FIFTY YEARS OF SOCIAL SERVICE

THE HISTORY OF
THE UNITED HEBREW CHARITIES
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

NOW THE
JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION, INC.

125 EAST 46TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2026

JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION, Inc.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 1926

PRESIDENT
LEOPOLD PLAUT

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS
ADOLPH LEWISOHN
MORTIMER L. SCHIFF
HENRY SOLOMON

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
EDGAR J. NATHAN

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT
WALTER H. LIEBMAN

TREASURER
LOUIS J. GRUMBACH

SECRETARY
EDGAR A. LEVY

TRUSTEES

MISS HILDA ALTSCHUL	MRS. B. LEERBURGER
JULIAN S. BACH	ALLAN S. LEHMAN
C. FRANK BACHRACH	MRS. M. L. LEVENSON
EDWIN BLUN	MORRIS MAYER
MRS. HERBERT S. CARLEBACH	MRS. NATHAN J. MILLER
ALBERT J. ERDMANN	DR. HENRY MOSKOWITZ
DR. BERNARD GLUECK	DR. MARK SOLITERMAN
DR. LOUIS I. HARRIS	MRS. WILLIAM C. SOLOMON
MRS. JOSEPH E. HOFFMAN	DAVID H. SULZBERGER
MISS FLORINA LASKER	RALPH WOLF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FRANCES TAUSSIG

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ELINOR BLACKMAN

Chapter I.

A PRELIMINARY GLANCE



HE United Hebrew Charities was organized in 1874. That was no mean date in the history of social work. The community was becoming dissatisfied with the doles then handed out by charitable societies; they thought that families should be assisted forward to vocations and self-support. Slight movements were under way that were to culminate in the establishment in Buffalo in 1877 of the "First Charity Organization Society", in the non-sectarian field.

Other expressions of the new spirit were coming out. Arnold Toynbee, that intrepid youth who shocked the quiet halls of Oxford with economics learned in the gutters of London, had not yet met Canon Barnett; out of the friendship between these two was to grow the first social settlement in the world. John Ruskin had already begun his letters to the workingmen of England, but much of his work in the field of social ethics was still to be done. Octavia Hill, a woman famed for her simplicity and interest in the unfortunate, was just then reaching this country with her pamphlets on sanitary living quarters for the poor, and little was known about her on this side of the Atlantic.

Some efforts to assist the poor had already been started. In Germany the town of Elberfeld had given help through "unpaid almoners" and had

influenced thought in other countries. Thomas Chalmers, the energetic dominie of Glasgow, Scotland, had devised his plan of administering assistance by districts or parishes, but little imitation of his district scheme had been forthcoming. In this country William Ellery Channing, in Boston, had thundered out his vigorous phrases about the social order as a producer of poverty, and Joseph Tuckerman, less known, had defined the purposes and methods of a new type of charitable assistance. It was not until seven years later that Josephine Shaw Lowell, as a member of the State Board of Charities of New York, wrote a memorable report, the result of which was the establishment of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York.

Thus, the United Hebrew Charities had its origin at a time when many of the events with which we are familiar had not occurred. Its subsequent history was to reflect and influence the development of modern social work. In the course of the next half century small houses grew into large tenements, congestion became alarming, and housing reforms were started. Tuberculosis was singled out for opposition, and medical discovery of ways to check this disease, especially in its early stages, enabled social reformers to build organizations by which to fight it. Child labor was seen to be a menace, and a strong effort to take little children out of mines and factories, off the streets and away from health-destroying employment, got under way. In similar fashion, safeguards were thrown around the work of women. Sickness emerged with tuberculosis as an important factor contributing to dependency, and charitable societies

endeavored to promote health as a necessary part of family welfare. With all this there went a progressive development of social work, so that technique was improved, purposes were enlarged, and salaried representatives of society's beneficence studied for their callings.

It is evident that the story to be told here is not only a part of this effort to improve conditions among the poor, but that it is to be seen most clearly against the background of changes in the Jewish community. Those changes were cataclysmic. When the United Hebrew Charities was started, the Jews in New York City numbered about 60,000. They were an active and energetic set of people. Revolutions in several countries in Europe had driven many young and able Jews to this country, and they were throwing themselves into the life of the new environment with enthusiasm. Literary societies were being formed, young men were meeting for debate, and music, art, politics, finance, business and the professions were claiming the newcomers. German emigration had added to the number of Jews during the decades just preceding, and Jews were erecting much of the structure in business and other fields that was later to become so solid. When Russian migration started in the early 'eighties, Jewish life in this country underwent a profound change.

The first touching of Jews at the little settlement of New Amsterdam was a picturesque incident. In 1654, when the irascible Dutchman, Peter Stuyvesant, was governor, a party of twenty-three refugees arrived on a boat called the *Santa Catarina*. They were fleeing from unjust treatment in Brazil

Evidently some of the Jews in the party were not well off, for they could not pay their full passage money, though the personal belongings of the whole group were sold to obtain the sum. Stuyvesant told them they could not remain. An appeal on their behalf was taken to the directors of the Dutch West Indies Company, whose servant Stuyvesant was. The reply of those gentlemen has become historic. It would be "unreasonable and unfair," they wrote, to exclude Jews from the colony, and the directors ordered that "they shall have permission to sail to and trade in New Netherlands, and to live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or the community, but be supported by their own nation." Thus, the Jews, on their first arrival in America, were compelled to care for their own poor.

First settlers among Jews in the United States were Spanish-Portuguese. Some of these came direct from Portugal, others after residence in Holland or England; some came by way of Brazil and the Dutch colonies in South America. With a broad outlook on affairs, they were individualists; they had travelled considerably and they were adventurous. They brought with them the tradition of the striking mediaeval scholarship and literary achievement of their people. In this tradition they took great pride. For a century and a half such people were almost the sole representatives of the Jewish race in the United States.

Early in the nineteenth century the second element to compose the Jews in this country began to arrive. German Jews, sturdy and persevering, at once began

to enter the life of the country. After the revolutions in Germany in 1848 and thereabouts, German immigrants grew in number. Now they entered industry, business, the arts and the professions on a large scale. One thing was noticeable, however, and that was the continued separation of the German and Spanish-Portuguese elements. Both Jews, each group kept its own customs and ways of regarding life.

The third element was contributed by the Russians who started coming in the early 'eighties. Galicia, Poland and Roumania were sources of this stream, also. These arrivals came largely from the country and small villages of eastern Europe, and they had little in common with either of the other two groups. They were in general the most poorly equipped for a competitive struggle in industrial America of all Jews who had arrived here. Their coming caused concern to the Jews already in this country, not only because of their prodigious numbers, but also because of the poverty of their background and the very few ways in which they could make a living. The surface of Jewish existence in the United States was now broken into a thousand eddies, and national traits and customs were represented here without number. The result was a heavy burden on Jewish statesmanship and Jewish philanthropy.

Until these later accessions, Jews had grown slowly in population for a long time. As late as 1812 it was estimated that there were only about 3,000 Jews in the United States. At that time New York City held about 500, and Newport, Rhode Island, with its Jewish whale-fishers and owners of trading vessels, and Charleston, South Carolina, were other impor-

tant Jewish centers. The number in New York began to grow rapidly as the century advanced, and by 1840 some 10,000 Jews made their homes there. It was German infusion that caused the greater part of this increase and, as has been said, when our story opens New York City had 60,000 Jews. By the turn of the twentieth century it had become the dwelling place of the largest urban Jewish population in the world.

Organized philanthropy appeared in its earliest form among the Jews of this country in the Jewish Orphans' Home which was started in Charleston, South Carolina in 1801. For generations there had been little need of charity among American Jews. So small had been their number throughout Colonial times, and so well did they do by themselves on the whole, that societies for relief were unnecessary; and any Jew who required assistance could get it quickly from his coreligionists.

The Mosaic law had made it a moral duty for the owners of fields to leave the corners of their acres and their forgotten gleanings to the poor, the fatherless and the widowed. The historic temper and tradition of the Jews has been to care for their own unfortunate and dependent.

Nothing could illustrate this historic temper better than the origin of the society that was, in fact, the parent of the United Hebrew Charities. In 1820 a veteran of the American Revolutionary War entered City Hospital, New York City, as a patient. He was without friends and without money, and he happened to be a Jew. Finding himself lonely, he expressed a wish for the companionship of fellow-

Jews. Quickly John Hart and Joseph Davies responded, going to the hospital and sitting at his bedside. They became interested in this grizzled, loquacious survivor of fascinating campaigns, and raised money by subscription to feed and clothe him when he should be able to leave the hopsital. Mr. Hart and Mr. Davies knew all the Jews in New York City, and had no trouble, going among them, in securing a fairly substantial sum. The veteran of the Revolution died in 1822, and when he passed away $300 of the money raised for him remained unspent.

This sum became the treasury of a new organization. It was called the Hebrew Benevolent Society, and was started in order that other Jews might be befriended in the future. "We shall have others of our own folk to look after in the days to come," said Mr. Hart and Mr. Davies. The society continued to give relief to individuals and families for many years.

In 1860 it opened a little home for children at 1 Lamartine Place (West Twenty-ninth Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues), and in 1870 changed its name to the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society. The original home soon gave way to a larger establishment at Seventy-seventh Street and Third Avenue and from this, in turn, the society moved in 1884 to the large orphanage at Amsterdam Avenue between One Hundred Thirty-sixth and One Hundred Thirty-eighth Streets, in which the Hebrew Orphan Asylum still cares for orphaned and dependent children. In the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society, started over 100 years ago, the United Hebrew Charities found its beginnings in 1874.

Chapter II.

FOUNDING THE UNITED HEBREW CHARITIES

When the United Hebrew Charities was founded, many Jewish organizations of charitable and even educational purpose already existed. As early as 1865, when a memorial meeting to Abraham Lincoln was held in Union Square and was followed by a huge procession, representatives of four charitable societies among Jews are known to have been present; these were the Purim Association, active for years in raising money for philanthropic purposes, the Mutual Benefit and Burial Society, the Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society. At the beginning of the decade, in 1870, a large charity ball was held and yielded the enormous sum of $101,675—an amount that was talked about for years; part of this went to Mt. Sinai Hospital, founded in 1852 and called "The Jews' Hospital" in those days. In 1874, the year the United Hebrew Charities was started, the Young Men's Hebrew Association also got under way, and two years later a summer home for children was opened by Jews at Far Rockaway, Long Island. In 1879 the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society was founded.

Jews were displeased with the modes of dispensing charity at the time. Many of the more observant among them saw ill-advised giving, and they saw chaos among the societies helping the poor. They

believed that families should be helped to become self-supporting, and they wanted responsible members of families taught trades. Among the societies they believed that there was much overlapping of assistance and duplication. They wanted some guiding and directing factor introduced into the situation, and intelligence used in the help given to people.

The history, not only of the founding of the United Hebrew Charities, but of the general criticism directed against methods of charity, may be traced fortunately in the columns of a weekly periodical then published by Jews. This was the *Jewish Messenger*, later merged with the *American Hebrew*, but then leading an independent and lively existence. It was not the only voice crying against poor charitable practices among Jews, but it was an insistent and at times even an eloquent voice; it made itself in a measure, the spokesman of Jewish charitable reformers.

Said the *Messenger* in an issue about this time: "The vital defect of our charities today is that intelligent study of the poor has been overlooked. Committees and donors have been content to dispose of each case on the mistaken principle—a dollar or two will cure every ill." The *Messenger* regarded it as clear that "more genuine good is accomplished by the elevation of one worthy family from depression, starvation and despair, than by giving out a score of weekly or occasional sums of money to the thriftless and indolent". It saw beggars going into mercantile houses and asking for help on account of "some imaginary cause of distress". It believed that begging and general thriftlessness were given an

impetus, and a positive zest, by the unenlightened donations then handed out. And it believed that this kind of conduct could be checked by more considered and more sensible giving.

The *Messenger* had a vivid eye for what it regarded as defects of charity. It drew a picture of a batch of money orders being mailed at stated intervals "to hundreds of known and unknown applicants" who, when they had cashed the orders, were no better off than before. One prominent charitable society, according to it, was sending monthly stipends to poor families, and the amounts received were "so trifling as scarcely to pay the rent of a part of the wretched hovels they occupy," so that the families had to go elsewhere for money to buy groceries. It was convinced that "our manner of giving charity will, unless checked by timely interference, produce in our midst a number of persons who will live and thrive upon our misdirected bounty."

All of this was part of the pensioning system of the period, a practice by which many societies kept a large number of persons on their books year after year. These families were given small sums regularly, and practically no attempt was made to check up on their need, or to assist them to become self-supporting. Many Jews attentive to charitable practices then believed that help of so definite a sort ought to enable families to draw themselves out of the quagmire of dependency. They believed, moreover, that unwise giving of this kind was characteristic of the philanthropy of all groups.

Thus, begging and pauperization were regarded as the products of current charity. The remedy, it

was held, lay in two things: first, a careful study of persons in distress and, second, co-operation among charitable societies. The need of co-operation was strongly urged. Some way of bringing charitable societies not only into more harmonious practice, but into mutual assistance and actual federation, was the cry of Jews at that time. It was insistence upon federation that produced the United Hebrew Charities.

"The idea of a central relief organization is neither new nor startling," rang one of the *Messenger's* pronouncements. "And yet it seems to require persistent explanation to convince the 'Bourbons' that times have changed." How similar is the language of innovation at all times! In the management of hospitals and other institutions, said this weekly, great strides have been taken within the past ten years. "It is unjust and discreditable to the Hebrews of New York that we continue the same modes of dispensing charity that were practiced in the infancy of our community." In London and Paris, it declared, the plan of centralized organization had been adopted, and there "the administration of the charities is systematic and successful."

These quotations are taken from numbers of the *Jewish Messenger* published in the spring and summer of 1873. It was then that the attempt to start the United Hebrew Charities was becoming definite. Indeed, the first formal proposal in that direction was made at the annual meeting of the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society in April 27 of that very year. This was not the original suggestion of the sort, for we are told that the chairman of one of the committees of the Hebrew Benevolent

and Orphan Asylum Society had suggested every year for six years, beginning in 1867, that some form of federation be formed out of the existing Jewish charitable agencies. But his suggestion had not borne fruit.

The annual meeting was held at the children's home of the society. A large gathering was in attendance. Myer S. Isaacs, destined to become widely known later as the first president of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, introduced a resolution calling for the appointment of a special committee of fifteen. This committee was to "inquire into the method of the distribution of relief now pursued by this Society, and to report a plan for co-operation with other Relief Societies." From the wording of this motion it will be seen that the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society was one of the agencies suffering from current criticism.

The committee set to work at once. In the course of the summer it studied the procedure of the Society in Philadelphia, and learned all it could about the Jewish Board of Guardians of London. By the end of the year it was ready with its report, and on December 29 the trustees of the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society met and approved its proposals.

