded resident camping program at Camp Cummings in Brewster, New York, supplemented by year-round group work services. Programs for physically handicapped children during the 1950s and 1960s included Athletics for the Blind (which sponsored wrestling matches for the blind at the Alliance) and Temple Beth Or, a special religious school for the deaf which was hosted by the Alliance.

Dr. Slavin's 1956 report also noted the first use of the Alliance as a training site for social work graduate students. In the few years since its inception, he pointed out, the modest training program had become the largest of its kind in the country.

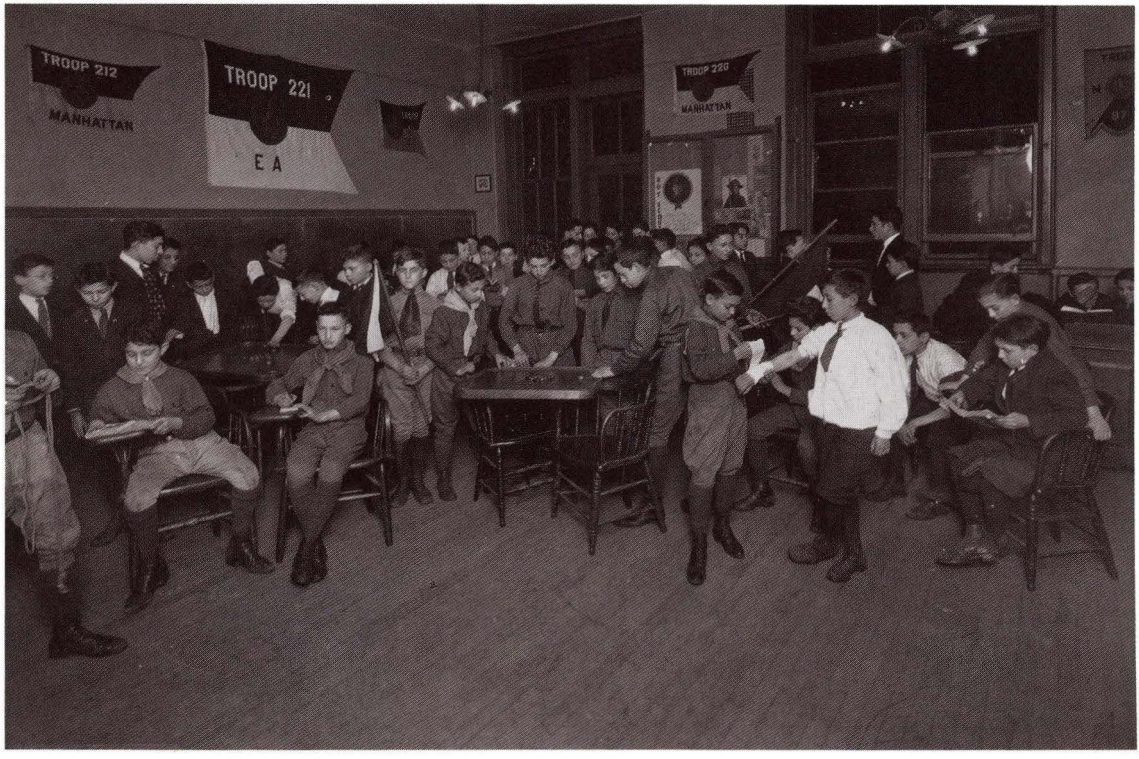
While the Alliance programs for community revival and "bridge-building," as well as effective remedial action for youth, were reaching out to many non-Jewish Lower East Siders, the agency was expanding its services to its traditional clientele, recognizing that much of it had moved up into the middle class, and in many cases left the old neighborhood, if not the Alliance, behind. The Alliance sought to serve its Jewish membership by adding to and improving its camping facilities, with inexpensive vacation opportunities made available to virtually every age group.

In 1956 a new camp site (named for Israel and Leah Cummings) was acquired in Brewster, New York, finally replacing the well-used but inadequate facilities of Camp Salomon. The new facility would be a composite of several camps on a large lake: at one end, Camp Salomon for older adults; nearby, a camp for mothers and children; another for adult women exclusively; a teenage work camp; a camp for whole families; and finally (at the opposite end of Lake Charles), a children's camp. Thus, the Alliance made pioneering forays into family and inter-generational camping. This expanded program allowed the Alliance to bring many more older people, adult women, and mothers with their children to the country each summer. In addition, Edalia and Cummings Village, which

had operated since 1951 at Bear Mountain, New York, hosted eight- to fourteen-year-old boys and girls. Counting the day camps run by the agency, and the special efforts to aid mentally retarded and developmentally disabled children, camping proved to be one of the Alliance's biggest success stories; an unprecedented annual attendance figure of 1,500 campers in the mid-1950s doubled over the course of the next decade.

The Educational Alliance's pluralistic approach was more and more evident in the late 1950s; and some members of the Jewish philanthropic community criticized the agency for its perceived departure from a more narrowly conceived sectarian mission. Throughout the decade, a new aggressive attitude toward advancing Jewish interests had begun to displace the older methods of quiet diplomacy employed by *shtadlanim* like Louis Marshall.* In 1959 a debate within Federation about the proper use of "Jewish" money in social services came to a head with the presentation of a paper (prepared by social worker Graenum Berger) to the Federation's Functional Committee on Community Centers. Berger adhered to the "narrow" interpretation of Jewish social work advanced in the

*During the war, especially, American Jews had tried to influence U.S. policy toward European Jewish refugees in the old-fashioned way, by means of polite delegations to those in positions of political power. These quiet methods did not work, and there arose in response a new attitude of self-reliance among Jewish leaders. This new attitude was also partly a result of a new generation of prosperous middle-class Jews overtaking the *shtadlanim* in the immediate post-war period; the new Jewish leaders attempted to enforce their more ardent pro-Zionist ideals of social education and organization.



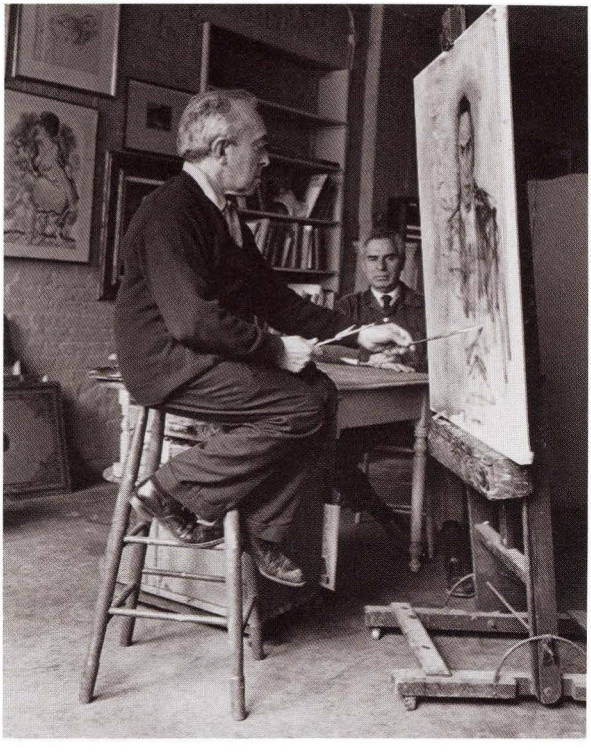
After the turn of the century, the neighborhood and the Alliance both saw many changes. Under the leadership of Dr. Henry Fleischman, new programs, including the Boy Scouts and other club activities, expanded and flourished.



The Art School offered classes in painting, drawing, and sculpture. The program produced many famous graduates and vigorously promoted art among the immigrant population of the Lower East Side.



Abbo Ostrowsky, head of the art school for many years, encouraged students to show "independence of thought and sincerity of conviction" in their work. (Photo by Murray Laden.)



The painter Moses Soyer was one of the art school's most distinguished graduates. Renowned sculptor Chaim Gross, in the background, also studied at the Alliance and later returned to teach there, dedicating enormous personal effort to the art program. (Photo by Budd.)



When the WPA was created, the Educational Alliance served as its neighborhood headquarters. Many new activities and programs were instituted during this period and continued thereafter, including expanded health care services. (YIVO Institute.)



The Alliance pitched into the war effort. Members rolled bandages, sold War Bonds, made clothing for the Red Cross, and raised over $11,000 in 1942, a remarkable contribution from such a poor neighborhood. (Photo by Acme, The Bettmann Archive.)



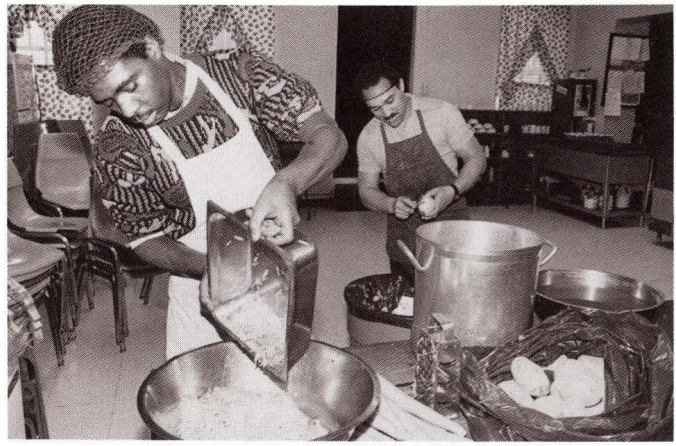
Surprise Lake became independent in 1917, but the Educational Alliance continued its emphasis on camping. By the 1950s, facilities had been developed to serve 1,500 campers every year. (YIVO Institute.)



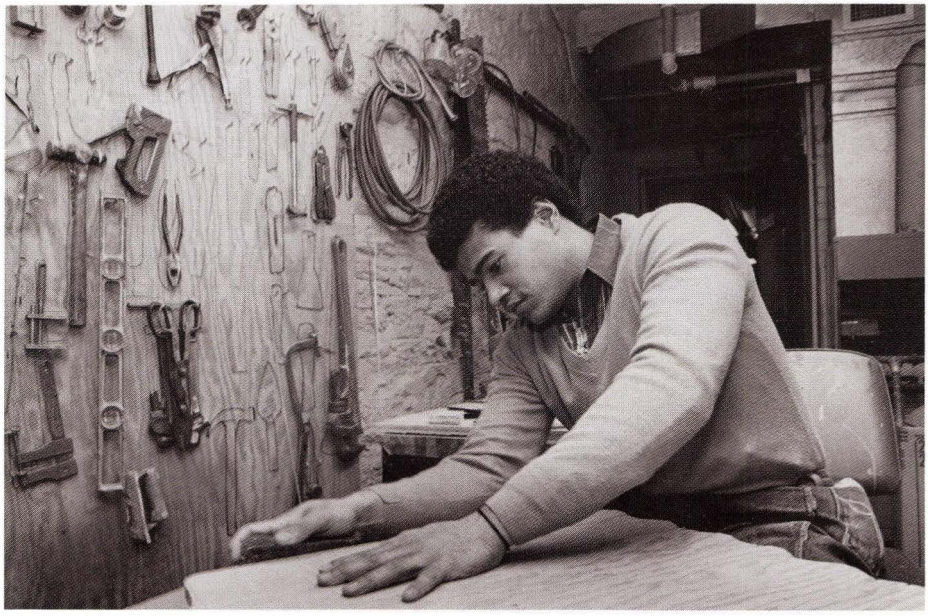
Cultural activities helped bring the ethnically diverse community together. An Alliance-sponsored steel drum band of African American and Latino teens greeted then-Executive Director Louis Berkowitz and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy when Kennedy toured the neighborhood in 1962. (YIVO Institute.)

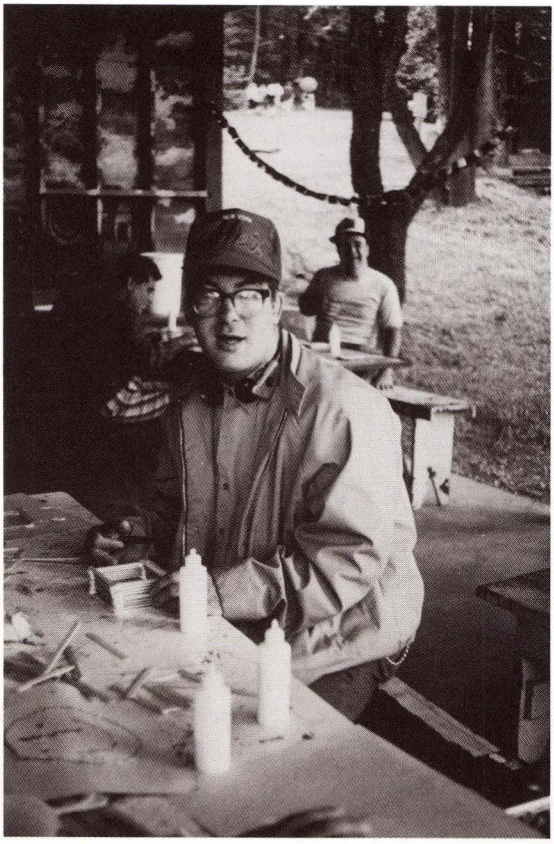


During the sixties and seventies, the Educational Alliance continued to expand and diversify. Vitality and flexibility were demonstrated in a wide assortment of programs. Priorities expanded to include seniors, mental health services, and homeless youth.



Job training programs were carefully constructed to help participants in many ways. Young people in these programs received on-the-job experience, supplemental education, counseling, and a weekly stipend.





Camping programs were as important as ever. The Alliance placed an emphasis on helping handicapped persons of all ages. Imaginative inter-group programs have helped reduce the isolation of many handicapped people.





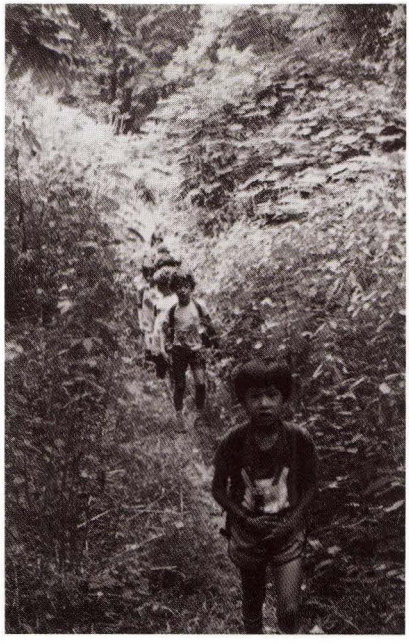


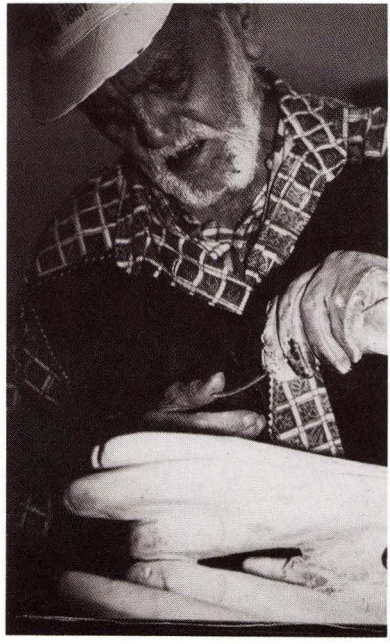
Respite House provides safe, affordable housing to senior adults who have become homeless or victims of fire, building abandonment, or family violence.



After a hundred years, the Alliance continues to offer cultural, educational, social, and mental health services to people of all ages. Facilities have recently opened to serve West Siders and Brooklynites while the Alliance maintains its headquarters on East Broadway. The centerpieces of the Alliance satellites are programs for families and children.



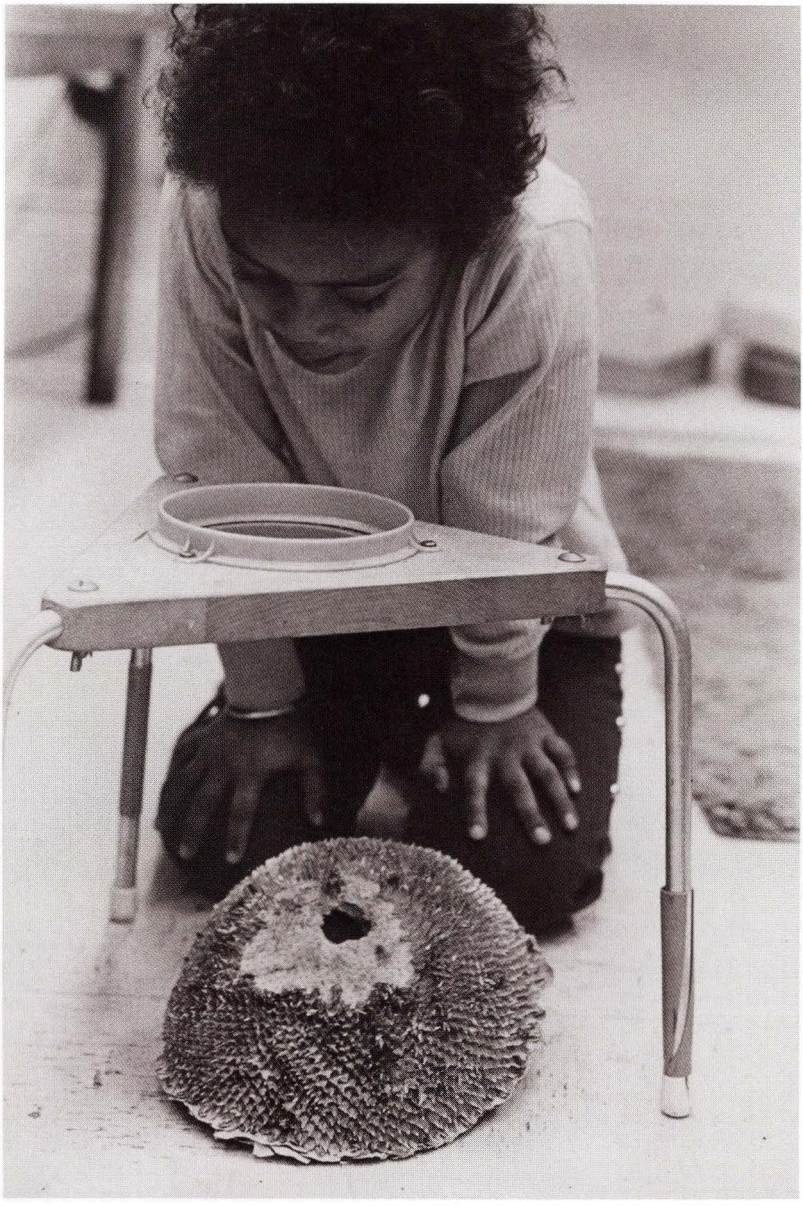














The ambitions of today's Educational Alliance are faithful to the sentiments of its founders, who wrote in 1895 that the Alliance should be "a wellspring of spiritual and moral power."

Janowsky report of ten years earlier. The Alliance was quite consciously many things to many people, and this reflected the agency's attitude—strongly defended by its staff of professional social workers—that in addition to serving the Jewish community, it was impossible to ignore the desperate needs of other, non-Jewish community members in the Alliance's service area. But Berger and others at Federation decried the Alliance's refusal to define its major purpose as being "to prepare its members for Jewish living in the American community."

Alliance President Robert Wolf (elected in 1958), speaking at a meeting of the same Federation committee (March 11, 1959), strongly defended its position, saying, "The members of the Alliance are people who happen to be Jewish, not Jews who happen to be people, and I believe that their primary concern and mine is with their overall problems in the community in which they live. Putting this another way, I hold our major purpose to be to prepare our clientele for living in the American community, not just for *Jewish* living in the American community."

Wolf also expressed surprise at Berger's contention that the Alliance was "becoming arid" due to its focus on social group work and that "other welfare agencies easily beat us at the social work game." Wolf reaffirmed the agency's commitment to social group work and specified that while the Educational Alliance was sectarian in spirit, "we are not prepared to confine our program to Jewish education."

Going beyond these assertions, Wolf stated that the current attempt to redefine Federation policy in terms of strictly Jewish priorities was an alarming development. In no event should Federation seek to impose a uniform policy on all of its affiliated community centers. Rather, he said, "centers should have individual philosophies reflecting the particular problems and needs of their respective communities."

Executive Director Dr. Louis Berkowitz seconded this view in a letter to committee chairman Zachary Stein, in which he characterized Berger's paper and its sponsors as attempting "to turn Federation into a *movement* for the promulgation of Jewish culture and Jewish group survival." But contrary to the intention of this "movement," Berkowitz predicted the result would be not only the unjustified withdrawal of necessary services to large numbers of non-Jewish neighborhood residents, but also a withdrawal of the Jewish group from American community life, "creating an unduly isolated subcommunity." In modern life, where inter-group relations were crucial to Jewish (and American) welfare and survival, the Jewish Community Center ought to pursue the admittedly difficult goal of retaining and enriching Jewish identity while at the same time helping Jews to become a part of the American mainstream.

Whether or not Federation was seriously attempting to bring all of its members into line with a monolithic point of view, or to enforce a centrally-directed program of service to the Jewish community, excluding all others, the message from the board of the Alliance was very clear: the agency affirmed its commitment

to serving both the Jewish community and the non-Jewish residents of the Lower East Side, relying on its own longstanding tradition of dual service. Thus, with its independent role successfully confirmed, the Alliance entered the next decade proudly and with evident self-confidence.

The Sixties and Beyond



New Frontier and Great Society

By 1961—according to a seventieth-anniversary report issued by Board President Robert Wolf and Executive Director Louis Berkowitz (appointed 1960)—the Alliance had expanded considerably. It now served more than 5,000 members in four age divisions (over 1,500 used the building daily) with a wide range of social, educational, athletic, and cultural activities. Based on knowledge gained from the membership

surveys and neighborhood studies commissioned over the preceding decade, programs were consciously designed with the needs of specific age and ethnic groups in mind, and were remarkably comprehensive.

The Alliance continued to work with and through LENA to improve neighborhood conditions such as poverty, overcrowded housing, economic discrimination, and inadequate health care. Since these conditions were at the root of many individual problems, the Alliance considered it well within its purview to engage in ameliorative social action at this level. The most ambitious project at this time was a multimillion-dollar physical expansion, adding new buildings to the existing East Broadway center to provide space for a new gymnasium and for the entire adult program. The agency's annual budget was now about $800,000, half received from Federation, the rest from fees, government subsidies, foundation grants, private contributions, and income on its modest endowment.

Among the more dramatic developments noted in the 1961 report was the further expansion of the camping system. The Golden Age Camp had doubled in size and the Cummings campgrounds had been improved with new buildings. A new campground had also been acquired at the Bear Mountain site, increasing the camp's capacity by 50 percent. Meanwhile, there had been an increase in enrollments at the Summer-in-Town play school for three- to six-and-a-half-year-olds, and the day camp for seven- to twelve-year-olds conducted at the Henry Kaufmann

Campgrounds now handled 35 percent more children. Surprise Lake Camp was now operated exclusively by an independent board composed of representatives from the Alliance, the YMHA, and the Jewish community.

New services for the handicapped (a program area that would dramatically expand in the sixties and seventies) included a program for young adults recently discharged from psychiatric hospital care—"probably the first such program sponsored by a community agency in the country," according to Berkowitz. Other activities for mentally retarded children and young adults included the first summer camp program under nonprofit auspices. There were also special programs for the blind of all ages, children with heart conditions, and senescent adults. Other mental health programs were still being offered by the pioneering Consultation Service—again, the first of its kind under voluntary, nonprofit auspices—and by the Strauss League, which, in conjunction with Hillside Hospital, administered a family-centered resocialization program for former mental patients.