These proposals were in the form of a "plan of union" for existing charitable societies among Jews. The "plan of union" eventually became the charter of the United Hebrew Charities.

Approval by the trustees did not mean final adoption, however. The committee still had to submit its report to the next annual meeting of the society,

to be held April 26, 1874. At that meeting, therefore, the document was read.

Mr. Isaacs, as chairman of the committee, was again spokesman. In the course of his remarks, he uttered an eloquent passage: "When we examine the work [of this and other societies], we shall find that, in the intelligent discernment of the needs of the poor, no progress has been felt. The poor remain poor. They are not assisted to raise themselves. They are not helped forward to a vocation. They are not spared the struggles attendant on poverty." Mr. Isaacs went on to assure all societies in the city that they would lose nothing by joining the union. The autonomy of each would be preserved, he said. But the "opportunities of each and all for doing good would be increased by their cordial acceptance each of a special duty." And Mr. Isaacs assured those within sound of his voice that the "income at the disposal" of the new organization would "gradually reach a sum far in excess of the combined expenditures in charity of existing societies." That was an important assurance.

Through the minds of those listening to Mr. Isaacs a common thought was running. That was the distress caused by the panic of 1873. No economic or industrial depression that this country has had has awakened so much sympathy for the sufferers, apparently, as did this one. The storm had burst in October, 1873, and had continued through the winter. New York City resounded to the tread of marching feet along its pavements, and cries of "We want work! We want work!" were raised from many throats. Charitable societies were overwhelmed with

appeals for help, and were acutely aware of their shortcomings in the presence of so much need. Many of the small movements to secure a better administration of charity in the 'seventies were given an impetus by this panic.

With such a background for its action, there was little that the members of the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society could do but second the approval of its trustees, and vote to join the contemplated union. That put underneath the measure the support of the most influential Jewish charitable agency in the city.

The satisfaction of the *Messenger* was unbounded. "A measure second to none ever initiated in the Jewish community of this city for profound consequence and permanent good," it called the committee's proposal.

Three other organizations had already indicated their friendliness to the plan. One was the Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association, which had passed it "with unanimity" a fortnight earlier, and the others were the Ladies' Benevolent Society of the Congregation Gates of Prayer and the Hebrew Relief Society. A fourth joined shortly, the Yorkville Ladies' Benevolent Society, and so there were five in all when the plan went into effect.

THE PLAN OF UNION

What was this "plan of union"? It began with the words: "The distribution of relief among the needy Hebrews of the City of New York shall be directed by the organization now formed, to be known as the United Hebrew Charities of New York." Thus, a new organization was to be formed,

which, however, was to be a federation of existing societies. All the Jewish charitable societies of New York that would come into it could do so. Each was to contribute at least $500 to the treasury, and that entitled it to one member on the Board of Relief, as the governing body of the new organization was called. For every $2,000 that it gave, a society could have an additional member. These societies were to be called constituent members. The Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society became by far the largest contributor to the funds, and had the most members on the board.

Six standing committees were called for: on employment, on loans and deposits, on supplies, on emigration (from New York), on medical and sanitary relief, and on finance. Officers of the Board of Relief included a president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary.

In the plan of procedure a novel feature was initiated: division of the city into districts for the giving of relief. There were to be seventeen districts, and the size and boundaries of these were to be determined in accordance with the "estimated population needing relief," not the total number of inhabitants. The boundaries of these early districts are not given. Over each neighborhood was to be a district or visiting committee, composed of five members. When an application for help reached the office, the clerk was to refer this to the chairman of the neighborhood in which the applicant lived. The district committee was then to investigate the condition of the poor family, or individual, make a report to the Board of Relief, and recommend what-

ever action it thought desirable. The actual granting of relief was left to the Board, except that the district chairman could, if he wished, give "emergency" help. The amount of this was fixed at five dollars.

It was not the intention, apparently, to restrict the activities of the society to people who might come to it. Words in the plan of union suggest, rather, that the society was to seek those in trouble. "It shall be the duty of the District Committee to visit every needy Jewish family in their section, and note their condition," says the plan.

THE FIRST YEARS

Thus did the United Hebrew Charities get started. It was part of that general stream of thought that was carrying observant philanthropists toward the goal of the Charity Organization Society. Those who assisted to establish it felt themselves engaged in kindred efforts. When Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, one of the founders and secretary of the London Charity Organization Society, wrote to friends in this country outlining "the proper principles of relief-giving," his words were regarded as expressing the spirit and purpose of the new organization. "There seems to be no diversity between the view so ably presented in this letter," commented the *Messenger*, "and the ground earnestly maintained . . . by those endeavoring to secure the success of our United Charities;" this was in February, 1874. The first charity organization society was not started in this country, as already stated, until 1877.

At 59 West Fourth Street, in small rooms no longer existing, the society opened its doors in Oc-

tober, 1874. Of the seventeen members of the first board of relief, only one, Mrs. M. L. Stieglitz, was a woman. The officers were P. W. Frank, president; Louis Lewengood and Henry S. Allen, vice-presidents; Louis S. Levy, treasurer, and Isaac Hoffman, secretary. A clerk and a messenger seem to have comprised the office staff. Between nine and six each day the clerk sat at his desk, ready to receive appeals for assistance; on Sabbaths and holidays the place was closed. A member of the executive committee (this committee was elected from persons composing the board of relief) attended every afternoon from four to six; on Fridays he was there from one to four. "Whenever an application for assistance is made," we read in the first annual report, "relief is given to a limited extent at once, if the member of the Committee present is satisfied that such aid is proper and necessary; the case is then referred to the District Chairman for investigation, and he is authorized to grant assistance to the amount of five dollars, pending the action of the Committee. At the ensuing meeting of the Executive Committee, action is taken upon the application and report. It is the belief of the Board that by reason of the establishment of a central office, and the facilities for prompt investigation and relief of applicants, the extent of begging at the stores and dwellings of our community has been sensibly diminished." Postal cards were distributed, and on these people could write to the office and ask about persons requesting help. "Any benevolent person can save himself from imposition by asking for the office report as to the party seeking help. On the clerk's reply from our

books, the inquirer can render or withhold assistance with discrimination."

Aid given during the first few months consisted largely, we are told, of "money to pay rent, to support neglected little children, and to relieve temporary want." Clothing and furniture were distributed and a constituent member of the "federation," the Hebrew Benevolent Fuel Association, contributed coal in half ton lots, a single family often getting two loads before the winter was over. The effects of the panic of 1873 had not subsided by the time the society got started, and efforts were made to get jobs for many men out of work. In April, 1875, special Passover donations were given to 515 families, and "it seemed to many a surprise," records the President "that they should be relieved without making application."

From the beginning individuals and families were assisted to leave New York City and go to other places—to "more promising fields of residence," as the society put it. Relatives or friends "at points inland in this country" sometimes offered homes and opportunities, and sometimes disappointed immigrants at their own request were returned to the ports of Antwerp, Bremen, Hamburg, Liverpool, Marseilles, or Rotterdam.

For a number of years the organization experimented with a constructive means of restoring families to self-support, namely, the loaning of money to heads of families who seemed likely to profit by such assistance. Men were picked out who displayed the best qualities. It was hoped that by using the money effectively, they could disengage themselves

from dependence. To buy a set of tools if one had a trade, to purchase a pushcart, or even to equip a small store with a few things for sale did not cost much, and the loans of $25 and $50—sometimes the sum allowed reached $100—might have sufficed for this. But the society found that it was difficult for poor men to secure the necessary endorsers for notes —two signatures were wanted—and, also, that only a small part of the money loaned was ever returned. It was not long before new ways of meeting the problem were found.

"It is evident," runs the very first annual report, "that a number of poor families . . . are crowded in tenements, deprived of sufficient air, exposed to disease and crushed in spirit." Here was a peep at that state of congestion that was later to hold the attention of the world. The name "lower east side" had not then become as familiar as it is now, but the district was growing.

The financial response to the launching of the new organization was gratifying. Gloomy prophets had foretold that little money would be contributed by New York Jews to a society run on the principles that this one espoused; "caution" and "systematized giving" were not wanted in charity, it was said. At the end of the first fiscal year expenditures had totalled $29,312 and receipts had been $37,007, so that there was a balance in the treasury of more than $7,000. "It is apparent," wrote President Frank, "that public opinion sustains the plan and action of the United Hebrew Charities, and that the funds for effectually carrying out their objects can be regarded as forthcoming." Not until the immigration of the

early 'eighties struck the society, and nearly overwhelmed it, did it know the distress of deficits in its treasury.

We need not suppose that everything the society did in those early years was well done. Charity was slow in reaching the ideals that it then set for itself, and the United Hebrew Charities was no exception. Its investigation of families was sketchy, its knowledge of their real difficulties slight, and its means of putting them on their feet none too adequate. Also, names "remained on the books" after the need of assistance was over, and other families never got the help, and especially the kind of help, that would have meant most to them. But all of this was part of a process of growth and experimentation. And there can be no doubt that the society had set a high standard of achievement, and was groping toward new and more effective ways of being useful.

In these early efforts a few strong spirits played leading parts. One of the most commanding of the early leaders was Henry Rice. He had been associated with the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society, and was a member of the first board of relief of the United Hebrew Charities. In 1875 he was elected president, a position retained for thirty-three years, or until 1908—an extraordinary span. To him the opportunities for usefulness of such an organization as the United Hebrew Charities were many. He looked at the life of the city around him and saw one situation after another justifying its attention and efforts.

A few years after the beginning of the society he begged women interested in the poor to visit those

homes and there "teach the laws of ventilation, the art of preparing a wholesome, inexpensive meal, how to ply the needle and how to use the broom." These picturesque words contained a call for that form of service that later came to be done by visiting housekeepers and dietitians.

In 1878 this enthusiast anticipated the better housing movements of subsequent decades by exclaiming against the "hot bed of misery" that lay "south of Eighth Street and east of the Bowery." Continuing, he declared, "The time must come when it shall be enacted that no house shall contain more people than the law of hygiene permits." Mr. Rice put the responsibility upon owners, too, for he said: "Houses that produce sickness and death should cease to be property."

Among the many people asking the United Hebrew Charities for help, he saw men and women suffering from serious diseases and chronic troubles, such as blindness, cancer, heart disease, spinal afflictions and epilepsy. The misery of these folk distressed him. He saw little hope that the United Hebrew Charities could do much for them. For this reason he pleaded for the establishment of a hospital for chronic patients, and when in 1884 the Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids was opened, Mr. Rice and his organization had played an important part in getting it started.

Looking at the streets of New York City, he saw Jewish boys "selling papers, matches and sundry articles, blacking shoes or working for a pittance in crowded manufactories." To him the future of such lads was not encouraging. The "next step for this

organization," he wrote in 1882, is to "teach these boys above thirteen years of age some useful trade or occupation"; two years later the society was instrumental in having the Hebrew Technical Institute established.

In such ways as these did Mr. Rice lead the society in its early days. He was interested in the engaging problems of immigration, in the ways to reduce desertion among Jewish husbands, in sickness as a cause of dependency, and in the low pay received by workers in all sorts of trades.

INCORPORATION

As early as 1877, the third year of the society, it became incorporated. The articles of incorporation declared its objects to be as follows:

> "To relieve the deserving poor and to discourage pauperism; to give money, food, clothing, fuel, and medical attendance, and such other aid as may be deemed proper, to worthy objects of charity; to grant loans in small amounts to enable meritorious persons to earn their livelihood; to encourage thrift and economy, and to aid the poor in obtaining employment."

During all this time the offices of the society had lingered in the neighborhood where it first opened its doors, within easy steps of most of the homes in which it was giving assistance. From 59 West Fourth Street, the first address, it went after seven months to 238 Fifth Street, not far away. At the end of a year it moved a block or two north, to 13 St. Mark's Place; then, as now, this was East Eighth Street. After three years it crossed the street to 12 St. Mark's

Place. There it stayed for a year or so, and then bought its first building, the one at 58 St. Mark's Place; this was in 1881. Here it remained for nine years. On the northern edge of the district containing the greatest number of Jewish poor, therefore, it remained. It lingered "within a stone's throw of the Bowery," as one of the early reports puts it.

Chapter III

IMMIGRATION AND THE 'EIGHTIES

At a little tavern in the town of Yelissavetgrad, Russia, on the eve of Easter, 1881, a historic scuffle occurred. The scuffle soon grew into a riot, and the Jewish houses in the town were burned. Quickly the outbreak spread to other cities, and in Warsaw, Odessa, Kiev and many other places Jewish areas were put to the torch. "Within a few weeks," as one author has said, "the whole of Western Russia, from the Black Sea to the Baltic, was smoking with the ruins of Jewish homes. Europe had witnessed no such scenes of mob savagery since the Black Death massacres in the fourteenth century." Everywhere the fires raged, and the whole civilized world was horrorstruck.

They came to the United States. New York City was the chief port of entry, and the bulk of the new arrivals had embarked for that point. It was a startling matter in those days to see as many immigrants from the interior of Russia, most of them hungry and poorly clad, arrive in a single day, as had previously entered in a whole year. People here did not know how to handle the emergency. They could not imagine such hordes being absorbed and receiving and caring for them was a tremendous difficulty. Disembarking at the old Castle Garden, then the immigration station, now the Aquarium on the Battery, the newcomers first experienced dirt, congestion, squalor and want. Who was there to help

them find homes and work. The charitable organizations in the United States had not yet learned to meet immigration problems. The United Hebrew Charities was prepared to relieve poverty among the needy Jews of New York City. It had assisted in greater or less degree a few thousands in the course of a year. But how was it to cope with the present situation.

As always in great human crises, emergency measures were applied. The story of those trying times is for the most part lost; but a few details remain. Energetic residents of the city, with whom the United Hebrew Charities was identified, rented the basement of what is said to be now 15 State Street and turned it over to the shelter of some of the newcomers. To this place hungry men and women, almost in panic, came. There they remained until plans could be made for disposing of them. Other places of a similar kind were provided. Committees, hastily formed, distributed the immigrants about among the boarding houses and poorer quarters of the lower town. The effort was directed mostly toward finding work for them in New York City, or pushing them on to other cities. Many of the immigrants became driven by fear at the delay in their movement, and there is some record of an exciting afternoon at 15 State Street, when the crowd of bewildered newcomers, unable to discover what was going to happen to them, nearly worked personal injury to the business men, judges and others who were trying to help them.

In April and May of 1881 the outbreaks in Russia had occurred, and during the summer the United Hebrew Charities cooperated with the Union of

American Jewish Congregations to form a temporary committee for assisting the immigrants. This committee opened headquarters at the offices of the society, 58 St. Mark's Place, and to this address many of the unfortunate among the newcomers then came. The representatives of the committee heard their stories, and made plans for helping them in New York or sending them on to other places. Out of this hastily formed group grew the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society, which took over the job. At the end of a year this organization turned back to the United Hebrew Charities $10,068 and the task of continuing to assist "Russian refugees domiciled in New York City."