Operation Street Corner had also expanded (by 50 percent) and had proven its worth in the field. Developed as a preventative program designed to counter gang involvement and narcotics abuse, Street Corner was in its fifth year in 1961. The program worked with sixteen groups and served over three hundred young people—one of the largest such programs in the country. Berkowitz proudly stated that Street Corner had "virtually eliminated local juvenile gang wars" during the past two years. In addition, the

Alliance claimed "some remarkable individual successes" in the fight against drug addiction.*

The Alliance also continued to be a leader in professional training and research. Almost two thousand students affiliated with New York's seven graduate schools of social work had their field-work placement at the Alliance over a twelve-year period—more than any other agency in the country. A large undergraduate program had also been instituted. In 1961 the agency marked the beginning of the new decade with an institute (co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Association of Jewish Center Workers) attended by several hundred group work professionals, including the deans of three graduate schools. The title, "Group Work and the New Frontier," aligned the conference with the national mood of dynamism and progress inspired by the newly elected President, John F. Kennedy.

Professor Nathan E. Cohen was the keynote speaker, and in resounding terms he set the tone for the Alliance's whole 1960s program. Cohen noted that the rapid social changes of the fifties had inspired a range of responses, both forward-looking and reactionary. The main danger for social work now was the impulse "to turn back to old boundaries and to glorify them as the goals of the future rather than as the accomplishments of the past."

*Financial sponsors of this program included the New York Fund for Children, the Children's Welfare League, and several private funds and estates. In addition, many Alliance trustees and alumni made direct contributions to the program.

Democracy, said Cohen, must retain its open and progressive spirit or fall back on a defensive and reactionary mode.

Looking ahead, Cohen identified racial desegregation, economic reorganization, and the impact of automation on the workplace as among the most pressing social problems of the coming decade. The challenge to social work in this context was to retain the flexibility, the vision, the energy, and the leadership that would enable it to have a positive impact on these changes. Cohen noted disapprovingly that the broad social welfare goals of the 1930s had been set aside in favor of an emphasis on methodology. A debate had emerged in the field between those who felt that methodology should dictate goals and those who felt that new goals required new methodologies.

Standing at the threshold of what would prove to be a revolutionary decade in American life, Cohen sounded the keynote of progressive optimism when he called for old forms to be discarded and new ones developed, derived from basic principles to suit the present times. To do so, he admonished, was not to betray the traditions of either Jewish philanthropy or professional social service. Rather, the tradition of democracy was change and adaptation, he reminded his audience. "Unless democracy can make constant room for progress through conscious reform and prescriptive innovation . . . then it has lost its dynamic heart and soul."

The papers and workshops that followed Cohen's speech were, according to Berkowitz, similarly "progressive" and "encouraging." Thus, the Alliance moved into the forefront of the social work

profession, helping to articulate new goals and purposes and to preserve a lively democratic tradition of social service in the flux of American life. The agency was clearly in a strong position. Instead of lagging behind other settlement houses and group-work agencies, it had led the movement forward. Under the direction of Louis Berkowitz (who had been assistant and then associate director during most of the Alliance's post-survey renaissance), the course set in the late forties was strongly maintained in terms of physical growth and service to a wide range of age, ethnic, religious, and income groups.

In 1962, Operation Street Corner was incorporated into the ground-breaking, federally funded campaign called Mobilization for Youth (MFY), which inaugurated the social vision of the War on Poverty in the inner cities that year. Awareness of the need for such a program grew out of such activities as Operation Street Corner and Henry Street Tenement Projects.* First proposed in 1958 by a council of five East Side neighborhood agencies, MFY was conceived as a means of conducting organized research into the causes of juvenile delinquency and social degradation in the area. The project was awarded a grant of $12 million for three years from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Ford Foundation, and the City of New York.†

*In conjunction with Adelphi University, a Tenement Organizing Project had placed social workers as community advocates in several of the worst buildings on Henry Street near the Alliance.

†Mobilization for Youth phased out its full program in 1967, and the

Cultural activities continued to flourish, and in particular during the sixties there was a renewed public interest in the Art School. A major retrospective exhibition in April and May 1963 at the American Federation of Arts Gallery in New York included the works of alumni such as Leonard Baskin, Peter Blume, Jo Davidson, Sir Jacob Epstein, Alexander Dobkin, Philip Evergood, Adolph Gottlieb, Chaim Gross, Louis Lozowick, Elie Nadelman, Louise Nevelson, Barnett Newman, Elias Newman, Ben Shahn, Isaac and Moses Soyer, and Abraham Walkowitz. John I. H. Baur, associate director of the Whitney Museum, wrote that "there is no common denominator, aside from art itself, to so diverse a group. But perhaps there is one attitude which . . . is more prevalent than any other. This is a concern with individual humanity, with the warp and weft of life, or, in more inclusive terms, with the particular human dilemma rather than the general one."

Meanwhile the Alliance was expanding its range of cultural programs and events in the best sense of pluralism. The agency's many artistic and cultural activities were vivid examples of a productive blend of tradition and innovation. Among the best-known were the steel drum bands of black and Hispanic youngsters who performed for Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy when, as head of the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, he toured the Mobilization for Youth programs on the Lower East Side in 1962. Some of these young men had been members of one of the

activities represented by Operation Street Corner were subsumed by other new initiatives in the area of youth services.

neighborhood's toughest street gangs; the welcome accorded the Attorney General illustrated the remarkable success the Alliance had had with this program. Other bands were soon formed (there were eventually fourteen), including one composed entirely of young women.

The Alliance's Cultural Arts program began to attract a notably larger audience in the 1960s, due to the generally high caliber of its offerings. The more popular programs included a chamber music series, the cultural activities of the Center for the Mature, the New Era Club lecture series, dramatic performances by the Hebrew Actors Union, a program of folk dance and folk arts, and a series of evenings with distinguished guests, including Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer. A Yiddish production of Bizet's opera *Carmen*, staged by Alliance senior citizens in February 1962, received a very favorable notice in the press.

Especially significant was the Alliance's commitment to a hard-hit and often-ignored section of its traditional base: the Jewish aged. Throughout the 1960s, the Alliance vigorously expanded its services to this population (by now the largest percentage of Jews on the Lower East Side were in this category) with particular attention to the health and housing problems of the isolated, handicapped, and homebound. Accordingly, various trustees—led by the family of noted lawyer David L. Podell—added their contributions to federal housing funds for the construction at 179-181 Henry Street of a ten-story apartment house for the elderly adjoining the main building of the Educational Alliance. This

ambitious undertaking, conceived in the late 1950s, was finally dedicated as the David L. Podell House for the Elderly on December 4, 1966. Intended as a residence for lower-middle-income Jewish senior citizens sixty-two and over, it was the first apartment building in the country to be constructed and operated as an integral part of a community center. The project was thus both a major use of public funds and a pioneering effort in senior citizens' services. Federation President Lawrence A. Wien observed that the Alliance had opened the way for other Federation agencies to use the new Section 202 of the Federal Housing Act of 1959, making low-interest loans available for senior citizens' housing projects.

As part of this facility, a new gymnasium and recreation center opened (named for long-time Alliance vice president and benefactor Israel Cummings and his wife Leah), replacing the long-outmoded facilities in the old building and allowing a great expansion in services to the neighborhood's youth. Also in 1966, under the leadership of then Alliance President Frank A. Weil, a half-million-dollar campaign was begun to rehabilitate and upgrade the main building, to be renamed in 1970 in honor of distinguished alumnus General David Sarnoff.

More than anything else, the Educational Alliance in the 1960s was noted for its experimental and repeatedly successful remedial and therapeutic programs aimed at the most disadvantaged groups in American and Lower Manhattan society: the mentally ill, high-school dropouts, minority-group mothers, the aged Jewish poor, runaways, and "hippies." In all these areas, the Alliance used its

own experience, the newest ideas, and federal funds to set up innovative, long-lasting programs.

One of the first of these was a joint project with Hillside Hospital. Conceived in 1961, the project was designed to reintegrate recently discharged young adult mental patients to a responsible social and group life by mobilizing the resources of a community agency. It was initially planned as a four-stage integration process for a group of fifty patients. In 1962, Hillside Hospital and the Educational Alliance received a three-year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to launch the demonstration project. By 1964, Louis Berkowitz and Dr. Abraham Lurie of Hillside were able to report favorably on the results of the joint program to a group of 250 representatives of psychiatric institutions, mental health clinics, and community organizations who were invited to attend a Mental Health Institute at the Alliance on April 12, 1962. By that time, 170 current and former mental patients were involved.

In 1966 the original grant for this program expired, but the joint mental health project was kept going for two more years with funds from Hillside, Federation, and private donors. Meanwhile, the Alliance developed new approaches to the problem, and in 1967 a Family-Centered Resocialization Program took over the rehabilitation work, serving the forty to forty-five young people annually discharged from the hospital. Favorable results were reported in 1969: of the original group, only two had returned to the hospital; the usual return rate was 30 percent.

Another major effort, starting in 1965, was Stay in School

(funded by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare), which targeted a group of likely dropouts in the Rutgers House apartments, mainly minority junior high-schoolers, and attempted with good results to address the specific causes that discouraged so many young people from finishing school. The program offered group and individual counseling, tutoring, school intervention, and family services, and stipends were provided to participants. By 1968, this highly successful program was attracting national attention. The six-year grant expired in 1971, with Stay in School having served 143 teenagers originally referred as potential drop-outs, many with drug-abuse problems. Of this group, 73 percent completed high school, and about 30 percent had gone on to some form of higher education. In 1971, the Alliance published a book-length report on this program called *Staying in School: An Evaluation of a Program to Prevent School Dropouts*, edited by Louis Berkowitz, Jacob Chwast, and Gerald Shattuck.

In addition to these well-known projects, the Alliance initiated or participated in a raft of Office for Economic Opportunity-supported community organizing drives. Among these were tenants' associations, cultural committees, a Neighborhood Mothers social work training group, afterschool and nursery-school projects, and other programs for retirees, teenagers, and children, including Head Start. These were aimed at some of the hardest hit low-income high-rises in the immediate neighborhood (LaGuardia and Rutgers Houses). Special programs for troubled youth and poor families

in this period included Operation Recycle,* an "uplift" program for black teenage girls, many of them violent, that offered counseling and job training, and an outreach program for juvenile delinquents in which a social worker counseled thirty gang-involved teenagers (the "Hester Street Group") in an effort to prevent further entanglement with crime and drug abuse. Among the agency's foremost initiatives was the dramatic expansion of the Henry Street Tenement Program in 1968 with a six-year grant from NIMH, awarded through the Adelphi University School of Social Work, which placed a unit of six graduate students in the mainly non-Jewish slum tenements around the Alliance. The students organized the residents to address common problems, such as landlord-tenant disputes, intervention with the New York City Department of Social Services regarding special allotments, and referrals to community agencies for child care, camping, job training, employment, and medical or psychiatric care.

Overall in this period, the Alliance's annual budget climbed to well over one million dollars a year, with Federation providing about 40 percent and government most of the rest.

Perhaps the most exciting of the Alliance's programs of the late 1960s and early 1970s was Project Contact. While the population and conditions of the agency's original environs around East Broadway had stabilized somewhat, the "upper" Lower East Side above Houston Street, also known as the East Village, had

*Established in 1970, Recycle was supported by the State Office of Crime Control Planning and the New York City Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

been invaded by a strange new breed of immigrants. These were not the poor and unfortunate victims of pogroms or other forms of repression, or simply of stark economic distress; they were the refugees of the middle class, the hippies who had left their families in suburbia and had gathered in various cheap, inner-city neighborhoods, especially San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and New York's East Village.

East of St. Mark's Place, however, many of these teenagers became involved in a cycle of drugs, destitution, and personal disintegration. Many of them became street people, drifting into drug selling, prostitution, and other marginal and dangerous activities. In 1967, increasing friction between black and Puerto Rican neighborhood groups and the predominantly white, middle-class hippies in and around Tompkins Square Park led to an experimental outreach program,* in which a young school teacher (also a neighborhood resident) began to hold informal meetings in a local coffee house known as The Cave. Poetry readings were held on Sundays, and on Wednesdays there was a music workshop. Altogether about 400 young people came in during an average week.