COLONIES IN THE WEST

While boats were still arriving, committees quickly got together to try to push these people westward. It was believed that other cities would be friendly to their future fortunes. In Chicago, St. Louis and elsewhere Jews were invited to receive as many immigrants as they could care for, and to assume responsibility for their welfare.

But an even more striking experiment was attempted. This was to found colonies of Jewish immigrants in different parts of the United States. Optimistically small groups of newcomers, with captains in charge, started out for Louisiana, Kansas, Oregon and other states south and west, to grow up with the country. The Montefiore Agricultural Society was one organization formed to foster Jewish colonies. It was responsible for breaking ground at Carmel in New Jersey, New Odessa in Oregon, Cremieux in the Dakotas, and Lasker, Hebron and Gilead in Kansas

—picturesque names. The plan was notable, but it failed. Of all the colonies started at that time, scarcely a trace was left ten years later. Sites were poorly chosen, the enthusiasm of leaders gave out, capital became exhausted, and other difficulties intervened. Jewish farmers were later to flourish in the United States, and the Jewish Agricultural Aid Society, Inc., was to succeed in inducing many Jews to leave the cities. But that outcome was reserved for the future.

NEEDLE TRADES

New York City retained the greater portion of those who arrived there. The Jewish population of the city was doubled in a short time. To find something for them to do seemed hopeless. One thing saved the situation. That was the existence of the "needle trades" in New York City. This young but growing industry was feeling the impulse of a rising demand for clothes, a demand stimulated by prosperity and by recovery from the Civil War. In many respects the garment-making shops were well adapted to the needs of the newcomers. The immigrant could find work there without facing factories and American industrial establishments; most of the occupations were easy to learn; and when he worked there he did not have to go far from localities in which his fellow-countrymen lived. The needle trades suited his temporary requirements. They received him quickly into the life of the complex country to which he had come.

Russian immigrants, as a result, fell rapidly into garment-making shops. This sprawling and remarkable industry was given a tremendous impetus by them as they swelled the number of its workers.

When employers' agents met incoming boats, they took new arrivals off in small crowds to nearby establishments; even charitable organizations helped large numbers to find jobs there. In the neighborhood of Essex and Hester Streets there grew up a sort of labor exchange, known as the "Pig Market", where immigrants waited for contractors to offer them jobs. It is said that members of one of the committees active at the time used to go to employers and say: "How long will it take a newcomer to learn the trade in your shop?" If the employer answered four or five weeks (as he usually did), the committee put into his hands money with which to pay the immigrant's wages during that time, not wishing the immigrant to know that he was receiving charity. At the end of that time, it was expected, the employer would himself meet the man's earnings.

RESTRICTION OF IMMIGRATION

Upon the United Hebrew Charities the effect of immigration was not slow in asserting itself. Mr. Rice, as president, was presently to speak of the organization as having been "diverted from its original position as a society to relieve the Jewish poor of New York City." Figures available from the old records do not show the full strain upon the organization's work, but they are interesting. From 1882 to 1883 "new applications" rose 53 per cent, from 3,235 to 4,955. Expenditures went up from $55,000 to $90,000, a large increase for one year! The various committees noticed the burden, also. The Committee on Lying-in-Relief declared that many mothers assisted by it were immigrants lately landed,

and when another committee forwarded to other cities 1,047 persons, as compared with 307 the year before, "the influx of immigrants sent hither by European countries" was held accountable for the increase.

Meanwhile, the organization could not escape the broader aspects of the subject. The question of restriction was now prominent. As early as 1880 its president had reported the restrictive laws favored by the State Board of Charities. From then on, for several years, a number of those associated with the organization wavered between a generous impulse to regard this country as the haven of all oppressed, with no restrictions, and the fear that many immigrants were bound to be wretched here.

We learn from one page in the society's reports that horror is felt for the abominable conditions under which so many Jews are compelled to live in Europe; and we learn from another that among the new arrivals is "a large number of persons unable by age, chronic disease, or extreme youth to earn a livelihood." We learn, too, that "most of the able-bodied are not able to pursue an avocation save that of peddling or of one of the branches of tailoring," which are "almost the only pursuits our own poor can follow." Fortunately, the society did not have to take a definite position on this perplexing question, and so, like a great many others, it let the question continue to perplex it.

But when (in 1882) Congress passed a law authorizing the return to Europe of "convicts, idiots, lunatics, and persons unable to take care of themselves," the Society was stirred to action. Stories were pres-

ently afloat that some of the deported aliens suffered hardship on the return voyage, and that others were shipped back too hastily; no right of appeal from the decisions of the immigration authority here was allowed, it was declared. The society started a test case. With Aaron Slomowitz and his companions under order of deportation, it gathered facts and went into court. Matters were moving toward a trial when, suddenly and without notice, Slomowitz and his fellows were shipped out of New York harbor.

With this failure, the Society decided to try to check at the source the occasions for injustice and suffering. To "leading Jewish societies and the Jewish press of Europe" it despatched a circular. In this it described the condition of some of the immigrants when they reached this country. The circular protested emphatically against the hurried and unthinking forwarding to this country of many who could not fail to become recipients of charity. The society suggested to European committees, known to be "assisting" the immigration, that they look into the prospects of those whom they were helping, and exercise a little selection. The officers of the United Hebrew Charities asked European committees to send them a list of people being forwarded, with full particulars about families and means of support, "so that our representative, fortified by such information, will thus be enabled to welcome deserving immigrants, and by proper explanation mitigate to unfortunate paupers the sorrow of their fruitless journey."

Meanwhile, conditions at Castle Garden continued chaotic. When immigrants arrived, they were so helpless that they had difficulty in finding any one to

whom they could talk, or who could answer their questions. Conferences were held with the immigration officials, and as a result an agent of the society was stationed at the Garden. There he assisted the Russian, Roumanian, Polish and other newcomers to thread the maze of examinations, and to get a little information about the city into which they were shortly to plunge. With "our name on his cap," he cut an interesting figure. As a result of these same conferences, a better understanding was reached as to who were "actual paupers" and who, therefore, might properly be allowed to enter. Greater satisfaction was expressed thereafter with the decisions of the authorities on this question.

OTHER SERVICES

Much was done in the 'eighties, aside from the struggles over immigration. One new form of service, added to the society's work early in the decade, was to assist at the delivery of infants. In the homes of the poor the arrival of a baby was a serious matter. Help of an effective sort was lacking, there was no money for essentials, and seldom did anyone know much about caring for the child—or, for that matter, its mother. For this reason the society engaged in "maternity relief." It employed a woman physician who went to homes where babies were expected and did what she could. In 1883 the society assisted at the births of 243 infants, and by 1894 the number at which help was given exceeded nine hundred in one year. Bundles of clothing, and groceries (sometimes "including wine"), were supplied to these homes also. An indication of the respect in which these services

were held is given by the comment of the executive committee that in 1885, when 331 children were delivered, "there was no loss of mother or child." The Ladies' Lying-in-Relief Society became a constituent member of the organization at the time this service was started, and helped in its performance.

A second service added to the society's work early in the decade was concerned with the other extreme of life. Burial for poor people had been supplied by the Hebrew Free Burial Society, but this organization was disbanding. The question arose, therefore, as to who would carry this service on, and the United Hebrew Charities undertook to perform it. In an early report of the society we are given a picture of "the disorderly way in which the funerals of our poor were supervised formerly, when bereaved mourners had to wander from synagogue to temple to secure a last resting-place for their dead, and in many cases met with repeated refusal and occasional abuse." This was not pleasant to contemplate. So the society added a Committee on Free Burial to its organization, and strove to make things better. Within a few years it was to assist at the interment of more than one thousand bodies in a single twelve months. Among other things, it supplied "free burial ground, coffins, shrouds, and hearses and carriages." In paying this sad attention to departed members of the community it took comfort in the fact that "we succor at the same time the living."

SANITATION AND HOUSING

Some able physicians were associated with the work of the society during these years. They were, for the

most part, members of the Committee on Medical and Sanitary Relief; as such, they were interested in the conditions of healthful living. They did not content themselves merely with going to the bedsides of sick people. They saw what went on in the homes of the poor, and they wanted to improve the situation found there. It was as a result of the initiative of these doctors that the society engaged two visiting nurses in 1884, each at a salary of $270 annually—an early instance of the employment of such assistance by a family welfare agency. We are told that each day these nurses visited the domiciles of "the sick poor, relieving their immediate wants, securing improved sanitation where possible, and providing in many cases rations of milk, meat and groceries, or wine."

The doctors of whom we have written believed that a relation existed between illness and dependency. They thought that it was of little use to put groceries into the pantry of a family, or clothes on the backs of its members, if people in the family remained sick, or the breadwinner continued to suffer from chronic trouble. Not even help of a clearly constructive kind was of much value, they thought, unless the members of the family could be made well and able to work. They told the society so in no uncertain terms. But they went even farther than that. Seeing disease and reduced vitality among many of the people who came to the organization for help, they concluded that these people lived in the midst of conditions likely to cause such effects; and they hoped that, if these conditions could be changed, the health of the residents of poor sections would be raised. At any rate, they decided to go out and get some facts about the housing situation.

Under the able leadership of Dr. Simeon N. Leo, chairman of the Committee on Medical and Sanitary Relief, 600 tenement houses in the neighborhood of Baxter, Mulberry, Hester, Mott, Ludlow, and Chrystie Streets were inspected in 1883. Dirt, dinginess, bad air, stuffiness and general confusion were found. The "head (of the water system) often barely reaches to the first floor," reports Dr. Leo, and adds that thus sinks and toilets were often left "without the means of being flushed." Small air shafts caused insufficient ventilation. There was a general lack of bathrooms. "Too many sleepers to a room" was a condition repeatedly observed, and the overcrowding was general. Even the food came under Dr. Leo's inspection. "Stale and rotten fruit" was sold in the neighborhood, he wrote, and declared that packages of spices and similar things ought to "be branded with their true contents and ingredients." No wonder the doctors found abundant evidence of "scrofula, rickets, phthisis and other diseases which indicate bad hygienic surroundings."

Dr. Leo wanted the sanitary code revised. He suggested the manner in which this should be done. A commission of architects, working with sanitary specialists from the New York Academy of Medicine, he wrote, could study the needed changes and make the revision. It was his clear opinion that no "well-meaning charitable organizations" could cope with such problems; only state laws were adequate. He also advised "model tenements for our poor." His recommendations were far-reaching. A sanitary station could well be erected, he said, with a medical and surgical dispensary, and this would enable the

poor of the neighborhood to keep well. In the existence of a "corps of visiting Jewesses" he saw opportunity for carrying lessons in hygiene throughout the district, and hoped that this would be done. Other suggestions included a diet kitchen, a day nursery, free baths, a lying-in-ward, and a cooperative store where wholesome food would be sold at cost. Dr. Leo was far ahead of the physicians of his time in the interest he took in matters relating to the poor.

TRADES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In 1880 an industrial school for girls had been opened by the society, and a branch had, the next year, been started by the Young Ladies' Charitable Union; this was a constituent member of the United Hebrew Charities and Julia Richman was president of it at the time. It is interesting to note that an industrial school for girls was considered a desirability before one for boys was established.

However, in 1882 the executive committee reported: "Industrial education is required for the boys of the poor, and this Committee believed that it is the duty of the United Hebrew Charities to adopt immediate measures for this purpose." The report of a special committee on industrial education in 1883 clinched the matter. In the report of that committee Jewish boys are represented as being "forced at an early age, often before reaching their thirteenth year, to peddle in the streets." Immigration was adding its hundreds of lads to the streets of New York City, and many of these were poor waifs, pursuing pleasure by any means at hand, and not always lawfully. Other boys were placed "at sewing machines in

tailors' shops, or at some branch of cigar-making." The committee saw little future for these boys. It believed that it would be feasible to teach them branches of wood-working and metal-working, and so raise their earning power. Mechanical drawing was desirable, also. "It has become well-nigh impossible," it wrote, "for a mechanic who cannot draw well to attain any rank at his trade."

This, with the agitation of others interested, caused a strong movement in favor of industrial education for boys, and in May, 1884, the Hebrew Technical Institute opened its doors. Ever since then it has been sending out its graduates into all sorts of technical and skilled work. It is a well-known institution today. Starting at 129 Crosby Street, its first classes held forty pupils. The initial contribution of the United Hebrew Charities amounted to $2,000, and other sums were given afterward. The boys were taught "mechanical drawing and wood-working . . . including the use of the hammer, saw, gauge, plane and chisel." They were taught English, too. "Scroll-sawing and modelling in clay are next to be taught." The remarkable success of this school was due primarily to the skill of its first principal, Dr. Henry M. Leipziger, whose name has been associated with it ever since. The annual report of the society for 1885 comments on the "indefatigable zeal and devotion, sound judgment and great ability" of this noted educator.

INDUSTRIAL COLONIES

In the latter part of the decade the society experimented with industrial colonies for workers, mostly immigrants. When manufacturers in Binghamton,

New York; South River, New Jersey; Stamford, Connecticut, and other "industrial centers" offered to build houses for such men as would come to them for work and bring their families, the opportunity seemed too good to be missed. There were plenty of men in New York City needing work, and so the society placed the offer before a considerable number of young and intelligent workers. It selected them with care, and even went so far as to have some of them taught "machine sewing and segar-making" before letting them start out. To its consternation, only nineteen out of 365 sent out during the first year continued on the job; the others were all back in New York City within a few months. The society was chagrined. Why these immigrants had returned "to lead in the Jewish quarter a life of poverty and distress," it could not imagine.

Two years later (1889) the same plan was more successful. Arthur Reichow had then become manager of the employment work of the society, and his zeal was notable. "The special work of the year," we read, "has consisted in furthering industrial settlements, inducing applicants to go in squads to active manufacturing establishments." Such squads had been sent to Marlborough and Glenville, Connecticut, to Marathon, New York, to Cumberland, Maryland, and even to Binghamton, New York, despite the former failure there. This was regarded as a promising way of serving immigrants. Twenty-eight carpenters and their families had been sent as far away as Indianapolis, and were satisfactorily settled there. A group of forty-nine tailors and their families had been established in Denver and had found

"profitable work"; indeed, many of them had already returned part of the money advanced them by the society. A year or two later satisfaction was felt over the achievements of a group of immigrants sent to North Adams, Massachusetts, where the newcomers had built a synagogue costing $5,000. They had also placed their children in the public schools, and had given every indication of being prosperously and pleasantly situated.

PAID VISITORS

We may fittingly close this chapter with a word about the change from volunteer to paid visitors. This was a step in that revolution in organized charity that meant its growth to a professional status and point of view. In the 'seventies the volunteer was the sole visitor employed; no organization would have thought of using a paid befriender of the poor. The volunteer was presumed to have a sympathy, and an understanding of people's troubles, and even a disinterestedness, that no person who worked for a salary could match.

From the beginning difficulty was met in finding volunteers enough to serve on all the district committees. There were seventeen of these, and each was supposed to have five members. That meant that over eighty benevolent Jewish men and women had to be found who would give time and thought to the families needing care. The trouble in discovering so many grew greater each year, until in 1883 we find Mr. Rice severely tried by the "lack of ladies and gentlemen" from which the society suffered. He expressed the hope that more would volunteer. At the

same time he showed the thought that was in his mind by a striking sentence: "The business of investigation may possibly be done by a paid employee"—expressing a doubt that was in all probability shared by those who, attending the annual meeting that year, heard him. Mr. Rice could not stop there, however; the facts carried him farther. "For some months past," he told those who were assembled before him, "our assistant clerk, Mr. Charles Frank, has been forced to make a large share of the investigations, owing to the absence from the city and business engagements of many of our chairmen." Mr. Frank had done his work "very creditably," Mr. Rice added. Despite the regret contained in all these remarks, the paid visitor seems to have been given a trial.

It was not until 1887, however, that paid visitors were definitely employed. The fact is chronicled in another of these passages that are characterized more by sorrow than by joy. The executive committee reports, succinctly enough, that there has been "a necessitated substitution of salaried visitors in certain districts." How many were engaged we do not know. No pleasure is expressed; the society would have preferred to rely solely upon the volunteer. But Mr. Rice, with his usual foresight, saw what was coming. In the substitution he saw the possibility of "a change in the policy of the society that, if not remedied, may result in the discontinuance of volunteer effort." The volunteer did not drop from the picture; but the demand for a specialized equipment and professional point of view toward charity work, and the realization that sympathy and understanding could be combined

with these, soon caused the volunteer visitor and case worker to cease to be the rule. Meanwhile, the volunteer shifted the ground of his usefulness and remained an important part of social work.

Chapter IV

BARON DE HIRSCH AND THE 'NINETIES

In 1890 the society went into court on behalf of people in need. It established a "legal aid" service. Perhaps an "emigrant" was being detained at Castle Garden, and his friends believed that he was eligible for admission; perhaps a widow wanted her son with her from the reformatory, hoping that he would become a support to her in her wretchedness; perhaps tenants were threatened with eviction for non-payment of rent. The society looked into such instances of distress and gave help where it believed help to be proper. Its lawyer not only advised clients in regard to their difficulties and rights, but often appeared in court in an effort to secure justice. "I have advised many poor persons in such manner that litigation was often avoided, and have had favors and indulgences extended to poor tenants by Justices of District Courts," reports the attorney who rendered this service.

One of the clients of the society was an immigrant, arrived from Paris, who was held as "insane" and refused admission; after a "hotly contested trial" the man was admitted. Another stole a gold watch and pawned it; with the proceeds he brought his wife and his one child to the United States. The society's attorney induced the judge to be lenient and to suspend sentence. Two striking tailors were accused of hitting a police officer in 1891; some hard work was done on their behalf, as a result of which these two unfortunate men obtained their liberty. An express-

man at Castle Garden took an immigrant uptown and "failed" to leave his baggage with him; the society had the man arrested and recovered the value of the goods that had been stolen. Wives were helped to find their deserting husbands, and some re-united families resulted from this effort.

At the outset of this decade the society was assisting a large number of families and spending a little more than $100,000 a year. In 1890 it is stated that the number of applications for relief was 5,170, and that these represented 19,140 persons; immigration was again on the increase and caused much of this want. Some 300 to 400 families (the number varied month by month) were getting pensions regularly, and another 400 to 500 received temporary help each month. In addition, nearly 3,000 people were furnished with "transportation" that year, *i.e.*, were given free passage to other cities, and work was found for many more. The number of families given help at the birth of children was 476, and over 500 burials were provided. The society was rendering service through committees on its industrial school for girls, on the Hebrew Technical Institute, on supplies, on medical relief and on other matters. There were now three nurses, instead of two.

The second strong tide of Russian immigration had begun to pour in upon the United States in 1889. The first had subsided after a few years, but now there was a renewal of harsh decrees in Russia and the temper of Czar Alexander III was becoming more violent and destructive. In philanthropy, the most memorable event of the period was the activity and munificence of Baron de Hirsch.

Maurice de Hirsch was a German Jew. His grandfather had been the first Jewish landowner in Bavaria, and his father was banker to the Bavarian king. Entering the business of banking, he piled up a fortune, and this he increased by the purchase of railway concessions in Austria and the Near East. It was while building railways through the Balkans to Constantinople that he became interested in the terrible conditions under which Jews lived in that part of the world.

Offering a huge sum of money to the Russian Government for the educational benefit of Jews in that country, he was displeased with the conditions which Russia attached to acceptance and withdrew the offer. Thereupon he turned his mind to emigration as a solution to the difficulties of his fellow Jews. The Argentine first recommended itself to him as the place of opportunity, but Jews flocked to this country in such numbers that he was forced to change his mind. Baron de Hirsch became the greatest inducer of emigration that ever lived. His benefactions in this country known by the name of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, were not by any means his largest; he founded the Jewish Colonization Association in England, and by 1899 had conferred upon it the sum of £11,000,000. "This enormous fund," writes a biographer, "is probably the greatest charitable trust in the world." So tremendous was the influence exercised by his work and name that thousands of Jews left their homes in eastern Europe simply because Baron de Hirsch was in the world; they were certain that in some place, at some time, the Baron's money would come to their assistance.

Early stages of the founding of the Baron de Hirsch Fund in the United States can be traced in the records of the United Hebrew Charities. In the spring of 1890 Baron de Hirsch wrote to individuals in New York City suggesting his desire to help emigrants reaching the United States. According to Mr. Rice, these letters showed that the Baron wanted to contribute a large sum "if assurances could be given him that the work of distributing his benefaction would be undertaken in the spirit in which he contemplated offering it, and that thereby the condition of Russians and Roumanians exiled from their own land could be materially improved in the United States." Gentlemen of Philadelphia and New York City were called into consultation, and a plan for spending this money was forwarded to the Baron in Europe.

The plan having been received by Baron de Hirsch, notice arrived that "the first installment of his gift, $10,000," was on its way. Equal sums, the group learned, were to be forthcoming, "until, after due consideration, a formal deed of trust could be prepared" and the whole of the promised benefaction transmitted to the chosen trustees. These trustees were selected, in the summer of 1890, and included Oscar S. Straus, then U. S. Minister to Turkey; Jacob H. Schiff and Jesse Seligman. Two of the original trustees of the Baron de Hirsch Fund were officers of the United Hebrew Charities, James H. Hoffman, treasurer, and Mr. Rice, president.

On February 12, 1891, formal incorporation took place, and the "promised gift of $2,000,000 or more" was raised to $2,400,000. In a short time it was increased to $4,000,000.

With incorporation, the purposes of the Baron de Hirsch Fund were explicitly stated. The Baron's own desire was that recipients of his help should be put in the way, so far as possible, of earning their own livings. The following is a brief summary of the purposes:

1. To make loans to immigrants from Russia and Roumania.
2. To assist immigrants to leave ports of arrival and go on into the interior.
3. To give trade training to immigrants, or assist them to get it, and to support them while learning trades and while securing work.
4. To help them in learning duties of citizenship and in general education.
5. To cooperate with existing agencies to extend constructive relief to needy immigrants.

Beginning with monthly installments of $2,500, increasing amounts were made available to the United Hebrew Charities, which it devoted to the welfare of Russian and Roumanian Jews who had been in this country less than two years. During the first years the fund was spent in three main ways. One was for "tools," one for "teaching trades," and one for "maintenance." To purchase tools for a newly-arrived immigrant in this country, especially if he had a trade or was quick at learning one, was a good way to help him support his family. The teaching of trades to immigrants was obviously of service. "Maintenance" consisted of helping families to live while immigrant husbands were learning trades or getting work. Another way in which money received

from Baron de Hirsch was spent was in "transportation," or assisting people to move on to other cities in the hope that they would thrive more prosperously there. All of these were in substantial accord with Baron de Hirsch's desires that his funds be used for constructive purposes.

In 1891 the society received its largest annual contribution, $67,685; from 1899 to 1917, when the grants ceased, the annual donation was usually $14,400. All told approximately $475,000 were received from the Baron de Hirsch Fund.

THE SISTERHOODS

In the course of the 'nineties the sisterhoods of personal service, associated with the synagogues, became important. The purpose of the sisterhood was to give opportunity to Jewish women to be of service to others; it came when the conception of the home as the exclusive sphere of activity for the Jewish woman was being discarded, and broader opportunities were beseeching her. The women who were members of sisterhoods found time and abilities for many forms of communal usefulness. "Such personal service," wrote Dr. Lee K. Frankel years later, "is a phase of the old Jewish idea of 'gemilut hesed,' and the modern development of the thought that the best aid that can be given to the poor is to help them to help themselves." Members of sisterhoods did friendly visiting, and the sisterhoods as organizations established workrooms for girls, conducted day nurseries, carried on schools of different kinds, and relieved the distress of families in want. Temple Emanu-El set the example of forming such an organization in about 1890,

and other congregations were quick to follow. By the end of the decade, there were sixteen such bodies and they were banded together into a federation—a very active and useful agency in Jewish affairs.

From the beginning the sisterhoods helped the United Hebrew Charities in important ways. Members of the groups acted as friendly visitors for the society, and the sisterhoods helped some families in want. In the course of the decade this assistance became more important, and the cooperation between the sisterhoods and the society closer. Leaders among sisterhood women showed great initiative and ability, and presently a number of the sisterhoods had offices of their own, from which, as headquarters, they carried on a variety of activities. The United Hebrew Charities gladly accepted these offices as agencies of its usefulness, and the sisterhoods performed work in the name of the society. They operated, in a measure, branch or district offices of the organization. So effective was the resourcefulness of these women that, after the starting of the Federation of Sisterhoods, the city was divided into districts, specific territory was assigned to each sisterhood, and the whole city, from the New Bowery to Harlem, was covered in this way. Some of the sisterhoods raised large sums of money for charitable help, and employed paid visitors. Years later the association between the sisterhoods and the society was dissolved, for reasons that will be told.

A PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVE

In 1893 the society showed that a new spirit was making itself felt in charitable work among Jews in

New York City by employing Nathaniel S. Rosenau as manager. Mr. Rosenau represented the progress of social work toward a profession. He had demonstrated his ability as secretary of the Charity Organization Society of Buffalo, the first organization of its kind in the United States. Advised in his younger days by Felix Adler to choose philanthropy as his profession, he brought to this vocation an ardent spirit and a constructive purpose.

Mr. Rosenau changed office methods at once. He established five bureaus, to correspond to the main lines of work of the society, and these were: registration, relief, medical, employment, and immigration. He also instituted a new system of recording case histories. This consisted of "a system of envelopes and cards, the envelope forming a permanent record of the applicant without the necessity of a renewed account of his social condition" every time he called.

The new manager regarded the society as a kind of physician to the Jewish poor of the city, and in one of his early reports he wrote:

> "Now what has your physician done in the past twelve months to cure the disease? A few hundreds have been decently placed beneath the earth, a few hundreds more have been made comfortable in homes for chronic invalids, a few hundreds more have been partially restored physically by hospital treatment, a few hundred children have been placed in orphanages where they are receiving that training which will fit them to be men and women, and the United Hebrew Charities has expended besides $225,000 to alleviate distress. Note the word *alleviate*. We

cannot pretend for one moment that we have done more except in a comparatively few cases. We have rebuilt families, but the very nature and extent of the demands upon us made it next to impossible to adopt such a form of treatment for the thousands of families that came within our ken as would prevent many of them from sinking lower after their first step."

EMPLOYMENT

The panic of 1893 occurred the year that Mr. Rosenau entered the service of the society, and may have emphasized his interest in finding employment for men out of work. It will be recalled that bitter complaints had been heard some years earlier that only two occupations seemed suitable to Jewish workmen: peddling and tailoring. Now all this was changed. Jews were going into many more ways of earning a living. The report of the society for 1895 lists no fewer than 157 different lines of work into which the society had put men who needed employment, and among these were printers, harness-makers, furriers, teachers, jewelers, salesmen, waiters, tanners, clerks, porters, office boys, shoemakers, mechanics, and laborers. The executive committee was delighted. It recorded that the "old complaint that Jewish workingmen in pursuit of occupations other than garment-making and peddling are an unknown quantity" was no longer valid. Here we see concrete evidence that the immigrant from Russia was finding himself in the new world.

During all of this time the society was moving forward toward a richer and more effective service on

behalf of the unfortunate. New questions were claiming the attention of persons engaged in social work. Some of these had been appreciated before, but now were felt with a new insistence or seen in new relationships. Among these were desertion, sickness in its role as a contributor to dependency, tuberculosis, child welfare, and standards of sanitation, of hours and of wages in industrial employment. It was during the 'nineties that the importance of tuberculosis became understood more clearly than before, and medical science was showing improved methods of coping with it, especially in the early stages. Another question that received more and more attention during the 'nineties was housing, for cities in many parts of the country were becoming aware of their overcrowding.

Chapter V

THE LOWER EAST SIDE

In 1899 Dr. Lee K. Frankel became manager of the United Hebrew Charities. While he had been instructor in chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, the charities of his home city of Philadelphia had interested him, and the trustees of the society believed that he would make an effective administrator of its affairs.

Dr. Frankel carried the society through an important period of growth and expansion. He became a national leader in social work and his voice was heard in the counsels of the National Conference of Jewish Charities and the larger National Conference of Charities and Correction. President Roosevelt appointed him as a member of the commission to study conditions on Ellis Island in 1903, and for many years he served as a member of the State Board of Charities. When he resigned in 1908 it was to continue his service to the public in the field of health.

CONGESTION

In 1900, the year after Dr. Frankel had begun his work, a little model of a city block on Canal Street was shown in an exhibition given by the Tenement House Department. The number of people who lived in this block was 2,300; it happened that there were 400 rooms without windows in the block and no bath tubs. No such congestion had ever been heard of before. When people saw this little model standing on

its table in the exhibition, their imaginations were disturbed. It confirmed the observations of the society's workers.

But other figures in regard to congestion were available. Manhattan Island, as a whole, was one of the most densely populated areas in the world; but its density was only 149 persons to the acre. In one city block down on the lower east side, bounded by Cherry, Jefferson, Monroe, and Rutgers streets, there were then 1,458 persons to the acre, and the acre was much smaller than a city block. There were twelve blocks on the island in which the population was more than 1,000 to the acre.

This congestion was new in the world. If Greater New York had been peopled as closely as the lower east side at that time, it would have held the whole population of the United States and more. If it had been peopled as closely as the Eighth Assembly District, a large area bounded by Henry, Clinton, Stanton, and Chrystie streets, it would have held the combined populations of the United States, Great Britain and France, that is, more than 150,000,000 people.