In 1968, a storefront operation on East 7th Street was established as a "drop-in center." The rooms were cleaned up and the offices built by the young people themselves, who also chose the name

*Support for the initial program and subsequent funding were provided by grants from the Janice Hellman Borg Foundation, headed by Mr. John Borg, a past president of the Educational Alliance. Afterwards, major support in the form of grants came from the New York City Community Mental Health Board and the Federal government.

"Contact." The staff at Project Contact deliberately avoided the trappings of psychiatric social work or official charity. At first they merely offered coffee, food, a shower, and a place to spend the night. Medical services were provided in a back room by volunteer physicians and nurses, and more serious cases were referred to the New York Infirmary. St. Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Beth Israel Hospital, and other neighborhood organizations also cooperated with Contact. In its first year, the storefront served over two hundred clients with drug-abuse problems.

In 1969, another survey of the Alliance, prepared by Myron Blanchard and Joseph Vigilante of Adelphi University, strongly advocated a shift from the "functional" process of established group work toward reaching out even more into the community and involving Lower East Siders of all backgrounds in the direction of its work. The Board made a variety of efforts in this area, most notably a Community Organization Task Force Program begun in September 1969 that focused on critical tensions among various groups: Jewish, Puerto Rican, black, and Asian residents. As with previous reports, this one also noted the tension that the Alliance displayed between the characteristic mission of a settlement house and that of a Jewish community center. A survey of neighborhood residents had revealed that while many regarded the Alliance as "a helping agency," most thought of it as "in essence . . . devoting itself principally to promoting Jewish culture." However, according to Blanchard and Vigilante, "the total community is in need of an

entirely new kind of service," which they identified as "a concept of cultural pluralism."

While some of their proposals were adopted, the recommendations of the survey team were not entirely in line with the Alliance's self-conception. It was clear from the report that Blanchard and Vigilante, professional social workers themselves, favored a resolution of this (by now familiar) tension between settlement house and community center in favor of the "settlement" conception, at the expense of Jewish services. This recommendation, after due consideration, was rejected by the Board, and the Alliance continued to negotiate its course between the two somewhat contrasting sets of values.

The Seventies and After

During the 1970s the Alliance squarely confronted the tensions of its social service and Jewish Center components, vigorously developing both aspects of its program. The settlement-type service developed in holistic programs for children, the disabled, the disenfranchised, and the elderly. The Jewish Center aspect was nurtured and grew through services to the community's growing Jewish aged and young Orthodox Jewish populations, as well as through the program unit known as Educational Alliance West. This dual mission of the Alliance became most clearly apparent in

the series of new undertakings inaugurated in the seventies. Separate program components were linked together in a network of one-stop services for children, families, youth, the disabled, and senior citizens. In the 1980s early childhood, parenting, afterschool, and senior adult services to the Jewish communities of the West Side and Brooklyn also underwent an explosion.

Since the early 1950s, at which time the agency operated a pre-kindergarten school (the long-established East Side Day Nursery) and an afterschool program for older children, the Alliance's early childhood program has experienced continual pressure from needy neighborhood parents to expand. The popular Day Care Center opened in 1951, funded by the Child Care Division of the New York City Department of Social Services (later called the Agency for Child Development), serving eighty children four to five years old. Operation Head Start (funded by the Federal Anti-Poverty Program) began in 1965 at the Rutgers Community Center and later moved into the main building of the Alliance at 197 East Broadway; originally serving sixty three- to four-year-old children, the Head Start program has expanded steadily over the years and now serves 100 children. There are also special program units for the learning disabled and emotionally handicapped.

In order to better serve those youngsters who were emotionally disabled, the Alliance opened the East Broadway School in 1969, initially enrolling twenty children from age four to second grade.*

*The East Broadway School was initiated in partnership with the New York City Board of Education's Committee on the Handicapped, with additional grants

To meet the needs of the community living in the surrounding middle-income cooperatives, a co-op nursery program emphasizing Jewish cultural activities was formed in 1970, which swiftly established itself as a self-sustaining enterprise. In 1980, the nursery inaugurated Bet Ha-Yeled class, designed for children of Orthodox families. In 1985 and 1986, a series of new programs expanded the Alliance's mental health outreach services to children in four elementary public schools in District 1.*

A major area of expansion in the 1970s and continuing today has been in services to troubled and disadvantaged youth. By 1970 the flagship program in this area, Project Contact, had logged over 4,000 clients in three years.† From 1970 to 1972, Project Contact received support from the Addiction Services Agency of New York City and the State Narcotics Control Commission, enabling the program to add a counseling unit and job-training program. In 1972, NIMH awarded the Alliance a grant of $620,000 for the first

from private foundations. Beginning in 1980 the program shifted its focus and now serves thirty-five children five to ten years old needing special education. Since 1981 the State University of New York Department of Education has supported the school with an annual grant of $95,000.

*Other areas now under consideration or in the process of implementation include mental health services to both East and West Side Nursery Schools, to the "latch-key" children in the afterschool program, and to children in the Day Care program. Since 1986, services to the developmentally disabled have been offered under the rubric of SPARC—Special Program for Autistic and Retarded Children—funded since 1974 by the New York City Department for Mental Health and Retardation.

†Ninety-five percent of Contact's clients were white, 30 percent were Jewish, and most were between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. In 1971 Contact moved from East 7th Street to 88 Second Avenue.

year of a projected eight-year effort to expand its services further to the alienated youth of the East Village. As a result, Project Contact came to include a temporary shelter on East 10th Street, to which outreach teams at train and bus terminals referred young runaways; a day treatment facility on Lafayette Street; a Group Home on Second Avenue; and Pride Site, a highly successful therapeutic rehabilitation residence for drug and alcohol abusers eighteen years and over. In 1974 a second Group Home was added, along with a pre-vocational program called Bridge to Reality, and a boutique (Synergy) was opened in which products made by clients were sold.* Contact was again expanded in 1976 with a comprehensive project for young adult violence-prone alcoholics.†

In the twenty years since its inception, Project Contact has been a model of innovative and persevering service to a much-neglected segment of the urban population. Government interest in this problem became more evident with the passage of the Runaway Youth Bill in 1978, which Alliance staff (along with representatives of other agencies) helped New York State legislators to draft. As recently as 1983, the *New York Times* reported that there were only three shelters for homeless youth in New York

*A second store, Synergy II, was opened in 1980 with a job-training grant of $232,000 from the Corporation for Public and Private Ventures.

†In 1975, a million-dollar grant from the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse launched a projected three-year project known as the Young Adult Alcoholism Service Program (YAASP), which was integrated with programs in the country. In 1979, funding for this project was provided by the New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse.

City, one of them the Educational Alliance's. In that year, the Contact shelter on East 10th Street served 475 young people.[1] Among recent new initiatives in drug treatment are a special program for runaways with drug-abuse problems (High-Impact Project), and the operation of the New York State Drug Abuse Hotline, available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, to counsel abusers of cocaine, crack, and other drugs. Our House, a supervised community residence for fourteen psychiatrically disabled young adults, opened in 1986. Currently the Alliance is exploring the cost of renovating a building on Avenue D to expand Pride Site's treatment and residence capacities.

Also notable in this period were several job-training programs, supervised by a Job Training Developer at the Alliance. Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and in partnership with the New York State Dental Technicians Association, a selected group of unemployed or underemployed young men and women from minority ethnic groups were placed in dental laboratories to receive on-the-job training. The trainees also participated in an educational program administered by the Job Training Developer which included basic reading, math, and grammar, as well as counseling and other social services as needed. During the nine-month training cycle, the trainees received a stipend of $100 a week. Most completed the training period and many continued to work as permanent employees in the labs where they had trained. Another such offering was the Training Program in Secretarial and Office Skills, conducted in cooperation with a Brooklyn business

school. Again, trainees were selected from minority ethnic groups and received remedial education and counseling or other social services as needed.

The Alliance's remarkably successful camping program continued to develop vigorously in the seventies and eighties, and has extended its multi-generational approach with special emphasis on serving the physically and emotionally handicapped, including a number of experimental programs for the blind, the deaf, the mentally retarded of all ages, autistic children, and young adult alcoholics.* Among other advantages, the proximity of so many diverse groups has created opportunities for some imaginative and beneficial inter-group programs.† In 1983 a Senior Citizens Building for the Handicapped was completed at Camp Salomon, designed to accommodate the blind, the deaf, and wheelchair users. Other constructions are underway to increase Camp Salomon's capacity to serve the non-disabled, frail and isolated Jewish elderly.

Beginning in the seventies, a series of new undertakings in the senior citizens program included a proliferation of social and cultural activities. A Telephone Reassurance Program was initiated in 1972, followed by a variety of companionship and visitation services. In 1978, six Federation agencies‡ pooled their resources

*In 1977 the New York State Alcohol Commission sponsored an Alcohol Program for young adults at Camp Salomon.

†In 1975, for example, two groups of deaf senior citizens at Camp Salomon were integrated by joint programming with sixty retarded Jewish children at Camp Leah, and many of the seniors became "grandparents" to the children.

‡The six agencies were the Alliance, the Jewish Association for Services to

to form the uniquely comprehensive Joint Services Program, henceforth to be based at the Alliance. In the same year, a Home Health Care Program—developed under the aegis of the Association of Lower East Side Settlements (ALESS)—was initiated, subsequently based at the Alliance, serving homebound and isolated elderly. In 1986, via a special Federation grant, the program expanded to include senior citizens in need of these services but not Medicaid eligible. Other notable programs started in that year included a Drug Misuse Program (administered by student nurses working with the neighborhood elderly) and a demonstration program for the elderly blind, co-sponsored by Federation, the Alliance, and the Associated Y's.

In 1980 the Alliance accepted a grant from the Wallace S. Whittaker Foundation for services to the elderly and subsequently renamed the Adult Services Department the Wallace S. Whittaker Senior Center. In November 1982, Respite House—a Crisis Support Station for Elderly Persons at Risk was opened in the Sirovich Senior Center at 331 East 12th Street. Described as a temporary shelter for senior citizens who have been displaced or victimized by crime or other causes, Respite House has supported over four hundred elderly people with food and clothing, relocation services, health treatment, job referrals, and aid with entitlements.

Among the significant programs for the elderly are the Alliance's

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the Aged, the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Federation Employment and Guidance Services, Beth Israel Medical Center, and the Hebrew Free Loan Society.

Lifeline program, an emergency alarm response system initiated in 1983 with a grant from New York State, which provides a 24-hour electronic monitoring system for the frail and homebound elderly, and a home-care service under the Expanded In-Service Program for the Elderly (EISPE). Other services include a Crime Prevention program (started in 1982), a legal clinic (with assistance from Cardozo Law School faculty and students), dental screening (conducted by faculty and students from the NYU School of Dentistry), a Glatt Kosher daily lunch program, and a wide range of cultural and social activities. In addition, the Penn South Project (started in 1986) offers recreational and educational services to several hundred seniors in the Penn South Co-Op Apartments. Utilizing funds from New York State Homeless Housing Assistance Program, and the New York City Capital Budget fund, as well as philanthropic contributions, the Alliance expanded its Respite House facility to include four additional floors of housing for the homeless elderly in the Sirovich Center on East 12th Street. In 1987 the Alliance began Project O.R.E.—Outreach to the Elderly—an outreach program to the homeless or near-homeless Jewish elderly who do not have access to available shelters. O.R.E. has located hundreds of Jewish seniors in need of housing. Initially, outreach staff covered the area between 23rd and 34th Streets. The program now extends farther north to 42nd Street. More housing for the elderly Jewish homeless and psychologically impaired is currently being prepared in a building at 255 East Broadway, which the Alliance purchased with specially contributed funds.

Cultural and fine arts programming has also continued to flourish at the Alliance. Beginning in the seventies, the cultural arts program drew increasing support from the New York State Council on the Arts; the grants were used to develop innovative offerings such as a photography program for the physically disabled and elderly, and Art on Wheels, an art class conducted by an artist in a wheelchair for a group of paraplegic patients from the Bird S. Coler Hospital on Roosevelt Island. The Alliance also provides a vigorous fine arts program in its old and esteemed Art School. Classes both day and evening are provided in painting, sculpture, ceramics, metal sculpture, and photography.