New York City, and the country at large, were waking up to this situation. The congestion that was then being discovered and acknowledged had crept upon the city by degrees; it was back in the early 'eighties, as we remember, that the society had been concerned by the immigration of Russian Jews and others, and now it saw a situation that was, in part, the result of that steady and increasing flow. To Jews in this country the facts meant the rise of a ghetto in the United States, a ghetto that already contained

300,000 people and that was apparently to go on becoming larger. They did not know what the consequences of all this might be.

ROUMANIAN REFUGEES

Anti-Semitic persecutions had revived in Roumania in 1900, and refugees from that country flocked to the United States. Once more the society was faced with the necessity of feeding, clothing and housing many new arrivals, and this it did in cooperation with the Independent Order of B'nai Brith and many prominent individuals. In 1899, the year before, the Hebrew Charities Building at Second Avenue and Twenty-first Street had been completed; this was built by the generosity of Solomon Loeb and was intended to house Jewish charitable societies for many years to come. In the rooms of this new building executive offices were opened for the assistance of Roumanian refugees, and many came there for help. The Roumanian Hebrew Aid Society took part in this activity. Once more efforts were made to persuade immigrants to go westward, and some of the Roumanians were sent as far as San Francisco. Most of them, as usual, however, remained in New York City.

INDUSTRIAL REMOVAL OFFICE

But it was the removal of the people from the east side that the society wished to see brought about. For years it had watched and participated in one effort after another to attain this object. It had seen agents approach new arrivals at Castle Garden, and later at Ellis Island, and try to persuade them to go

on into the interior. It had seen colonization projects hopefully begun, little groups started westward in the expectation of founding communities to which other Jews would come. It had seen propagandist societies distributing literature telling Jews and others what advantages the interior of the country offered. And it had seen garment factories employing immigrants move from the crowded centers to the outskirts in the hope that workers would follow them. In 1890 the United Hebrew Charities itself had helped 2,960 individuals to move from New York to other cities, and in 1894, $50,000 were spent in moving more than 5,000 individuals from the city. All of these efforts had produced little effect. They had employed the wrong arguments, or had set up unnatural conditions; they had tried to move people in masses, or attempted to persuade them to go to places for reasons that did not appeal to them.

In 1901 a new attempt to induce people to leave the city was made through the Industrial Removal Office which had its quarters in the society's building. The purpose of the Industrial Removal Office was to deal with individuals, and to assist, or persuade them, to go to places where work awaited them or where there was reason to believe they would get on well. The office exchanged correspondence with branches in other cities and with local Jewish charitable societies throughout the country. Not only did it receive applications from people who wished work elsewhere, but it carried on a campaign of information and education in regard to industrial opportunities. While persons with trades were preferred, others were helped, in accordance with the "transportation agree-

ment," which was adopted in 1900, at the first meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Charities and which provided for the approval of local organizations in other cities before sending people there. This method of tackling the problem, it was believed, was a more natural way of overcoming the tendencies of old country residents to stay in New York City.

The Industrial Removal Office denied that its purpose was to depopulate the ghetto. To entertain such an aim, it declared, would be the "height of quixotic extravagance." Its purpose was to help as many people as possible to leave that neighborhood, to divert arriving Jews from New York City, and to establish families of Jews in interior communities as drawing points for others. Letters written back by immigrants to relatives and friends at home tended to bring these people to the same places from which the letters were written.

Begun as a branch of the Jewish Agricultural Society, Inc., the Industrial Removal Office became in a few years an independent organization under the direction of David M. Bressler. By the end of 1916 it, with its Boston and Philadelphia branches, had sent nearly 80,000 people to 1,790 different communities in the interior. The war and reduction of immigration brought its work practically to a close, and the office went out of existence in 1922. The United Hebrew Charities shared in starting the Industrial Removal Office and took considerable pride in its early accomplishments.

PHILANTHROPIC JOURNALISM

In 1891 the United Hebrew Charities had attempted one of the earliest adventures in philan-

thropic journalism in the United States. The "Charity Record," containing "readable items as to the progress of the society and the condition of the Jewish poor" lived only a year or two.

In 1902 the society again entered the journalistic field. The name of its magazine was now *Charity Work*, and this was a more ambitious publication. Social workers were now becoming more self-conscious, and a forum for exchange of views was desirable. The name was changed quickly to *Jewish Charity*, and under this name it became better known. Dr. Frankel acted as editor, and the pages of the magazine presented discussions of a wide variety of topics. Kate H. Claghorn contributed an article on "Jewish Immigration and Pauperism," Dr. David Blaustein on "The Making of Americans," Louis Marshall on "Charity in Ancient Judaism," Frances A. Kellor on "The Menace of Intelligence Offices," and there were discussions of Jewish prisoners in Sing Sing, strikes and charity, a federation for the support of Jewish philanthropic societies and other topics. The magazine became the official organ of the National Conference of Jewish Charities, and was widely read.

In 1905 *Charities*, the publication of the Charity Organization Society of the City of New York was combined with *The Commons*, a magazine which was published by Prof. Graham Taylor in Chicago. With the new monthly, *Charities and the Commons*, *Jewish Charity* joined hands in 1906, and thereafter only one journal appeared in the field of social work. This, in 1909, became known as *The Survey*.

TRAINING FOR SOCIAL WORK

While a journalism of philanthropy was growing up, schools of social work were also being started. As early as 1901 Dr. Frankel proposed that the society establish a course of instruction in "applied philanthropy," and that a special fund be raised to run it. Nothing came of the suggestion, but when the Jewish Chautauqua Society, two years later, invited Dr. Frankel to take charge of just such a course, he accepted. Opportunity was thus afforded to supply special training for social work to Jews. In that same year, 1903, the Charity Organization Society, which had held several summer sessions for instruction in philanthropy, established its first winter course, and the present New York School of Social Work had its beginning.

THE SELF-SUPPORT FUND

In the course of these years the society expanded its work in several respects. One of these was through the starting of the Self-Support Fund; others were in the field of health; and still others related to desertion and private family homes for children.

Back in the early years, it will be remembered, the society had made small loans to heads of families in the hope that they would thereby become self-supporting. When borrowers unexpectedly showed that they could not easily get two indorsers for their notes, and could seldom repay the loans, the experiment was dropped. The matter was now approached in quite a different way. The money granted in this way to families under the society's care was given with no guarantee that it would be returned.

The Self-Support Fund was started in 1900 with a donation of $5,000 from Jacob H. Schiff. The purpose was to give sums ranging from $50 to $200 to responsible breadwinners who, with the aid of a little ready capital, it was hoped, would be able to set themselves up in some small business. Persons laboring under physical handicaps were, it was thought, especially in need of such help. They could buy a small stock for a grocery or other store, or perhaps merely equip themselves with a push cart by which they could earn a small living. Mr. Schiff made annual contributions to this fund as the years went on.

Obviously the success that such a fund would meet with would depend upon the judgment with which persons to receive the money were selected. At first not many gifts were made, but by 1906 the number of families helped out of the money was 667. A check-up on these showed that, in the records of the society, 39 per cent had been successful, 33 per cent were considered unsuccessful, 15 per cent had been again helped by the society, and the whereabouts of the remaining 13 per cent was unknown. This record was believed to be satisfactory. The society was pleased to be able to report that of the whole 667, a large number, 207, had made partial repayments of the money given them, and 56 had repaid it in full.

Mr. Schiff's interest in the constructive purposes of the United Hebrew Charities again showed itself after the financial depression of 1907. When, in 1908, he contributed $20,000 for the establishment of the "Self Respect Fund" it was for the purpose of "making loans to families who have never before found it

necessary to ask for charitable aid" but whose independence had been shaken by unemployment.

This was followed by still a third fund, called the "Self Help Fund," of which Mr. Schiff was again the contributor. The purpose of the Self-Help Fund was described in the following words: "We have frequent calls upon us from dependents who are unable to work, but who could wholly or partially support themselves if they were set up in some little business. These applicants are so handicapped by physical defects or otherwise as to make hopeless any thought of their repaying our advances to them, and they are therefore not proper subjects for the Self-Support Fund."

It will thus be seen that the objects of these three funds were, first, to enable capable heads of families to start in some little business and become self-supporting, second, to loan money to people who had never before asked for charity and who had lost their jobs, and, third, to provide for handicapped people who could partially support themselves if given a push. The Self-Help Fund, it was believed, would improve the administration of the Self-Support Fund by allowing more careful selection to be made of persons to receive assistance from the latter. These combined funds were the nucleus of the present Self-Support Department of the Society.

HEALTH

In the decade beginning in 1900, the society's interest in matters of health became strong. It urged additional facilities for the care of convalescents, and shared in the cost of the establishment in Lebanon Hospital of a department for convalescent care.

Tuberculosis was claiming the interest of the whole country. It was believed that there was a relation between the rise of congestion on the lower East Side and the many cases of tuberculosis, and while medical men were intensively studying tuberculosis as a medical question, the Medical Committee of the United Hebrew Charities appointed a sub-committee on tuberculosis to study its social aspects. The work and suggestions of this committee led directly to important steps taken a few years later in the constructive treatment of tuberculosis among the Jews.

FAMILY HOMES FOR CHILDREN

While these things were going on, a changed attitude was revealing itself in regard to the treatment of children who had lost their parents or whose parents were too poor to provide for them. The traditional way of caring for such children, in most countries throughout the world, had been to put them into orphanages; now a different plan was finding favor, and specialists in the treatment of children were advocating it. This was to place such children in private foster family homes. Obviously, it seemed to people who had given the subject greatest attention, the child was better off in a normal, wholesome family atmosphere than in the crowded rooms and stereotyped environment of an institution. The only question was whether such homes, willing to receive children, could be found in large numbers.

The society believed they could be found and calling a meeting of representatives of five well-known charitable organizations in 1903, it promoted the establishment of a committee to take action. This

committee, named the Joint Committee on Dependent Children, sent a representative to see Mr. Homer Folks, then Commissioner of Public Charities of New York City, and to ask Mr. Folks to appoint a special Jewish agent in the Department of Public Charities to find private Jewish homes for Jewish children who otherwise would be retained in child-caring institutions. This Mr. Folks promptly did. It happened that at that time a number of Jewish children were being cared for in non-Jewish institutions, and it was the desire of the committee that these children be removed and placed in Jewish foster homes. Extending her search to parts of New York State, as well as the city, in order that some children might have the benefit of rural or small-town life, the agent of the Department of Public Charities found many such homes, and her work was regarded as successful. Indeed, it was "demonstrated," according to a report of the society, "that it is possible to secure high grade private Jewish homes, where they will receive proper attention and proper supervision." Some of the families received the children for small compensation, some adopted them outright. Thus the society assisted a progressive movement, which was given strength when the famous White House conference, convened at the instance of President Roosevelt in 1909, approved the use of family homes for children whenever possible.

CLOSER RELATIONS TO THE EAST SIDE

The United Hebrew Charities began to realize during these days that its purposes were not adequately understood nor its methods completely

trusted by the Jews of the East Side. To them it was a distant and alien organization. Local societies had sprung up on the lower East Side in great numbers. Common experiences in Europe brought together groups who had lived there under the same local governments and had fled from the same persecuting hands. The Jews of the lower East Side came together in mutual assistance. In time there were societies for the burial of the dead, invalid aid societies, maternity relief societies, sheltering homes, fraternal organizations, mutual benefit associations, day nurseries, kindergartens, lodges, Chevras, Vereins Talmud Torahs, agencies distributing Passover supplies and others. In spite of their numbers, these smaller bodies were not able to meet the needs of their fellows. They were weak and their efforts overlapped. The United Hebrew Charities eventually recognized the importance of bringing their own understanding and good will to bear upon its treatment of the difficulties of their group.

"With all our good intentions and high motives," said Dr. Frankel to the members of the society in 1902, "we cannot do the amount of good among the poverty-stricken Russians, Roumanians and Galicians which the more advanced of their own nationality can do for them." Dr. Frankel realized that it was personal contact that counted. "Our work, to be effective," he said, "must be neighborhood work. Our agents, paid or volunteer, must be of the neighborhood in which our applicants live. They must be able to appreciate not merely the fact that there is poverty which must be alleviated, but must comprehend the motives of the applicant and the historical

background which brought on dependency." Dr. Frankel believed that among the crowded residents of the lower East Side there were "hundreds of men and women competent and able to assist in the solution of the problems of their suffering brethren, and probably more fit than we unaided are, because of birth, association, tradition and environment, to undertake the responsibility of the care of a large part of our Jewish poor."

It was these considerations that brought the society to measures designed to establish closer relations with the East Side. Calling a conference of representatives of many of the organizations just enumerated, it asked them how it could enlist the interest of people there, and be of more service to them. A Committee of Fifty was appointed by this meeting, and the committee drew up a plan.

Under the plan adopted, the lower East Side was divided into four parts; if advisable later, the number was to be increased to ten. The United Hebrew Charities was to open a branch office in each district, and employ at least one paid visitor in each to care for families. The work, however, was to be under the guidance, and to a considerable extent under the control, of a board of residents of the neighborhood, called a local board of directors. There was to be a local board of directors in each district. This board was to frame rules for the carrying on of family welfare work, only being careful not to violate the constitution and by-laws of the United Hebrew Charities. Each local board was to have thirty members, chosen with the purpose of having them representative of the organizations in the neighborhood. The thirty were

to be elected in the following manner: Twenty-seven of them were to be chosen by residents of the district who were members of the United Hebrew Charities, and the other three were to be selected by the president of the United Hebrew Charities. Of the thirty, three were to sit on the central Board of Directors of the society, and thus the districts were to be represented on the important, policy-making body of the society.

Each local board was to appoint a relief committee, to meet daily at the office of the districts and there decide what action was to be taken in the cases of the families under treatment. Thus, the local boards had a large and actual part in the work of the society in their neighborhoods, a considerable power to lodge in them.

In regard to money, the United Hebrew Charities agreed to spend in the lower East Side, or in the area covered by these districts, two-thirds of its entire budget. This was a recognition of the importance of that neighborhood. But the financial clauses did not stop there. The society further agreed to appropriate to each board, for expenditure under its control, two-thirds of the money raised in its district, the remaining third to be used for the general work of the society. In addition, the society agreed to go over its records for the five preceding years, to ascertain the average monthly amount that had been spent by it in each of the territories making up these districts, and to guarantee each board not less than this sum for present use. The society, of course, expected the boards to help raise money for charitable purposes, and it also expected an increase in membership and

contributions. Another clause stipulated that every neighborhood organization paying as much as ten dollars into the treasury of the United Hebrew Charities should be allowed one vote at its annual meeting.

This plan remained in existence for five years, from 1904 to 1908 inclusive. Unfortunately detailed records of its operations are not available. In the report of the executive committee, at the end of the first year of the plan, these words were found:

"In the main, the work of the district organizations has been satisfactory. Applicants living in the territory covered by the districts are no longer required to apply to the office on 21st Street, but make application at the district office and receive such assistance as they may require directly from these headquarters. Of particular value, however, in this scheme is the fact that the men who make up the board of trustees (the local board of directors), owing to their thorough acquaintance and familiarity with East Side conditions, are able to enter most sympathetically into the needs of the poor and to give them the help and the advice they so urgently need. The committee hopes that during the next year two other district offices may be opened in this section of the city."

And a year later:

"The experiment . . . has demonstrated its feasibility, and may be called a pronounced success. The particular value of this plan is the fact that our applicants are being cared for, not only by co-religionists, but by men and women who come from the same section of the old country,

and who are allied with them in language, traditions and in customs."

Disappointment succeeded this pleasure. The districts were too large. They were unwieldy, and the people who served on the downtown boards did not retain their original enthusiasm. Neither did they keep their standards of treatment up to a high notch. The result was that in 1908, the plan was modified. A new scheme of district offices was projected. The Board of Directors of the society thus discussed the change:

"The principle upon which the plan of the district offices was based is as sound as heretobefore, but those established have been too large and unwieldy to be effective agencies for work among the poor. The responsibility which was delegated to our Downtown Boards of Directors, though exercised with dignity and purpose, did not diminish that of your Board, nor were realized the motives which gave rise to the plan. They (the districts) have been found to be too large to make possible that despatch in satisfying the applicants' needs, and that close personal interest in the family, which are so desirable and essential.

"Plans are being formulated to organize a larger number of districts, much smaller in area, each to be in charge of an experienced visitor who with the help of advisory committees of the local residents will be better enabled to serve the interests of those under her care. The new plan seeks to concentrate the responsibilities in the main office, and providing as it does for the

election to our Board, instead of to branch offices, of gentlemen who have an intimate knowledge of lower East Side conditions, promises more effectual results. In abolishing our downtown branches, the Board would be guilty of ingratitude were it not to express in cordial terms, the thanks of the society to the men who devoted much time and energy to the difficult and arduous labors in which they so zealously engaged."

THE PANIC OF 1907

The panic, or financial distress, of 1907, now well remembered, caused a reduction in the society's income. In that same year the annual contributions of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum Society, which had been growing gradually less for some years, ceased altogether and left the society without that accustomed revenue. On a cold day in December, with many men out of work, the society closed its doors. It had no money, and so it suspended operations. Probably few acts of any charitable organization have ever caused such quick protest. The newspapers protested, and prominent Jewish men and women protested. The directors explained that they were without funds, and that it seemed more honest to acknowledge their inability to render any service for the time being than to give the appearance of being able to do what they could not do.

The struggle for funds was always an arduous one, with the United Hebrew Charities as with nearly all family welfare organizations, and even extraordinary appeals for help that year had yielded little return. The closing of the doors, however, brought results; if

the directors hoped by that measure to get action that seemed impossible in any other way, they were partially successful. For the Council of Jewish Communal Institutions came to the rescue, and a committee appointed by it raised funds for the society. The doors were promptly re-opened, having been closed only three days.

The society was not yet out of difficulty, however. The slump in contributions continued, and 1908 saw little improvement in the financial situation. Several sisterhoods had thrown back upon the society parts of their districts, and this increased the amount of money that had to come out of the society's own treasury. In the necessity for economy, the society decided upon a drastic policy; it decided to curtail pensions being given to some of the widows under its care. This seemed less objectionable than other measures. The result of this action, however, was to make it necessary for some of these widows to place their children in child-caring institutions, because they could no longer support them, and again the society was the object of criticism. In the emergency the Widowed Mothers' Fund Association, an organization still at work today, was formed to relieve the pressure upon these mothers. Finally, a working arrangement was reached with the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, to whom most of the children had been committed by the city, whereby it shared with the United Hebrew Charities and with the Widowed Mothers' Fund Association the responsibility for keeping these homes unbroken, and the difficult period was at last successfully passed through.

"DISPERSION" FROM THE LOWER EAST SIDE

Meanwhile, a process was occurring on the lower East Side that arrested the attention of the society. This was a "spontaneous and voluntary dispersion" of the residents of that neighborhood; the lower East Side was breaking up. We know now that the East Side did not break up, but to a few optimistic observers then it seemed as if some of the problems of congestion in that neighborhood were being solved. The Bronx was attracting its thousands, and Brownsville on Long Island was a flourishing center. Thus did a page in one of the annual reports of the society describe the process:

> "The borough of the Bronx is rapidly becoming populated with an element of our co-religionists who realize the necessity for better living conditions, and who of their own volition, are doing the pioneer work in establishing new centers of Jewish activity. Of pronounced interest is the settlement at the outskirts of Brooklyn, known as Brownsville, in which it is estimated 60,000 Jews at present reside. The housing conditions which are found there are far superior to those of New York. Tenements more than four stories in height are unknown. The average home is in a two-family, three-story house with porch front. The streets are wide and well paved. The city has erected a substantial public bath which is used daily by 2,500 people and is at present finishing a public park or playground.
>
> "The results are easily apparent. During the last six months there have been but twenty-one arrests of Jewish boys and girls for infractions of

the law. There is comparatively little of the sordid poverty to be found in Manhattan, and all in all, the settlement bears out the belief which has so frequently been emphasized in these reports, that whatever chronic poverty is found among our co-religionists in Manhattan, is owing to their environment and not to any inherent shortcomings.

"If more settlements like Brownsville could be inaugurated, many of the problems which confront the Jewish community of New York would begin to find a solution."

If this "voluntary dispersion" did not remove the evils of congestion on the lower East Side, it at least carried many Jews to more pleasant places in which to live.

Chapter VI

A PERIOD OF PROGRESS

In 1908, Henry Rice became honorary president of the United Hebrew Charities after thirty-three years of active and inspiring leadership. He was succeeded in the presidency by Cyrus L. Sulzberger, who held the office only two years, his business interests requiring him to refuse a third election. Mr. Sulzberger then became chairman of the Executive Committee, and in that capacity and later in the counsels of the Federation, has continued since those early days to give notable service and leadership to the Jewish community.

The year of Mr. Rice's retirement marked Dr. Frankel's departure to a new field of activity. The United Hebrew Charities was then thirty-four years old. It had been through a varied history. Begun as a federation of existing societies, it had been the product of reform, and was the Jews' answer, at a creditably early time, to the demand for better organization and more intelligence in charity. When Russian immigration struck it in the early 'eighties, it had nearly been overwhelmed but had withstood the impact, and had emerged with its original purposes intact.

On a number of occasions the United Hebrew Charities had started, or had helped to start, useful organizations. Represented at the councils that resulted in the great gift of Baron de Hirsch, it had become an important agent in distributing money from

that famous fund. Through the 'nineties it had grown in professional spirit, and in the course of that decade and the next had made important contributions not only to the technique of assisting families, but to the treatment of desertion, the care of tuberculous people, child welfare, the treatment of the sick and other phases of social work. It had responded, with excellent facility, to changes in the Jewish community, and had tried especially to bring the people of the lower East Side into closer relations with it. The organization that opened a little office at 59 East Fourth Street in 1874 and issued relief under the direction of a member of the Executive Committee was hardly recognizable. From spending less than $30,000 a year it had grown to the expenditure of more than $325,000; from a society that took care of the few poor families among the 60,000 Jews of New York City it had expanded to one giving a much more varied treatment to the unfortunate among the 850,000 Jews in the city.

The society's new executive was Morris D. Waldman, whose early experience in social work in the Industrial Removal Office and the "Galveston movement," had brought him into close contact with immigrants and their problems. In the course of Mr. Waldman's administration important advances were made in the organization's conception of its purposes and its development of methods to meet them. Significant changes were brought about in the treatment of desertion and tuberculosis, and in the realization of the vocational needs of children. Interested in the problems of community organization underlying the financial support of charitable societies,

Mr. Waldman studied the idea of federation, and became a convinced advocate of the plan. When the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies was established in New York City in 1917, it was Mr. Waldman who had done much to revive interest in the project and to bring about its acceptance by the community.

CONSTRUCTIVE PHILANTHROPY

The intricacy of family difficulties and the complexity of treatment needed to remove them was, as we have said, coming to be more clearly recognized in the course of these years. The following words appeared in a report of the society at about this time:

> "The problem with the individual family today is much more difficult and intricate than formerly. Into it are injected the larger and more complicated considerations, such as woman and child labor, housing, education, health, and recreation. Where in former years the grant of a small sum to tide one over the emergency disposed of the case, today the continuous relief granted must be coupled with intelligent, solicitous and painstaking efforts to rehabilitate the family. Family rehabilitation has, therefore, become the watchword of our relief committees and workers. When the charity organization movement started thirty years ago, the evils of monetary relief were emphasized. Today we realize that constructive and reconstructive philanthropy involves generous relief.
>
> "In addition, the increasing complexity of our family problems has necessitated higher effi-

ciency in our office and field administration and in this respect we can report satisfactory progress."

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TUBERCULOSIS

For many years, as we have seen, tuberculosis had claimed the society's interest. As early as 1902, a serious study of the problem had been made by the medical committee, which had concerned itself with the conditions under which tuberculous patients might be suitably treated in their own homes. Upon its recommendation the following program had been adopted:

(*a*) To treat in their homes consumptives who are waiting for admission to sanatoria, or whose cases are not suitable for sanatorium treatment, or whose condition prevents the removal of the patients from their homes.

(*b*) To improve the sanitary surroundings of the consumptive and to teach him the prevention of infection and re-infection.

(*c*) To give ample relief, particularly suitable nourishment.

(*d*) To provide a means of livelihood for improved cases.

The technique of treating tuberculosis has made great advances since 1902. Nevertheless the work and suggestions of this committee were in the right direction, and were influential in 1910 in bringing about further organization for the treatment of the disease.

In that year the society, with the Social Service Department of the Free Synagogue, formed the Joint

Committee on Tuberculosis. This committee gave intensive care to families in which tuberculosis had lodged, checking it in patients, preventing other members from getting it, and bringing about a general improvement in the health and welfare of the family.

The matter was important, for in 1910 the society spent $32,500, or 14 per cent of its total cash disbursements, in assistance to families in which there was tuberculosis. In 1911 it spent more than $40,000, or 20 per cent. Tuberculosis was a large contributing factor to dependency, or a disturbing complication in families receiving treatment. "The white plague continues to cripple and kill," wrote a committee at this time, and the members of the committee believed that tuberculosis was "steadily making headway among the masses of our people."

At the end of three years the committee had a striking record to point to. Its careful treatment of families had apparently proved highly beneficial; the treatment had consisted in giving larger sums of money for food, supplying doctors and nurses, procuring suitable living quarters, making sure that work was of the proper kind, and generally supervising recovery. A study of a large number of patients discharged from Bedford Sanitarium showed that 55 per cent of these suffered relapses within a short time after returning to their former environments; in the families cared for by the Joint Committee, relapses had happened in only eight per cent. When this fact was brought to the attention of the trustees of Montefiore Home, who were responsible for Bedford Sanitarium, they agreed to join the

society and the Free Synagogue in extending the work of the committee to include proper after-care of their own patients.

Two years later, in 1915, the committee, still exploring methods of helping the tuberculous, started a model garment factory in the Bronx to see if people who had had this disease could not work again under good conditions. The experiment was successful, and patients held their own or visibly improved from the beginning. It was at this time that the Department of Health and the Joint Board of Sanitary Control were included in representation on this committee, which became an independent organization under the name of the Committee for the Care of the Jewish Tuberculous. Its Altro Shops in the Bronx have made a notable demonstration of the advantages of work under proper conditions for the tuberculous.

FAMILY DESERTION

Desertion had interested the society from the beginning. It was in 1880 that Mr. Rice had cried out against the "wretched men who play upon the miseries of their wives and babes," sometimes abandoning them in the early dawn of married life. This was regarded as "a blot on the fair name of Israel, whose sons, no less than their daughters, are noted for their strong family love and domestic virtues." With this idea went a growing consciousness that desertion was playing a large part in the misery that the society was trying to alleviate.

That consciousness deepened as the years went by. We find desertion mentioned as more and more important through the 'eighties and into the 'nineties,

until in 1897 deserted wives were specified with old people and widows as the three classes of cases requiring immediate attention. "It is the policy of this society," write the members of the executive committee, "to help the family in the belief that neither the deserted wife nor the children should be made to suffer for the misdeeds of the husband"; nevertheless, it was considered important, whenever possible, to bring the offending husband back and require him to assist in the support of his family. The attitude of the society was fairly stiff toward the deserting male, and strong regret was felt both that many wives gave listless help to the society's efforts to locate men, and that existing laws made extradition of deserters difficult.

In 1903 the Charity Organization Society formed a committee to seek legislation at Albany making desertion a felony instead of a misdemeanor, and so making it extraditable, and officials of the society joined this committee. Some difficulty was experienced in getting the law passed, but in 1905 the committee was successful, and from then on husbands who left their children and wives in straits could be brought back from other states in this country to New York, and could be both fined and imprisoned. The society established a desertion committee to pursue absent husbands, and also to effect reconciliations whenever possible and to relieve the suffering families. The law was only partially successful since in 981 instances of desertion in 1906, the whereabouts of the husband had been discovered by the end of the year in only 378. Whenever the husband agreed to resume the support of his family, the society with-

drew prosecution; and some husbands were released from prison at the solicitation of their wives.

It was in 1910 that the United Hebrew Charities, convinced of the futility of the new desertion legislation without means of finding the deserters, began to print their photographs and descriptions in the Jewish newspapers.

In the same year Monroe M. Goldstein, a young lawyer, made a special study of desertion cases for the society. It was observed, among other things, that many men who left their families were guilty of desertion only in a technical sense, and that their acts involved no moral delinquency; these men started away from home in search of work, and if successful they sent for their families, if not they returned to them.

Nevertheless, desertion was still a disturbing factor in causing families to become dependent. It was no worse, apparently, among Jewish families than among non-Jewish. The Board of Trustees pointed out that Edward T. Devine's new book, "Misery and Its Causes," reported a study of 5,000 dependent families in which 606, or slightly more than 12 per cent, were deserted. In the 1,591 new families assisted by the United Hebrew Charities that year, only 137, or something fewer than 9 per cent, were deserted.

Desertion was now being looked at on a national scale. The society, for its part, had so regarded it for many years. In 1900 Nathan Bijur, then vice-president of the United Hebrew Charities, had read a paper on the subject before the National Conference of Jewish Charities, pleading with charitable agencies the country over to cooperate in an effort to restore deserters to their families. Six years later Dr.

Frankel, addressing the same group, had suggested that a national Jewish registration bureau for deserters be established, and this was the first specific suggestion for a national desertion bureau.

Then, in 1910, came a paper by Mr. Waldman, also before the National Conference, quickening the pulses of that body and causing it to appoint a committee to study the whole subject anew thoroughly. This committee refused to confine itself to an academic inquiry, however. It obtained the approval of the executive committee of the conference to establish the Desertion Bureau of the National Conference, and the New York Foundation gave $5,000 to meet the expenses of the bureau, until the next biennial of the conference, in 1912. The purpose of this bureau was to arouse concerted action among all Jewish welfare societies and to act as a clearing house for efforts to reduce desertion.