In 1985, with funds provided by the Mazer and Kohns foundations, the Alliance's theater was reopened after an extensive renovation. The renamed Mazer Theater of the Lee Kohns Cultural Arts Center is available as a community theater and for experiential workshops.

By the 1980s, government support for the War on Poverty diminished and finally ended, but the Alliance persevered in its regenerative mission of social, cultural, and community uplift. This was the decade of expanding services to the handicapped, and of the development of programs to address the growing problems of homelessness. However, the most dramatic new initiative for the Alliance has been the extension of community services to the Lower West Side of New York and "Brownstone Brooklyn" under the aegis of Educational Alliance West.

While one can say that the Alliance has maintained its central

purposes and programs since the Second World War, one noteworthy and decisive development has taken place in the last decade. At a time when virtually all social services, agencies, and programs have contracted or retrenched, the Alliance has expanded well beyond the boundaries of the Lower East Side in a continuing effort to fulfill its mission of service to the Jewish community of New York. One major vehicle for this development has been Educational Alliance West, inaugurated in 1979.

During the late seventies, consistent with its mission as a Jewish institution, the Alliance resolved to reach out to the unserved members of the Jewish community, wherever they might be, and find new ways and means of serving them. In 1979, Federation awarded a seed grant of $10,000 for an exploratory survey of the Jewish community on the Lower West Side of Manhattan. The study found a substantial population of unaffiliated Jews, a significant number of them elderly and many of them poor, in an area without Jewish communal services. Accordingly, a modest pilot project was initiated to bring basic services to this neglected population.

Among other noteworthy Alliance efforts during this period are two that deserve special mention: the Jewish Public School Youth (JPSY) and "Betsavta, New York" programs. JPSY, a unique pioneer outreach program that became independent in 1986, served unaffiliated Jewish youth attending seventeen public high schools in all five boroughs of New York. Activities were intended to

strengthen Jewish identification and included informal weekly educational and social clubs that met on the high school campuses, and various special events, such as JPSY-sponsored long-weekend seminars that provided an intensive introduction to Jewish religion and culture as well as advisory sessions, film programs, discussion groups, parties, and weekend trips to other communities with Jewish youth groups in Montreal, Washington, D.C., and upstate New York. "Betsavta, New York" was an Israeli-American cafe theater that operated from 1975 to 1983; it met every Saturday night at the Alliance to foster Israeli culture in New York and to offer a relaxed and informal atmosphere for those who wished to socialize. The program featured top Israeli and American performers and eminent speakers, as well as dancing and film.

The West Side program rapidly expanded in an effort to keep pace with the rising demand for every kind of social service in this area. Today, Educational Alliance West offers cultural, educational and social activities as well as mental health and relief service to people of all ages in an area whose boundaries now extend from Battery Park City to 34th Street. In addition, in 1985, with Federation's approval, the Alliance completed a study in the brownstone area of Brooklyn, and as a result synagogue-affiliated satellite programs were developed to serve the Jewish communities in these neighborhoods. Today the centerpiece of Educational Alliance West is its program for families and children, and in 1987 West Side Early Childhood Services opened its Parenting Center

and Nursery School in new headquarters at 21 East 13th Street.* In 1989 a similar facility was opened at 129 Montague Street in Brooklyn. It serves as an early childhood and parenting center for the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill, Cobble Hill, and Carroll Gardens.

The holistic character of all of these undertakings has been one of the hallmarks of the Alliance in this decade and provides one more instance of the agency's model approach to social services.

THE FUTURE

For 100 years, innovative programs designed and tested at the Educational Alliance have served as models for other agencies in government, community services, social work, mental health, rehabilitative care, and education. At every point, the agency has successfully relied on its own traditions and experience to guide its present actions and to set its future course. The self-evident question today, as the Alliance contemplates its first century of service, is how best to set the course for the next hundred years.

In the minds of its trustees, any question of the agency's future must be framed in terms of the future of the Lower East Side. The neighborhood still has a substantial population of Orthodox Jews and senior adults for whom the Alliance provides every imaginable

*More detailed information on Educational Alliance West may be found in Appendix I to this volume.

kind of physical and cultural support. The future of this Jewish community may well depend on the Alliance's ability, in cooperation with local Jewish leadership, to maintain and develop adequate housing at affordable costs. Toward this end, the Alliance has been working closely with resident leadership and neighborhood merchants to sponsor new housing projects in the area and to ensure the viability and vigor of Jewish social services.

The long-range prospects for the Jewish community may be uncertain, but for the foreseeable future—and certainly as long as there are Jews on the Lower East Side—the Alliance will continue to serve them.

Everywhere one looks, the need is great—and growing greater—for the special mix of programs and services that the Alliance has to offer. As part of its efforts on the Lower East Side, the Alliance continues its traditional work of teaching the language and customs of American society to immigrants, now mostly Asian and Latino. But the Alliance also wishes to pursue and develop its holistic model of treatment and rehabilitation, which has been recognized and funded by a wide range of public and private sources. This program strategy for children, youth, families, and senior adults on the East Side and West Side acknowledges that individual and family needs encompass a diverse range of service possibilities. Thus, the agency has creatively linked existing social service program components and coordinated additional public and private program support among funders who understand the value and efficiency of a highly responsive, holistic design.

It has never been a simple matter to be Jewish in America, and there are growing indications that the problem will soon become more, not less, complex. An Orthodox revival and a theological crisis in Reform Judaism on the one hand, combined with strained relations in the old civil rights coalition on the other—not to mention the prospect of a major shift in the strategic alliance between the United States and Israel—all seem to promise that the Alliance of the twenty-first century may well see American Jews again becoming conscious of the need to redefine themselves in the ever-changing context of American society. The Educational Alliance believes that it has a vitally important contribution to make in this process, not least in displaying the exemplary ideals that it derives from the highest principle of *tzedekah*: helping others learn to help themselves. These ideals, which the Alliance embodies, still offer a viable model for responsible action.

At such a moment, it is appropriate that the agency look to its past as a source of strength and confidence. In doing so, it is remarkable to discover how much the spirit of the Educational Alliance today still reflects the highest sentiments of its founders, as expressed in the 1895 *Official Souvenir Book* of the Fair that year. Their words make a fitting conclusion:

> The vastness, the importance and delicacy of the work of which The Educational Alliance is the exponent, are apparent. The Educational Alliance has given a home to many whose only place was the street, the public square, or more dangerous resorts. . . . it must strive to become a wellspring

of spiritual and moral power, so that the young men and women who come within the building should not alone become better themselves, but shall be moved to help others to become better—its work in the past is merely an earnest of what it shall do and will do in the future.

Notes

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[26]Boris Bogen, *Jewish Philanthropy* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1917), p. 232.

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[28]*Ibid.*, p. 232.

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CHAPTER FOUR

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CHAPTER FIVE

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CHAPTER SIX

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Appendix I

DIRECTORY OF EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

For one hundred years, innovative programs designed and tested at the Educational Alliance have served as models for other agencies in the Jewish Communal Service, the Settlement House Movement, and social welfare in general. Today, the Educational Alliance continues its tradition as a non-sectarian Jewish settlement house and community resource center, providing services to the Lower East Side of Manhattan, as well as the Lower West Side and Brooklyn. Over fifty-six Jewish cultural and educational programs, group services, and preventative, restorative, and rehabilitative mental health services are provided at nineteen sites. The scope and depth of the various services are illustrative of the Alliance's commitment and resolve to meet human needs and to provide a variety of opportunities for creative Jewish expression and identification.

Services for Children

The early childhood programs at the Alliance serve over four hundred children. Parents can choose among four programs, designed to meet the educational and emotional needs of children age two through early childhood.

The Day Care Center, open every weekday, provides an all-day educational program for children of working parents, ages three to six,

and an afterschool program for children six to nine. The Day Care Center, which is operated on a sliding fee scale, is also open during school vacations and many holidays.

Operation Head Start is a pre-school educationally enriched program for three- to four-year-olds and their parents. The half-day program operates Monday through Friday and includes nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Social work and psychological support services, as well as services for the handicapped, are available.

The East Broadway School, run in partnership with P.S. 106 of the New York City Board of Education, is a weekday program for emotionally handicapped children in grades K-3. The East Broadway School offers small classes and special education teachers; a mental health team of social workers and a consulting psychiatrist and psychologist work with children and their families in an effort to help them resolve and control their problems, bring stability to the home, and return the child to a normal school setting.

The Co-op Nursery School and Kindergarten offers both half- and full-day programs from Monday through Friday. An enriched afterschool program is also available. The school provides an environment in which children are encouraged to explore and develop their individual capacities. Limited scholarships are available. Parents can also choose Bet Ha-Yeled classes for a more traditional Hebrew/English approach.

On-Site Mental Health Services for school-age children have been developed on the Lower East Side to assist with family issues of single parenting, new immigrants, abject poverty, child neglect, and alcohol and substance abuse. Social workers, in consultation with a psychologist and a psychiatrist at P.S. 97, P.S. 142, P.S. 20, and P.S. 64, provide early intervention for children and families exhibiting problematic symptoms and behavior.

Jewish families who desire more traditional programs for their children have a choice of programs. Kol-Tov, a Sunday activities program for boys and girls five to thirteen, is accepted by the Orthodox Jewish community. Kol-Tov serves two hundred children and family members with crafts, sewing, dancing, games, gym, outings, woodworking, and special seminars for parents. "Graduates" of Kol-Tov join the Pre-Teen

and Teen Program to participate in trips, teen council, athletics, and "Shabboteens".

The Educational Alliance also offers special programs for yeshiva children and youth, with organized sports and fitness activities and a Young Israel-Edgies basketball league.

The Jewish Family School is an alternative program for families for whom traditional forms of Jewish education are not desirable or feasible. The school provides an intimate Jewish family experience for sixty-five to seventy parents and their children, bringing them together to learn basic Jewish culture, songs, dance, crafts, and elementary Hebrew, supplemented by trips and holiday celebrations.

Services for Older Adults

The Educational Alliance has been a pioneer in the field of services for older adults. It currently serves over 4,500 older adults, with approximately thirty-seven group programs, including a daily Glatt Kosher meal service, seven major Jewish festivals, trips, health maintenance, Home Care, and a broad range of preventative, supportive, and rehabilitative social service/mental health services. In the past five years, senior adult membership has more than doubled. UJA-Federation, through the provision of its special funds programs, has been a staunch partner in this growth process, together with foundations, Alliance trustees, and government funding sources.

The Wallace S. Whittaker Senior Center offers arts and crafts, art appreciation, bingo, bridge lessons, cooking, choral groups, creative writing, crime prevention workshops, discussion groups, embroidery and sewing, exercise classes, folk dancing, health care screening, intergenerational programs, Jewish studies and history, music, literary clubs, mah jongg, Middle Eastern dancing, movies, Oneg Shabbat, Scrabble club, self-help groups, stress management, theater arts, travel clubs, Yiddish "corner," and more. Birthday parties, Succoth, Purim, Hanukah, Passover, and other special events are also celebrated at the center.

General services for senior citizens at the Alliance include daily Glatt Kosher hot lunches sponsored by the Jewish Council of the Lower East

Side, the Cardozo Legal Clinic available for those with entitlement claims or other legal issues, and the Senior Companions Telephone Assurance, a contact service for homebound aged, staffed and operated by senior citizens.

In addition, the staff of the Alliance have developed other programs with older adult members and senior citizens to address special interests and concerns. Association of Retired Persons (ARP) is an independent, self-led program for older adults who want to keep broadening their interests in such areas as art, theater, literature, and world affairs. The Program for the Mature (P.M.) offers weekly cultural activities for those who are contemplating retirement or have recently retired.

The Alliance also operates supportive service programs and recreational activities at neighborhood senior residences. The Penn South Program provides educational, social, and cultural activities for three hundred senior citizen residents of Penn South Co-op, at 290 Ninth Avenue. The LaGuardia Addition offers programs for tenants of the LaGuardia Addition for the Elderly, a low-income public housing project located at 282 Cherry Street. The David L. Podell House is a twelve-story apartment residence for senior citizens attached to the David Sarnoff Building of the Educational Alliance, located at 179-181 Henry Street.

Cultural Activities

The Art School at the Educational Alliance provides a setting for students to develop their imaginative talents in a variety of media. Classes are offered in oil painting, acrylics and watercolors, life sketch, ceramics, and clay, stone, wood, and metal sculpture.

The Photography Institute offers seminars and workshops to teach students to investigate and experiment with camera techniques and darkroom resources. In addition, the Gifted Young Artists Program offers courses for talented youth, ages thirteen through twenty, in life drawing and painting, and multi-media exploration.

The Lee Kohns Cultural Arts Center is a fine setting for older adult arts activities. This center is home to the following: The Joseph and Ceil Mazer Theater, which offers concerts, dance recitals, film series, theater

works, vocal programs, holiday celebrations, art lectures, poetry readings, and children's programs; the New Era Club Lecture Forum, which meets twice monthly and brings guest speakers to present social, political, economic, historic, and health issues; the Alliance of Figurative Artists, which organizes panels of artists to discuss concepts and challenges related to visual art; and the New Gallery, which provides an exhibition space for community artists and arts groups.

Athletics

The Israel Cummings Gymnasium is available for sports and fitness programs for children, youth, men, and women, with special services for the elderly. Handball, paddleball, badminton, basketball, and volleyball can be played indoors; classes in tennis, golf, yoga, aerobics, creative dancing and exercise, belly dancing, self defense, kung fu, gymnastics, jogging, and fencing are all offered regularly.

Jewish Festivals

In addition to the Educational Alliance's diverse range of programs targeted to the special needs of children, youth, older adults, and seniors, all members and families can participate in festive Jewish celebrations and holidays: Succoth, Hanukah, Tu B'Shvat, Purimspiel, a traditional Pesach seder, Israel Independence Day, and the annual Lower East Side Festival and Jewish Community Street Fair.

Alliance Camps

The summer city programs and country camps of the Educational Alliance were established in 1901 and continue to offer camping experiences throughout the season for children, senior citizens, and developmentally disabled children, youth, and adults. Camp Leah, for children and teenagers six through sixteen, is located at Bear Mountain, New York; Camp Cummings, in Brewster, New York, is designed for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled and autistic children, adolescents and adults;

the Salomon Vacation Center, also in Brewster, New York, is available for older adults; the Intown Day Camp is an Alliance-based program for children two-and-a-half to six-and-a-half years old; and the New Country Day Camp offers complete camping at Henry Kaufmann Campgrounds, Staten Island, for children seven through fourteen years old.

Educational Alliance West

Educational Alliance West was founded as a modest pilot project after a 1979 Alliance study, funded by UJA-Federation, found a substantial unaffiliated Jewish population, completely unserved, on the Lower West Side. Today, the Educational Alliance West program provides cultural, educational, and social activities within the framework of the Jewish tradition to people of all ages. The program's development has been characterized by consistent growth in number and diversity of programs, broadening of age groups and populations served to include singles, young couples, families, and the elderly. The boundaries of the Alliance West have expanded beyond the West Village to include SoHo, TriBeCa, and Battery Park City, with satellite programs in Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, and Boerum Hill. An enthusiastic staff, an active board committee, and an ever expanding membership have led to consistent and dramatic evolution of the program. Each year Educational Alliance West is substantially different from the year before, as the program responds to the needs of its growing community.

Programs at Educational Alliance West serve:

One hundred pre-schoolers in the newly renovated GANI Nursery School at the 13th Street Alan Harris Cummings Family and Parenting Center, where an experienced early childhood staff oversees diverse group and individual activities;

Six hundred babies and pre-schoolers and their parents in over fifty groups and more than fifteen Jewish Parenting Workshops at the East 13th Street facility;

Seven hundred grade-school children in Afterschool Network and "Prime Time" Programs, plus a holiday and trip program;

Twenty-five hundred family members participate in the community-

wide Jewish Holiday Program, which includes menorah lighting, Megillah reading, a Purim festival, and Yom Hashoah observance;

Five hundred singles who participate in Singles Activities, including weekly Sunday brunches, lectures, and special events;

One thousand participants in Tarbuth West Judaica and Jewish Cultural Programs, including children in the Kinder Klub classes, singles, adults, and seniors. Tarbuth West programs include seminars in Jewish thought, a film series, a monthly Shabbat Havurah with a pot-luck vegetarian supper, all-day Yiddish workshops, and "Sunday Nite Live" lectures by such speakers as Chaim Potok, Alan Dershowitz, and Norman Podhoretz.

In addition, the Educational Alliance West has established the Melton School, which offers a curriculum in Jewish studies to adults with little or no background in the subject. The Melton School holds classes in Manhattan and in Brooklyn and is a two-year program of thirty evenings a year. The school introduces students to the shared classical heritage of the Jewish people, leading to a Certificate of Jewish Study from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

In Brooklyn, the Educational Alliance West programs concentrate on early childhood and parenting programs, Jewish singles and adults activities, and Tarbuth cultural programs, all emanating from five cooperating synagogues: Congregation Mount Sinai, the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, Congregation Beth Elohim, Union Temple, and the Kane Street Synagogue. The Alliance West programs in Brooklyn serve a large and growing area of upwardly-mobile young Jewish professionals, entrepreneurs, executives, and managers.

In September 1989 the Alliance opened the doors of its newly renovated, rented site at 129 Montague Street in Brooklyn. The facility, approximately 5,000 square feet, was designed to accomodate a nursery school for 100 children along with a parenting program for some 500 families. In the evenings, the site serves as a center for singles and Jewish Family Life activities. This facility, the most recent initiative that the Alliance has sponsored in this area of "Brownstone Brooklyn," will also be utilized for organizing the planning and subsequent implementation of other desired programs and services.

Community, Mental Health, and Special Service Programs

Community Mental Health Services, located at 315 East 10th Street, offers diagnostic, counseling (individual, group, and family therapy), and referral services for substance abusers, as well as young professionals and business people suffering from cocaine or alcohol abuse.

Project Contact, a comprehensive prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation program, offers a multi-faceted approach to meet the needs of runaways, the homeless, and drug-abusing youth and adults. Project Contact has served as a model rehabilitation treatment program since its founding in 1967. Services include a statewide round-the-clock drug information hotline, crisis intervention, counseling, remedial education, high school equivalency diploma preparation, vocational training, job placement, and short- or long-term residential care.

In 1987, largely in response to the escalating number of young people enmeshed in the crack epidemic, Project Contact shifted some of its resources and energies toward strengthening its preventative and rehabilitative services for adolescents. Specific initiatives include sponsorship of a federally funded "high impact" residential treatment component housed in the seventy-eight-bed Pride Site facility, and Project TRY, a day treatment program for forty high-risk and chemically abusing youths and funded through a combined Federal and State Task Force on Integrated Projects for Youth and Chemical Dependency. In addition, a comprehensive service program for the prevention of adolescence substance abuse by runaways and homeless youth, funded through the Federal Office of Human Development Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, has been initiated. The program involves over fifty youths in peer counseling, the making of drug prevention videotapes, an anti-drug use newsletter, and a youth counseling center. Project Contact programs operate at Pride Site (371 East 10th Street), the Mental Health Center (315 East 10th Street), and Our House (315 Second Avenue).

Our House is a supervised community residence for young men and women ages eighteen through twenty-nine who have had a history of psychiatric hospitalization. Our House seeks to assist the residents to live independently in the community and to help prevent them from being reinstitutionalized.

Alliance Home Care Services brings personal care services to frail, elderly persons. Light housecleaning, shopping, bathing, escort service, case assistance, information and referral services are all offered.

E.A.R.S.—Lifeline is an emergency alarm system for medically disabled, physically frail individuals. In an emergency, the client activates the response system by pressing a button worn on his or her person. Responders are sent to assist.

Homeless projects developed by the Alliance include the following:

Project O.R.E. was established as a Manhattan outreach project to the Jewish aged and homeless, or those isolated in SRO hotels and slum tenements. One of a number of special projects funded by UJA-Federation under its Special Funds program, O.R.E. provides emergency assistance and functions as an outreach program that searches out the homeless and isolated Jewish elderly of midtown Manhattan. Comprehensive services include crisis intervention—food, clothing, shelter, crisis home care, cash assistance; a drop-in center, established at Congregation Emunath Israel at 236 West 23th Street, where Glatt Kosher lunches are provided daily and weekend food packages are distributed to SRO hotels; Jewish cultural group activities; individual and group counseling by social workers; referrals to other agencies as needed; and permanent housing assistance.

Respite House provides a temporary shelter at 331 East 12th Street for seniors in crisis as a result of crime in their home, fire, eviction, domestic violence, or building abandonment. Clients are given help with relocation, entitlements, counseling, and other needed services. Established in 1983, Respite House has helped over 650 elderly people in crisis.

Sirovich House, an SRO residential facility, provides safe housing, including meals and supportive services, for individuals over the age of sixty-two years. The sixty-eight-unit program, also located at 331 East 12th Street, on the two-and-a-half floors above Respite House, provides permanent housing for some of the clients from various other programs serving residents from the Lower East Side.

Appendix II

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE PRESIDENTS

Isidor Straus	1893–1912
Judge Samuel Greenbaum	1912–1928
Benjamin Tuska	1928–1933
Hon. Stanley M. Isaacs	1933–1937
James Frank	1937–1942
Robert B. Brodie	1942–1945
Robert S. Byfield	1945–1948
Chauncey M. Mayers	1948–1951
Rabbi Nathan A. Perilman	1951–1953
Joseph S. Oettinger	1953–1955
Donald B. Straus	1955–1958
Robert Wolf	1958–1961
George T. Palley	1961–1964
Joseph S. Gershman	1964–1967
Frank A. Weil	1967–1970
John S. Borg	1970–1974
Martin J. Freund	1974–1977
James J. Ross	1977–1983
Ernest Rubenstein	1983–present

Appendix III

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE TRUSTEES

Current Trustees	*Date Elected to Board*
PRESIDENT:	
Ernest Rubenstein	March 20, 1961
VICE-PRESIDENTS:	
Arnold Chase	December 20, 1976
Howard Ganek	January 22, 1979
Lawrence Greenfield	April 28, 1975
Jonathan Rose	September 24, 1979
Ann Schreiber	June 23, 1982
TREASURER:	
Jerome E. Kranz	December 20, 1976
SECRETARY:	
Mrs. Linda Lynn	April 28, 1975
ASSISTANT SECRETARY:	
Richard Karp	November 27, 1978

Mrs. Martha V. Bartos	November 24, 1952
Dr. Katherine Behrens	September 19, 1977
Charles Benenson	January 28, 1952
David Blech	September 25, 1989
Clyde R. Brownstone	September 25, 1989
Howard W. H. Chan	March 25, 1985
Mrs. Israel Cummings	February 15, 1960
Edgar Eisner	September 25, 1989
Leslie Gordon Fagen	March 30, 1987
Bernice Forman Friedman	November 28, 1988
Daniel B. Grossman	March 30, 1987
Leonard J. Hankin	May 20, 1957
Stanley Herzman	February 20, 1967
Howard Herzog	November 26, 1984
David Horowitz	September 25, 1989
Mrs. Patricia Kenner	January 24, 1983
Amos Landman	March 24, 1980
Ms. Jane Levere	September 25, 1989
Ralph Lippman	June 21, 1954
Mrs. Karen Etingin-Mayers	May 19, 1986
Ms. Deborah W. Meier	February 17, 1969
Mrs. Bonny Newman	March 30, 1987
Helen Nitkin	May 22, 1989
Steven D. Oppenheim	April 25, 1988
Samuel S. Perelson	September 27, 1976
Mrs. Norman Pleshette	February 26, 1973
Irving Raber	November 28, 1988
William Rapfogel	October 24, 1983
Ms. Elinor Ratner	July 10, 1984
Mrs. Carole Rifkind	December 19, 1983
Lawrence Rivkin	September 28, 1987
Mrs. Billie S. Rosen	November 22, 1982
James J. Ross	January 20, 1971
Marian Saltzman	November 28, 1988
Oscar Schachter	May 19, 1986

Howard Schneider	March 18, 1968
Bruce Slovin	June 15, 1981
Mrs. Mia Solow	November 23, 1981
Arthur I. Sonnenblick	September 28, 1987
Mrs. Ruth Cummings-Sorenson	July 10, 1984
Kenneth M. Stark	September 28, 1987
William M. Stern	September 24, 1973
Wilbert A. Tatum	November 15, 1971
Mrs. Merryl Tisch	September 28, 1987
Madelene Towne	May 22, 1989
Sandison E. Weil	September 25, 1989
Benjamin Weiss	May 18, 1971

Lifetime Honorary Trustees	*Date Elected to Board*
Walter J. Brownstone	May 23, 1950
Martin J. Freund	March 17, 1969
Mrs. J. Harold Garfunkel	February 25, 1957
Mrs. Randolph Guggenheimer	November 26, 1941
Maurice Magid	December 20, 1954
Donald B. Straus	May 27, 1946
Frank A. Weil	May 27, 1958
Robert Wolf	September 27, 1948

*Past Trustees**	*Term of Service on the Board*
Mrs. James H. Abraham	April 19, 1919–August 1962
Mrs. Alexander Aderer	May 16, 1949–March 19, 1962
Benjamin Altman	November 25, 1896–October 10, 1910
Alexander E. Arnstein	April 28, 1930–May 1933
Rhetta M. Arter	April 19, 1965–May 25, 1977

* This list may be incomplete due to missing records.