At the session in 1912 the bureau was transformed into the National Desertion Bureau, an organization now existing and devoted to the study of the problem of family desertion and efforts to reduce it among Jewish families. The bureau is a socio-legal agency dealing with non-support, family desertion and domestic relations generally, for all Jewish social agencies in the United States. Its main purposes are to locate family deserters with a view to reuniting and reconciling them, to effect arrangements for the separate support of families when necessary, and to prosecute husbands who refuse to contribute to their families' welfare.

The work of the bureau quickly brought about a reduction in the number of cases of desertion coming

to the attention of family welfare societies. In 1914 the United Hebrew Charities reported that the bureau had "cut these cases in two." One of the first measures of the bureau was to eliminate Canada as a popular refuge for deserters by obtaining the agreement of the Canadian Government to deport deserters back to the United States, even though extradition courtesies were not granted in the opposite direction. Later in 1922 the Bureau helped in obtaining the adoption of an extradition treaty between U. S. and Canada providing for an extradition of fathers abandoning their children. Thus, the machinery for a serious encounter with the troubles of desertion was slowly built up.

Mr. Leopold Plaut became president of the society in 1911. He has been re-chosen annually ever since and is president today; of the four men who have held this position, he has thus filled the next to the longest term of service, Mr. Rice's having been longer. Mr. Plaut has steadfastly encouraged the improvements in the society's work that have been made under his presidency, and it is largely due to his support that some of the most important changes have been carried out; the true significance of his leadership will become apparent in the final chapter. Following the establishment of the Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies, in 1917, he helped to interpret to that body the service rendered by the society.

THE WAR

The war produced little immediate effect upon family welfare organizations. It was accompanied

by a drop in the number of families under the care of the United Hebrew Charities, and it caused a sudden check to immigration; these aspects of its influence will be treated in the final chapter. It is possible that the ambitious programs for humanitarian service devised by the American Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Knights of Columbus, and other organizations, as well as by some governmental departments, helped to stimulate activity in social work. When social workers saw what ardent enthusiasm could be evoked for human welfare, despite the slaughter and devastation that were the chief effects of the war; when they noticed the tremendous numbers of people enlisted in efforts to help others: and when they saw how easily purses could be opened in response to appeal; many of them may have felt a quickening of the belief that their own programs could be enlarged, that peacetime effort on behalf of the wretched could command the services of more people and of more money.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

In 1915 the United Hebrew Charities established a department of Vocational Guidance. The purpose of this was to serve families by helping young boys and girls, at the age when many leave school, to continue their education in directions most useful to them, and, if work was decided upon, to guide them into occupations that would express their best abilities. No community-wide vocational guidance activity existed at that time, and the United Hebrew Charities was the first family welfare organization in the country to study the subject and engage in this form of service.

In the families cared for by the society there were many children who were about to make the important decision whether to remain in school or to quit and find employment. Children who have once left school, seldom return. The society decided that it could render great and lasting help to these families by placing before them all available information concerning schools and jobs; and that by studying the individual child, considering his impulses and desires, and pooling the observations of teachers, parents and others who know him, it might arrive at some conclusion concerning his interests and special abilities. In some cases, further schooling, directed by such study, was to be made possible by providing scholarships.

FEDERATION

When Louis A. Heinsheimer died in 1909 and left one million dollars to be used as the nucleus of a federation for the support of Jewish philanthropic societies, it appeared that this much-discussed and much-needed form of organization would come into existence. But because two of the largest societies in the city refused to join such a federation, if formed, Mr. Heinsheimer's purpose came to nothing. His bequest, reverting to private hands, was later used to found the New York Foundation, the income from which is used for studies and experiments in social work. Mr. Heinsheimer was treasurer of the United Hebrew Charities and active in its affairs, and he shared the desire of his colleagues for a federation.

Still earlier attempts to persuade New York City's Jewish charitable agencies to accept a federation had been made. As early as 1900 Prof. Morris Loeb read

a paper before the first meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Charities, not only presenting the arguments in favor of a federation for financial purposes, but giving the facts about an unsuccessful attempt to form such a federation in New York City in 1897. In 1905 the directors of the United Hebrew Charities had once more submitted to other institutions the question of calling a conference to discuss the formation of a federation. Thus, the society took the initiative in this instance. The methods then in vogue of raising money, each society trying to obtain its own little quota by "reaching contributors through personal effort," were believed by the directors to be obsolete in a city of the size of New York. They wanted a more comprehensive method. Mr. Rice, celebrating his thirtieth year as president of the organization, had called for an end of the "Thirty Years' War" of struggle to get an annual income, and begged for a sounder system. But, as on other occasions, nothing had happened.

In 1907 there was organized the Council of Jewish Communal Institutions, composed of delegates from fourteen of the largest institutions, to promote the cause of philanthropic endeavor. It brought about discussion by the delegates regarding better methods and economies of administration, and was an important factor in bringing about closer cooperation, and it is believed distinctly advanced the cause of Federation.

Meanwhile, federations had been accepted in other cities. Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Pittsburg, and other places had become familiar with their operation, and in most if not all of these their success was acknowledged. Many people

believed that New York City was in a class by itself, that it was unique; they thought that its very size, and the complexity of its charitable problems, precluded the application to it of arguments that were sound elsewhere. This opinion, however, was growing weaker. Federations were being too highly regarded in other cities for New York City to hold out much longer, and a report by Mr. Waldman, made to the New York Foundation, on the experiences of other cities with their federations, served to revive interest.

The chief arguments urged in 1915 and 1916 on behalf of federation in New York City were: that such an organization would raise more money for the societies affiliating with it than they were able to raise when acting separately; that it would insure a more fair and equitable distribution of money to these societies, and so to the services they represented; that it would protect contributors from undesirable and promiscuous forms of solicitation for charitable funds; that it would insure a full accounting of all sums collected and spent; that it would relieve the societies from the necessity of raising money and so set them freer to give their full time to their work; that it would be able to investigate new proposed organizations in philanthropy, and so protect the community from undesirable ones; that, in addition to eliminating undesirable forms of activity, it could strengthen the desirable ones and improve the social service performed in the community; and that it would be an effective force for coordinating all philanthropic effort, for seeing that all forms of need were treated, and for interpreting the purposes of social service to the city at large.

The Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies in New York City was finally established in 1916 and began work in 1917. It is an organization established to collect, through one agency, the money needed to maintain the large number of Jewish charitable societies affiliated with it, and to distribute these funds to those organizations in a way deemed best for the interests of the community. Its appeals to the contributing public are made on behalf of all of the organizations that are its constituent members. The community and its needs, and the form of organization best adapted to meet those needs are given careful continuous study.

Each society annually presents the Federation with a budget of its estimated requirements. Federation then decides upon its appropriation for the year. No society is expected to make a separate appeal to the public, though it may receive legacies and it may also receive funds for special purposes. The bulk of an organization's income is nearly always that received from the Federation, and in some instances this is substantially the whole amount. Of the Jewish charitable societies in New York City, ninety-one are at present affiliated with the Federation. When it began its work, in 1917, only twenty-one were affiliated with it.

There is one particular respect in which the establishment of the Federation is important that deserves mention in a history of the United Hebrew Charities. We have referred to the diverse elements in the Jewish population in this country, and to the resulting conflicts in Jewish life and management of affairs. A variety of cultures, and a variety of national back-

grounds, caused a variety of points of view and an inability to come together in effective cooperation for general purposes. Barriers were retained that had no real relation to conditions here. We have seen how these barriers at times affected the policies of the United Hebrew Charities. To weld Jewish organizations into a single effective agency, or to bring them together for a common program, has often been an impossible task for Jewish statesmanship; now it is becoming more possible. Unity is replacing disunity, and the Federation is an illustration of this process. Federations in other cities preceded the one there, to be sure, but the one in New York City is perhaps more significant, for the confusion was greater there and the devisive forces were stronger. Among the large number of societies that have accepted the Federation idea in New York City, differences were great; it is an eloquent sign of the levelling of these obstructions that so many organizations have come together in an enterprise that means real consideration by each of the position and purposes of others. This is not an entirely new development in Jewish affairs, for cooperation has been evident in other fields; but it is pleasant to be able to record that the process is making headway in social work. The continued work of the Federation will, of course, hasten the cooperation that has begun, for the association of all of these bodies in that organization will further break down the differences that have held them apart.

Chapter VII

NEW PURPOSES IN THE TREATMENT OF FAMILIES

In 1915, the society invited the New York Foundation to study its work. It was then particularly concerned with the lack of coordination between its work and that of the multitude of organizations of all sorts which were springing up, without, until the creation of the Federation, any controlling or directing force. The difficulty was not only in the number of all these, but in the lack of cooperation between them, and in the variety of methods and standards in the treatment pursued by them. In this confusion, the sisterhoods presented a particular problem. It will be remembered that these active bodies of women, formed in connection with synagogues, carried on many enterprises of their own. They conducted classes, ran summer camps and day nurseries, opened libraries, operated employment bureaus and brought mothers together into clubs. They also acted as agents of the United Hebrew Charities. They helped it raise money and were its accepted representatives in the treatment of families. Each sisterhood had its own territory and its own office, and this office was in effect a district office of the United Hebrew Charities. From that office went on much of the family welfare work of the neighborhood. The number of sisterhoods holding this relationship to the society varied from time to time, but was usually ten or twelve.

At the request of the New York Foundation, the situation was surveyed by the Bureau of Municipal

Research. The Bureau found a number of defects in the relationship between the society and the sisterhoods. The defects had been felt before, but the Bureau's report had the value of an outside judgment. While commenting on the useful things that sisterhoods did, the Bureau pointed out that their standards in the treatment of families were not uniform; this produced confusion and placed the society in the position of following one practice in one district and another in another.

Another difficulty was that the work of the sisterhoods could not be organized on a professional basis. The women who gave time to these organizations, though devoted and able, were not trained in the complex technique of caring for families. The result was that the society was not doing as good work as it wished, a fact realized by some of the leading women in the sisterhoods.

In 1918, after the establishment of the Federation, the Society found its opportunity for changing the relationship. It asked the sisterhoods to relinquish their responsibility for the care of families. The change was amicably made, the sisterhoods continuing to help the society in many other ways. At the same time, through the Federation, after over forty years of struggle, the society found itself freed from the wearing burden of raising its own funds.

Mr. Waldman had left the United Hebrew Charities in 1917 to reorganize the Federated Jewish Charities in Boston. For a short time after his departure Mr. Abraham Oseroff was in charge of the society's affairs, resigning to enter business. Mr. Waldman returned for a period sufficient to effect the change in

relationship between the sisterhoods and the society, resigning in 1919. Thus it was in a period of reorganization, the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the United Hebrew Charities, that Miss Frances Taussig became its Executive Director.

By this time it was recognized that the purpose of progressive family welfare societies is to restore to the community, as participating groups, the families for whom they assume responsibility. It is to put them back into the life around them as normally functioning, effective units. These families have been withdrawn for one reason or another: perhaps the father has suffered in an accident, the mother has been ill for a long time, or members of the family have been out of work. Some catastrophe has interfered with the normal relationships and functioning of the family. The society wishes not only to repair the immediate trouble, if possible, but to raise the general level of the family's condition and interest. It wishes to make it possible for the family to take part in what goes on around it with the full enjoyment of which the members are capable, to make them a productive, useful, contented and harmonious group. The family is regarded primarily as a whole, and though members may receive individual treatment, the concern of the society is not limited to this. It wishes to give the family a strong confidence in itself and a sustained belief that it can overcome its own difficulties. It wants to build up in it a resourcefulness that will demolish future obstacles. This resourcefulness may be information, or it may be a new attitude toward life, a new persistence, a freer willingness to adapt itself to the demands of situations that arise.

This service may take a great many different directions. The society may find a new home or new environment for the family. It may restore its members to health, and show them ways of preventing illness; it may improve their education, and help to keep children in school; it may find remunerative and congenial work for members of the family. The society may smooth out difficulties in the relationships between members of the families, and it may treat mental troubles. It may promote the opportunities of the family to enjoy cultural and religious advantages, if the family wishes these. It may do any of a great number of things. And an important aspect of all of this is that the family is given an opportunity to participate in the plans for its own welfare.

In order to learn to what extent these newer purposes were dominating the work of the organization, an inquiry was made at the beginning of this last stage in its development into the record of its treatment of a number of families who had been under its care for as long as ten years. This study was made by Miss Elinor Blackman, who later became assistant executive director of the United Hebrew Charities.

Miss Blackman went closely into the record of the society's work with these families, and made some interesting discoveries. She found, among other things, that many of the families had been approached, in the first place, in an unsympathetic way; this had produced antagonism in the family and had made successful treatment difficult. Frequently, it was learned, the examination of the families' troubles had been confined to a few aspects, and a clear picture of the whole situation had not

been reached; the family's income had received attention perhaps, without sufficient consideration of the members of the family as individuals, the relationships between members of the family or some of the personality factors involved. This prevented a clear diagnosis of the difficulty, and without such diagnosis an effective plan of treatment could not be devised. In carrying out plans, too, the visitors had not been sufficiently persistent, and had not obtained the cooperation of the families. In few instances had any of these families been invited to participate in the plans for their welfare. The result was that many of the families had merely drifted along, seeing no improvement in their situations and little prospect of any improvement. In some were children suffering from unsuitable guardianship, sick people whose condition had been unrecognized and untreated for years, nervous people who were rapidly becoming neurotic, old people whose misery continued unrelieved, and even defectives who should have been placed, for their own good, in institutions that could give them proper care. Ambition had been almost nowhere stirred. As the report put it, there still remained in these families, after the lapse of ten years, "liabilities in the form of poor health, lack of self-respect, chronic dependence and antagonism."

The situation was presented to the Federation. The United Hebrew Charities desired to make the changes in its organization through which it might become a constructive influence in the lives of the families whom it endeavored to help. For this it needed a larger and better staff, a more complex organization and sufficient funds for the relief of material need.

The Federation's appropriation to the society at this time was not large enough to cover this new program. Furthermore the Federation could not be expected to finance experiments or sudden changes in policy. The Federation was a new body, feeling its way, and was not able to appropriate to its affiliated organization, all that many of them required. In 1917, the first year of its existence, the Federation appropriated to the United Hebrew Charities, $272,-773; in 1918, $295,445; in 1919, $374,034; and in 1920, $484,017. Large as these increases were, it will be seen that except for the last year the amount received from the Federation did not equal the sums spent by the society for material relief alone.