Monty Banks	September 22, 1970–May 14, 1973
Martin Beck	November 8, 1915–December 11, 1916
Morris W. Benjamin	November 10, 1896–October 21, 1921
Mrs. Sarah Berger	November 23, 1981– November 26, 1984
Leonard H. Bernheim	February 26, 1945–September 1968
Kermit Berylson	April 30, 1973–September 1973
Dorothy Beskind	September 23, 1974–May 1976
Mrs. Miriam Birnbaum	September 19, 1977– September 29, 1986
Mrs. Abe Blinder	February 22, 1972–February 25, 1974
Ben C. Bloch	May 3, 1943–November 28, 1977
Paul Block	February 28, 1928–May 1933
Sidney Blumenthal	February 2, 1896–November 9, 1914
Julius Blumberg	January 9, 1905–January 14, 1907
Mrs. Frances Borg	June 25, 1979–March 28, 1981
John S. Borg	May 24, 1938–June 1977
Dr. Samuel M. Brickner	February 14, 1910–October 12, 1913
Samuel Brill	October 15, 1901–February 8, 1904
Robert B. Brodie	January 17, 1921–April 26, 1954
Mrs. Myron I. Buchman	November 24, 1952–November 1954
Henry Budge	June 6, 1893–May 14, 1894
Mrs. Walter G. Bunzl	May 7, 1951–September 21, 1959
Robert S. Byfield	October 23, 1933–October 29, 1951
Eddie Cantor	November 23, 1936–January 27, 1947
Mark Chasin	April 23, 1979–November 1980
Elliot E. Cohen	March 24, 1947–June 25, 1951
Mrs. George L. Cohen	November 27, 1950–October 29, 1951
Richard Cohen	October 25, 1937–February 25, 1948
Robert Cohen	June 6, 1893–December 4, 1893
Sydney S. Cohen	May 16, 1927–December 16, 1935
Israel Cummings	December 21, 1948–January 28, 1974
Mrs. William Easton	June 19, 1961–December 1966
Lewis Einstein	February 9, 1903–September 14, 1903
Mark Eisner	October 9, 1916–January 25, 1922

Miss Sarah Elkus	April 19, 1919–October 21, 1957
Bernard M. L. Ernst	March 14, 1904–November 25, 1938
Mrs. Edward First	February 16, 1959–September 23, 1963
Elliot Fixler	December 20, 1976–September 1986
James Frank	September 15, 1902–October 28, 1946
Mrs. Maxwell Frank	February 24, 1942–September 27, 1948
George Freedman	September 24, 1973–March 22, 1982
Albert Friedlander	June 6, 1893–June 2, 1909
Israel Friedlander	March 10, 1913–September 18, 1919
William Furth	June 19, 1961–March 23, 1981
Joseph S. Gershman	June 22, 1953–December 22, 1969
Mrs. George Ginandes	November 27, 1950–March 24, 1952
B. Benedict Glazer	April 25, 1938–October 27, 1941
Leon Goldfluss	May 16, 1955–May 1958
Nathan Goldman	November 22, 1982–January 26, 1987
Richard S. W. Goldman	December 27, 1943– November 27, 1944
August Goldsmith	December 11, 1905–May 25, 1933
Lawrence L. Goldsmith	June 13, 1950–December 22, 1947
Ned Goldsmith	November 27, 1950–April 2, 1951
Philip J. Goodhart	March 12, 1894–April 11, 1898
Dr. Richard Gottheil	November 11, 1912–March 9, 1936
Herbert M. Gorfinkle	May 20, 1963–September 1969
Irving L. Greene	April 22, 1974–May 1977
Hon. Samuel Greenbaum	June 6, 1967–September 25, 1987
Benjamin Grund	June 19, 1967–September 25, 1987
Isaac Guggenheim	December 10, 1900–November 2, 1905
Randolph Guggenheimer, Jr.	January 20, 1964–June 1983
Ralph K. Guinzburg	May 21, 1923–December 28, 1928
David Haar	December 21, 1925–March 2, 1953
J. Stanley Halle	April 21, 1924–March 15, 1926
Louis J. Halle	November 8, 1909–December 13, 1909
Samuel B. Hamburger	May 28, 1899–December 28, 1926
Sam Harris	May 24, 1948–October 25, 1954
Andrew M. Heine	May 20, 1963–April 19, 1965

F. Warren Hellman	March 20, 1961–June 1969
Charles E. Heming	February 21, 1927–January 18, 1929
Emil Heller	April 12, 1915–June 26, 1916
Mrs. A. Minnie Herts Heniger	June 6, 1893–November 11, 1895
Lev H. Hershfield	June 6, 1893–October 12, 1896
Abraham Hertzberg	April 22, 1974–April 26, 1976
Dr. Jerry Hochbaum	October 29, 1973–September 1982
Albert F. Hochstadter	June 6, 1893–July 4, 1903
Arthur Hofheimer	June 12, 1922–May 21, 1923
Myer S. Isaacs	June 6, 1893–June 14, 1897
Mrs. Lewis M. Isaacs, Jr.	April 16, 1962–May 11, 1964
Stanley M. Isaacs	December 14, 1914–October 27, 1914
Joseph S. Iseman	March 2, 1953–May 20, 1963
Hon. Murray L. Jacobs	October 28, 1940–June 23, 1982
Richard Jacobs	January 26, 1970–September 1972
Samuel K. Jacobs	June 12, 1922–February 1, 1928
Stanley R. Jacobs	December 23, 1929– November 25, 1985
Siegfried H. Kahn	November 8, 1915–December 17, 1923
Jerome E. Klein	April 16, 1962–September 1965
Charles Kleiman	September 22, 1975–July 1983
Hon. Herman Katz	May 20, 1957–May 1977
Arnold Kohn	December 10, 1900–October 15, 1901
David Kohn	June 25, 1894–March 11, 1895
Lee Kohns	June 6, 1893–January 18, 1927
Robert Lee Kohns	February 21, 1927–October 27, 1929
Ferdinand Kuhn	March 8, 1899–October 9, 1916
Joseph F. Keller	January 22, 1934–May 3, 1943
Mrs. Harold Lamberg	January 16, 1967–December 16, 1970
Edgar J. Lauer	January 22, 1914–May 1942
Henry M. Leipziger	June 6, 1893–January 11, 1911
Mrs. Amy S. Tenny-Levere	February 27, 1894–September 1988
Albert D. Levin	November 27, 1950–April 18, 1955
Aaron J. Levy	April 5, 1937–May 1939
Donald R. Levy	January 16, 1967–October 21, 1968

Leo Levy	November 13, 1916–December 1938
Stanley H. Levy	October 21, 1974–December 1985
Adolph Lewisohn	November 14, 1898–February 10, 1902
Julius Lewisohn	April 10, 1911–October 13, 1914
Leonard Lewisohn	November 14, 1898–February 10, 1902
Alfred Liebman	January 14, 1907–October 7, 1907
Norman Linzer	April 17, 1972–June 24, 1973
Mrs. Morris Loeb	November 11, 1901–April 7, 1919
Morris Loeb	June 6, 1893–June 8, 1896
Adolph Loewenthal	December 10, 1894–October 12, 1896
Abraham E. Lubarsky	January 11, 1911–October 18, 1920
Mrs. Walter S. Mack	January 22, 1934–November 29, 1943
Mrs. Hubert Mann	May 16, 1949–September 1949
Marcus M. Marks	June 6, 1893–October 11, 1909
Louis Marshall	June 14, 1897–September 12, 1929
A. Wilfred May	April 25, 1938–May 24, 1954
Julius M. Mayer	February 9, 1903–October 7, 1907
Chauncey M. Mayers	October 28, 1940–April 17, 1961
Thomas C. Mayers	June 19, 1961–December 1974
Ira L. Mendell	May 20, 1963–May 11, 1964
Sigmund Mendelsohn	June 13, 1904–December 1941
Henry Morgenthau	December 12, 1989–March 9, 1903
Louis J. Naftalison	November 27, 1950–April 1969
Paul D. Neuwirth	June 24, 1974–November 22, 1976
Mrs. Maxine Nathan	October 29, 1979–March 28, 1981
John B. Oakes	March 27, 1950–November 20, 1950
Adolph S. Ochs	April 14, 1902–December 8, 1902
Gerard Oestreicher	April 27, 1953–September 1967
Joseph S. Oettinger	May 26, 1947–June 1983
Steven Osterweis	June 20, 1955–March 17, 1958
Harvey Ostrover	May 24, 1982–October 1984
George T. Palley	March 23, 1953–January 20, 1974
Eugene H. Paul	January 11, 1909–February 8, 1909
Rabbi Nathan A. Perilman	January 26, 1942–February 1952
Robert Pilpel	November 24, 1947–September 1987

M. Warley Platzek	June 6, 1893–November 13, 1893
David L. Podell	April 17, 1922–January 27, 1947
Mrs. Edward Popper	January 24, 1944–March 28, 1948
William C. Popper	April 13, 1896–January 4, 1924
Hon. Saul Price	December 21, 1948–November 1964
Mrs. S. S. Prince	November 4, 1989–May 22, 1933
Ms. Julia Richman	June 6, 1893–June 24, 1912
Stuart Robinowitz	March 21, 1966–June 1969
Mrs. Martin Roeder	January 19, 1959–March 20, 1961
Mrs. Irwin H. Rosenberg	November 24, 1947–February 1959
Henry L. Rosenfeld	November 13, 1911–March 10, 1913
Mrs. Samuel N. Rosenman	March 26, 1930–October 25, 1938
Isaac Rosenwald	January 21, 1894–June 25, 1894
Charles I. Rostov	June 20, 1965–September 29, 1989
Dr. Benjamin Rubinstein	May 21, 1962–May 1975
Henry N. Sachs	April 27, 1953–February 4, 1985
William Salomon	January 21, 1894–December 15, 1919
Henry F. Samstag	December 14, 1908–October 16, 1920
Levi Samuels	June 6, 1893–January 21, 1894
Gen. David Sarnoff	February 23, 1928–January 27, 1947
Solomon Schechter	November 16, 1903–November 11, 1912
John H. Scheier	January 27, 1930–May 1941
Jacob H. Schiff	June 6, 1893–January 13, 1896
Eugene Schorr	September 24, 1979–February 1982
Herman Schram	April 21, 1924–March 24, 1947
Wolfgang S. Schwabacher	May 21, 1923–April 2, 1951
Mrs. Michael Schwartz	October 21, 1974–May 1976
Arthur L. Selig	December 13, 1910–March 26, 1925
Edwin R. A. Seligman	June 6, 1893–May 20, 1902
Bernard Semel	April 2, 1917–May 19, 1924
W. A. Shakman	May 11, 1914–January 18, 1915
Michael Sher	October 5, 1970–March 1988
Hon. Sheldon Silver	September 22, 1975–January 26, 1987
Robert Simons	May 26, 1947–April 26, 1954

Robert E. Simon	March 14, 1904–June 2, 1927
Peter Skomorowsky	October 25, 1976–June 2, 1980
Herbert Slater	April 22, 1974–September 1979
Carl M. Spero	November 27, 1950–January 30, 1989
Frederick Spiegelberg	June 6, 1893–October 10, 1905
Mrs. Manuel Stapen	February 15, 1960–May 11, 1964
Bernard Z. Stein	February 26, 1962–May 20, 1974
Dr. Samuel H. Stein	November 27, 1950–May 20, 1963
Mrs. Robert D. Steefel	March 27, 1946–May 26, 1947
Mrs. Carl S. Stern	May 21, 1908–December 27, 1932
Louis Stern	June 6, 1893–October 15, 1901
Theodore Sterngrin	March 15, 1910–October 10, 1910
Mrs. George J. Stewart	September 23, 1963–February 1973
Marcus Stine	October 15, 1901–December 14, 1903
Maurice L. Stone	November 27, 1950–March 20, 1955
Mrs. Myron K. Stone	May 23, 1960–January 30, 1961
Isidor Straus	June 6, 1893–April 15, 1912
Jesse Isidor Straus	October 14, 1912–March 1, 1920
Ralph I. Strauss	February 26, 1934–March 25, 1946
Samuel Strauss	February 13, 1906–January 27, 1947
Solomon Sulzberger	December 8, 1902–October 23, 1911
Mrs. Michael Swartz	October 21, 1974–May 1976
Benjamin Tuska	June 6, 1893–June 1932
Mrs. Herbert Thalheimer	November 26, 1951–February 28, 1955
Ms. Gwen Vallely	October 24, 1983–May 20, 1985
Dr. J. G. Wallach	February 2, 1896–May 23, 1898
Mrs. Sheila Walpin	November 27, 1978–September 1987
Felix M. Warburg	November 10, 1896–February 6, 1917
Gerald Felix Warburg	February 21, 1927–December 28, 1931
Ms. Marcia Warner	December 20, 1976–June 1983
Clarence A. Weiller	April 26, 1948–February 20, 1956
Jacques Weinberger	April 19, 1910–October 14, 1920
Mrs. Joseph Weintraub	January 28, 1952–September 1960
Maurice Wertheim	December 13, 1909–June 2, 1919
Charles Whitehead	September 22, 1970–May 1972

Mrs. Clarence K. Whitehill	November 27, 1950–October 29, 1951
Louis Wiley	May 14, 1906–April 7, 1919
Mrs. Joseph Willen	June 19, 1967–March 18, 1968
Carrie Wise	January 13, 1913–September 1933
Dr. Jonah B. Wise	November 25, 1929–March 28, 1949
Simson Wolf	March 9, 1908–May 13, 1912
Fred R. Wolfe	March 16, 1925–December 29, 1929
William J. Wollman	December 13, 1909–April 7, 1919
Eugene H. Zagat	February 24, 1947–November 20, 1960
Charles Zimmerman	September 17, 1956–February 26, 1962

Appendix IV

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Isaac Spectorsky (Superintendent)	1891–1898
David Blaustein (Superintendent)	1898–1907
Dr. Henry Fleischman (Administrator)	1907–1938
Samuel S. Fishzohn	1938–1945
Mordecai Kessler	1945–1948
Charles Ansell (Acting Director)	1948–1949
A. Harold Murray	1949–1954
Dr. Simon Slavin	1954–1960
Dr. Louis Berkowitz	1960–1980
Robert Meltzer	1980–present

Appendix V

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE
CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1864 Hebrew Free School Association founded.

1883 Young Men's Hebrew Association opens East Broadway branch.

1886 Aguilar Free Library Society organized.

1889 Committee of German Jewish Philanthropists: Isidor Straus, Judge Samuel Greenbaum, Myer S. Isaacs, Jacob H. Schiff, Morris Loeb, Edwin R. A. Seligman plan a fundraising fair to erect a large educational building to house the Hebrew Free School Association, the Aguilar Free Library Society and the Young Men's Hebrew Association. Benefit fair at American Institute Hall raises $125,000 for building fund.

1891 Isaac Spectorsky appointed Superintendent of the Educational Alliance. Hebrew Institute completed at 197 East Broadway. Baron de Hirsch Fund established, Myer S. Isaacs, president, Jacob Schiff, vice-president.

1892 Baron de Hirsch English classes for newly arrived immigrant children established at Hebrew Institute.

1893 YMHA drops out of partnership arrangement with Hebrew Free School Association and Aguilar Free Library Society, and the Hebrew Institute renamed the Educational Alliance. Isidor Straus appointed first president of the new board; Isaac Spectorsky appointed Headworker (Executive Director).

1895 Joint art exhibit with University Settlement at Educational Alliance (attendance 105,716). Benefit Fair raises $100,000.

1897 Rev. Hirsh Masliansky begins evening lectures in Yiddish. Building mortgage redeemed by Baroness Clara de Hirsch.

1898 David Blaustein appointed Superintendent. Endowment Fund initiated by Jacob Schiff. Thomas Davidson begins Breadwinners' College.

1899 Educational Alliance incorporated.

1900 Surprise Lake Camp for boys established with gift of land by Ferdinand Kuhn, James Frank, and Bernard M. L. Ernst. Morris Raphael Cohen takes over Breadwinners' College.

1901 Isidor Straus refuses Democratic nomination for Mayor of New York.

1902 Legal Aid Bureau established with Yiddish-speaking lawyers and clerks; Desertion Bureau later added.

1903 Children's Educational Theater founded; Mark Twain attends a performance and subsequently joins the Board of Advisors of the Children's Theater.

1904 Compulsory Education and Child Labor laws enacted.

1906 Sholom Aleichem and Mark Twain appear together at Educational Alliance.

1907 Dr. Henry Fleischman appointed Administrator.

1908 Commissioner of Police Bingham apologizes for his anti-Semitic-sounding remarks due to pressure by Louis Marshall of the Alliance board.

1910 New York City establishes English classes for immigrants. Support of Baron de Hirsch Fund for Alliance classes ends.

1912 Isidor and Ida Straus drown on the *Titanic*; leave bequest of $101,000. A Protective Bureau and a Probation Bureau established which deal with pre-delinquents, delinquents and vice conditions on the Lower East Side.

1913 Council of Jewish Communal Institutions formed; Lee Kohns (Alliance delegate), president.

1915 Twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. Edalia, vacation home for girls, opened in Rumson, N.J. Alumni Association formed by group of former club members.

1917 Federation for Support of Jewish Philanthropic Agencies of New York organized. The Educational Alliance becomes a charter member agency and receives annual budgetary allowance. Educational Alliance Art School reorganized by Russian-born artist Abbo Ostrowsky. Support of Baron de Hirsch Fund ended. Surprise Lake Camp becomes an independent Federation unit.

1924 Restrictive immigration laws end growth of East Side Jewish population.

1926 Camp Salomon founded with family memorial gift.

1928 Educational Alliance absorbs East Side Day Nursery with Federation subsidy.

1931 First speech improvement clinic in New York opens at Alliance.

1937 Neighborhood Service Department opened.

1938 Samuel S. Fishzohn appointed Director.

1940 Retrospective Exhibition held at Associated American Artists Galleries, commemorating twenty-five years of Art School.

1945 Mordecai Kessler appointed Director.

1948 Cohen Survey of the Educational Alliance assesses changes on the Lower East Side and leads to increased professionalization of services. Charles Ansell appointed Acting Director.

1949 A. Harold Murray appointed Director.

1951 Alliance begins Day Care Center Program for young children of low-income mothers, subsidized by the New York City Department of Social Services. Stuyvesant Neighborhood House merged with Educational Alliance. Mental Health Consultation Unit established.

1954 Programs begun for mentally retarded children and adults. Dr. Simon Slavin appointed Director. Radio broadcasts from Alliance auditorium.

1955 Tercentenary of Jews in America celebrated on the Lower East Side. Alexander Dobkin takes over Art School.

1956 Operation Street Corner initiated. *Between Two Bridges* study published by New York University. Alliance helps establish Lower East Side Neighborhood Association and Two Bridges Neighborhood Council. Purchase of Israel and Leah Cummings campsite. Alumni Hall of Fame established.

1960 Louis Berkowitz appointed Director.

1961 Seventieth Anniversary Celebration. Alliance sponsors Professional Institute entitled, "Group Work and the New Frontier."

1962 Joint project with Hillside Hospital on social rehabilitation of discharged psychiatric patients is initiated. Operation Street Corner incorporated in government-funded Mobilization for Youth Program.

1963 Retrospective Art Exhibit at American Federation of Arts Galleries. Edgies Basketeers appear on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show."

1964 Stay in School project initiated. Groundbreaking ceremonies for David Podell House and Israel and Leah Cummings Gymnasium. Mental Health Institute with Hillside Hospital held at Alliance.

1965 Neighborhood Youth Corps, LaGuardia Houses project, Strauss League program with Hillside Hospital, and Head Start program initiated. Alliance opens Rutgers Community Center.

1966 Seventy-fifth Anniversary dinner at Waldorf-Astoria. Governor David Rockefeller attends unveiling of commemorative plaque at David Sarnoff Building. Dedication ceremonies for David Podell House for the Elderly.

1967 Tenement Houses Project with Adelphi School of Social Work begins.

1968 Project Contact storefront opened.

1969 Dedication of Israel and Leah Cummings Gymnasium. Community Organization Task Force launched. East Broadway School for Emotionally Disturbed Children established.

1970 Project Contact expanded, Pride Site residence established. Blanchard and Vigilante report, *Response to Change: The Educational Alliance and Its Future*. Dedication of renowned Educational Alliance building, now named the David Sarnoff Building (attended by Mayor John Lindsay).

1971 Dedication of Camp Leah.

1972 Project Contact receives Federal grant to add residential, day treatment, and outpatient services.

1973 Neighborhood Service Center for the Jewish Poor established.

1975 Alliance joins United Jewish Council of the Lower East Side. Project Contact initiates major Alcohol Treatment Program.

1976 First Annual Jewish Spring Festival. Chaim Gross commemorates fifty years of association with Art School. ALESS (Association of Lower East Side Settlements) Home Care program, Senior Companions program, Jewish Public School Youth program initiated.

1978 Project Contact Synergy Program, a retail sales training program, begins.

1979 Lower West Side Program (Educational Alliance West) opened with seed grant from Federation.

1980 Robert Meltzer appointed Director. Wallace S. Whittaker Senior Center established.

1982 Respite House and Crime Prevention for the Elderly. Head Start Project Linkage study and conference. Lifeline program, an emergency alarm response system for physically frail and homebound elderly, initiated.

1983 Dedication of Senior Citizens Building for the Handicapped at Cummings Campgrounds. Day Care Center award presented by Mayor Edward Koch. CompatiMates, part of Educational Alliance West, initiated.

1984 Building purchased for group residence at 315 Second Avenue for psychologically impaired youth and young adults (Our House). Gifted Young Artists, a new program, introduced in the Art School for thirteen- to twenty-year-old students.

1985 Legal Services Clinic established by Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

1986 Ground-breaking ceremony for SRO facility for homeless senior citizens. Our House opening ceremonies. Educational Alliance West opens early childhood center at 21 East 13th Street. New York State Cocaine Hotline established at Project Contact. Project O.R.E., an outreach program for elderly Jewish homeless, initiated.

1987 Dedication of SRO facility with supporting services for homeless senior citizens.

1988 Alliance West conducts extension program at Penn South Co-op for senior adults. 255 East Broadway purchased for new respite facility for the elderly.

1989 Centennial programs begin to celebrate first 100 years of the Alliance. Dedication of Educational Alliance Corner at the corner of Jefferson Street and East Broadway in Lower Manhattan. Educational Alliance West opens early childhood/parenting center in downtown Brooklyn on Montague Street.

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