The Society had a Reserve Fund of approximately $400,000. A few years earlier Theophilus Marc, upon his death, had left the residue of his estate to the United Hebrew Charities. Son of a Jewish father, but reared in the Lutheran faith, Mr. Marc had desired to have the money which he had made in America devoted to the solution of "what he considered America's most pressing problem, the improvement of the condition of the immigrant Jew. His legacy formed the greater part of the Reserve Fund. This had come to be regarded as a safeguard against serious emergencies, a kind of insurance against disaster, not to be touched lightly. The argument for its use in the existing situation was strongly made.

The Trustees showed their belief in the new interpretation of the organization's work and decided to spend the Reserve Fund. From 1919 on, parts of the fund were used each year until by the end of 1923 it

was exhausted. Their faith that the Federation would eventually make appropriations large enough to cover the greater demands of the society was justified, for the Federation's appropriation increased from year to year until in 1925 it was $611,320.

THE NEW PROGRAM

The acceptance of new purposes was for the United Hebrew Charities only the beginning of the development of the program which is still shaping its growth. The essence of this program is an ever widening and deepening conception of the meaning of the society's work. To carry out this new meaning, it has been necessary from time to time to make changes in the structure of the organization. Through the opening of district offices the society has been brought nearer to the families whom it serves; a better trained and enlarged staff has made possible a better quality of work; the development of some and the creation of other special functional departments have added to its resources in its care of families.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

The first step in the reorganization was taken upon the dissolution of the partnership with the sisterhoods. Five new district offices were opened, the one already maintained in the Bronx being continued. Of the new districts, one was organized in Harlem, one in the neighborhood known as Yorkville, and three on the lower East Side. In each of these was established a staff of workers responsible to the central administration of the society.

To those associated with the United Hebrew Charities it seemed that its work would never be under-

stood in these neighborhoods so long as it remained in the eyes of the people living there an organization of professional social workers, standing more or less aloof from the folks among whom it treated families and responding in slight degree to their public opinion. In a large city it is especially easy for an organization to occupy this position, for local districts merge imperceptibly into the rest of the city and it is hard to remember that these districts often have interests, points of view, and preoccupations of their own.

The society finds that it gains from the knowledge of local conditions and points of view that people in the neighborhood can bring to it. Not only are they likely to know a great deal about facilities for service, and conditions that make it hard to render service, in the neighborhood—such as schools, playgrounds, the way young people spend their leisure time, churches or synagogues, political conditions and the like—but they are likely to know expectations and standards among families, and the way in which they regard treatment.

Moreover, to many people in the neighborhoods where clients reside the acts of the society must have seemed strange and illogical. In one instance it would do its utmost to hold the family intact; in another it might assist in breaking up the family, removing the parents from the children, perhaps, or sending some member to an institution. In one instance it would urge a child to remain in school and continue its education; in another it would encourage the child to find a job; in some cases its financial assistance seemed generous; in others small.

It is too much to expect outsiders to understand all such variations in treatment, and yet it is important

that public opinion in a district where a society works support it. There are occasions when an adverse public opinion may seriously interfere with a society's usefulness, and with a family's welfare.

Upon the organization of the district offices, the society invited representatives of the districts to sit on advisory committees and help it in its work. There is one such committee in each of the six districts, and the members include business men, women active in neighborhood affairs, school teachers, doctors, rabbis, lawyers, social workers, and persons prominent in local organizations. The committees take part in the discussion of cases thereby serving the dual purpose of helping to care for families and of interpreting the purposes of the organization to the neighborhoods. In 1925 the by-laws of the society were changed to make all of the chairmen of these committees members of the Board of Trustees of the United Hebrew Charities. This has brought to the central policy-making body of the society the knowledge which these chairmen have of local conditions, and has helped to cement the relations between the society and the district. Once more an attempt has been made to bring into the administration of the organization the good will and the intelligence of representatives of the groups from whom the society's clients come.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this district organization could not have been accomplished without a larger, better qualified and better trained staff. An increased salary scale soon made possible the engagement of workers with an improved equipment of personality and edu-

cation. Better qualified workers were not enough to bring about the desired improvement of work with families. Training was needed. Schools of social work have offered training for many years but their graduates had never been sufficient in number to man the staffs of social agencies. It was therefore necessary for the United Hebrew Charities itself to train its new staff members. For this purpose, in addition to apprenticeship training which the society continues to provide, training classes within the organization were conducted for a while. Later it became possible to make use of the classes in the New York School of Social Work which are open to the staff members of social agencies.

Another important step in the training of the staff was the establishment of the Stuyvesant District in 1924. Heretofore, when a visitor came to the United Hebrew Charities, there was little opportunity in the crowded work of the district to give her training or to introduce her gradually into the complexities of her task.

Furthermore, since the reorganization with the enlarged conception of the work of the society, new workers were showing a tendency to become overwhelmed and discouraged at the outset of their experience. The proposal was made, therefore, that a specified territory be set aside as a training district, and that visitors joining the staff have their first experience there. A plan was made whereby only a limited number of families was referred to this district for care. This left the supervisor freer than those in the other districts to give time and thought to the training and instruction of workers. It also was

possible through this plan to give each new worker responsibility for only as many families as should be given her in the light of her experience and progress in the work.

Excellent as this proposal was, funds for meeting the expenses of the district were lacking, until the Hofheimer Foundation and the New York Foundation came to the rescue, sharing the expense of the experiment. A part of the Stuyvesant neighborhood was chosen and the training district established. This district was selected because of the variation in its population and in the problems it presents. A further reason for choosing the Stuyvesant neighborhood was that it was close to the New York School of Social Work, some of whose students, along with those from the Training School for Jewish Social Work, do their field work under the supervision of the United Hebrew Charities.

The Stuyvesant District has been training some of the staff of the United Hebrew Charities since September, 1924. These visitors have entered upon the services of the district offices, well prepared for the difficult task of helping families. This has not only had an important effect on the quality of attention given the families but has contributed to an improved and healthier attitude toward their work, on the part of staff members who are introduced to their responsibilities in this way.

In spite of all of these opportunities for training a better qualified staff, the society was finding that its personnel was a constantly changing one. Beginners had been discouraged by the suddenness with which responsibilities had been thrust upon them. Older

workers were experiencing the futility of trying to improve the quality of their services while spreading them over too large a group of families. In Stuyvesant District, this difficulty had been met; but in the rest of the organization, it, along with low salaries, continued to play havoc with the stability of the staff. In spite of the fact that the staff was constantly growing in numbers with a corresponding decrease in the number of families under the care of each worker and in spite of an increasing salary scale, it was not until recently that sufficiently radical changes in either of these respects could be made to improve the situation.

SPECIAL DEPARTMENTS

The development and creation of special functional departments has already been mentioned as another and important factor in carrying out the new meaning of the organization's work. Many years ago it became apparent to the United Hebrew Charities that lack of community resources frequently limited the effectiveness of its work with families. New resources were created, some of which, as a part of the organization, became important independent agencies, while others remained a part of the society. Two of these specialized activities within the society had been in existence before the reorganization; two others followed, giving the society four functional departments to help the case workers meet all of the needs of the family. The departments are those of Self-Support, of Vocational Guidance, of Mental Hygiene, and of Home Economics and Dietetics.

SELF-SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

In earlier chapters we have traced the history of the Self-Support Fund, which Jacob H. Schiff and his family have maintained ever since its beginning in 1900. As we have seen, grants and loans from the fund established families in businesses, which included push cart peddling, newspaper stands, candy and stationery stores, and even occasionally grocery stores and barber shops. Usually the persons so established were disabled in some way which unfitted them for industry. Until conditions surrounding small business ventures became too complex, many families were successfully and happily put on their feet in this way. In recent years, however, it has been found that only a small proportion of these people have had the required strength, both physical and mental, to meet the competition which has developed in the field of small business. And so the United Hebrew Charities has realized that the Self-Support Department, as it has been constituted, is no longer an answer to the problem of the handicapped. For this reason, in 1925, the society undertook a study of the handicapped with the hope that within the next few years, the Self-Support Department might be expanded to meet their problems, and to serve the society generally in their care.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The principles on which the society originally undertook to extend vocational guidance to young people in families under care were explained in the preceding chapter. Since then the work of this department has been extended, and many more children

now receive the benefit of its advice and information. Study of conditions in schools and in trades has enabled the society to be helpful in suggesting courses of study to young people. Psychological tests are now given to many children, and this assists the society to outline programs for them; the cooperation of the family is, of course, obtained in any plan or suggestion. The educational facilities of the city are thoroughly explained to children—a much-needed service. Children of ability are nearly always encouraged to continue their schooling, and scholarships to the amount of over $15,000 each year are given by the society assisted by the Junior Society of Temple Emanu-El and other organizations. Information about the characteristics of different trades and ways of earning a living is given, and young people are helped to select occupations. When they have gone to work, representatives of the department keep in touch with them and help them to make progress. The department is one of general assistance and help in this field. It aids the case workers in their contact with families and treatment of situations calling for decisions in regard to school and work.

HOME ECONOMICS AND DIETETICS

It was at the beginning of the reorganization period that the Department of Home Economics and Dietetics came into existence. Its first task was to change the method of giving material relief to families. In the days of doles, the practice was common among charitable societies of giving an occasional sum of money to families in destitute circumstances. Later groceries were sent periodically; or small sums of

money were provided at stated intervals. In this way an attempt was made to take care of the material needs of families more regularly, but it lacked the basis of a real understanding of those needs.

And so with the advent of the Home Economics Department, the family budget was introduced. This meant that allowances to families instead of being arbitrarily fixed, were based on careful estimates of the family's needs and were established in accordance with the requirements of the adults and children of different ages and sexes in the family. It will be remembered that the Home Economics Department was established at the end of the war, when the cost of living was at its highest. The Department's studies of food costs and living expenses begun at that time continue to this day and assure the society that its family budgets are in accordance with actual living costs. This service, too, is given through consultation with the society's workers.

In time the Department became useful to the workers in other ways. It concerned itself with home making and problems of household management, with nutrition and its relation to the general health of the family. Cooking classes for mothers were organized, and later groups of undernourished children and their mothers were brought together under medical supervision for training in health and food habits. In 1920, began the experiment of sending some of these undernourished children away to the country for the whole summer. Life in camp made wholesome food and healthful ways of living attractive to the children, so that when they came home they were ready to carry on these ways in which their mothers,

in their absence, had been schooled. Camp Rainbow has now become a permanent part of the program of the society.

MENTAL HYGIENE

With the acceptance of new purposes and widening conceptions of the organization's work, there came the recognition of serious problems of behavior and mental disturbances, difficult of understanding and treatment. In engaging the services of a trained psychiatric worker in 1921, the society took a valuable step forward. Through her the staff were helped to recognize those problems in their early stages and to utilize the city's slowly developing resources for their treatment. Psychiatric clinics, however, were limited, and for persons who spoke no English were frequently not to be had. In 1924 a psychiatrist was added to the staff of the Mental Hygiene Department. Through his clinics and the consultant services of the department, acute mental troubles have received more adequate attention, and in addition the society has been helped to understand the situations which arise in families or in the lives of individuals, which have their origin in less obvious mental disturbances.

SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY CHANGES

By the time these changes in the structure of the United Hebrew Charities had been completed, the Jewish community had assumed new aspects. It will be remembered that the war brought a sudden check to immigration, which the restrictive Congressional legislation of 1924 has prolonged. Even before the war, however, the recently arrived immigrant formed a small proportion of the organization's families. It

is no longer true that "the problem of the care of the Jewish poor in New York is essentially the problem of the immigrant," as a committee of this organization once wrote. Today the families who have lived in the United States for less than one year, for example, are relatively few among the society's clients, whereas once they were numerous. In 1891, when the munificence of Baron de Hirsch was amazing the world, 54 per cent of the families helped by the society were residents here for one year, or less, and in 1925 the percentage was one and one-half per cent. In 1901 the percentage was 32 and by 1910 it had fallen to 3.2. So that the decline here, which had occurred gradually, is not to be attributed to the war. In 1925 the situation was almost the reverse of that in 1891, for at the earlier time 54 per cent of the families had lived here for less than a year, and in 1925 the percentage who had lived here for ten years or longer was 58.

The reasons for this are not difficult to discover. Not only has the character of Jewish immigration changed considerably, later arrivals being people who were seeking economic and social advancement rather than refuge from anti-Semitic disturbances, the object of earlier comers, but today there is a larger, more settled, more prosperous and more diversified community for them to merge into. Then, too, the exclusion of immigrants without resources is stricter today, and organizations for the reception of incoming aliens are better organized and doing more effective work.

NEW PURPOSES FORMULATED

Eventually, in this changing community, the United Hebrew Charities no longer needed to have as

its chief concern the emergencies produced by the influx of a large group of immigrants. Many of the newcomers had soon found their places in the life of the community. We have seen, in the earlier chapters, how the organization had provided for those who were not so successful, helping them to find work, caring for their health, and meeting other conspicuous needs. However, its most important and direct service for many years was the giving of material assistance, and by this service it was known.

As time went on, the society's work assumed less and less of an emergency character; families came to it with other needs than those which required material assistance. It became conscious of the multitude of difficulties which menace normal family life and the society's responsibility in that connection. Finally, with other family care agencies it came to believe that all of its services should lead to one important end, the maintenance and development of the life of the family in its broadest sense.

Certain essentials are necessary to the realization of this end. The society has become convinced that the family, to take its place in the community and to live normally, must have a home in which healthful, comfortable living is possible; that it must have food which will sustain and promote bodily health; clothing which not only meets material needs, but which provides a measure of expression of individual taste as well; educational opportunity in accordance with ability to make use of that opportunity; work which is congenial and offers progress; recreation for all of the members of the family; some means for spiritual development and growth; and with all of these,

happy and wholesome relationships within the family group.

It is obvious that if these essentials are to be found for the family, they must first be found for its individual members. This requires of the worker, before all else, an understanding of the individual, his capacities and his hopes, his successes and his failures in his relation to the world about him. Next there must be the ability, with this understanding as a basis, to lead the individual toward the development of his fullest capacity for life. If each of its members can be helped toward this equipment for his personal life which includes his relationships to his family and the world outside, the family as a group will then be ready to face not only its present difficulties but also those which the future holds for it.

THE JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION

It is for such leadership that the United Hebrew Charities has been strengthening its structure, and equipping its staff with all of the skill which training could add to the qualities of which social workers must be made. In 1922 this staff petitioned the Board of Trustees to change the name of the society. They believed that their opportunities for effective leadership were hampered by the limitations of the old name. Their experience had taught them that again and again, families were reluctant to approach a "charitable" organization when they would have welcomed the services of an agency whose name expressed the real meaning of this new function of the United Hebrew Charities.

The petition came to the Board of Trustees just one

hundred years after the organization of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. It was not until early in 1926 that a charter was granted to the Jewish Social Service Association. The United Hebrew Charities gave way in the fifty-second year of its existence, to a society built on the foundation of all that was good in this half century of service, and chartered by the state, "through service, relief of material need and the coordination of community resources, to conserve and develop normal family life in the Jewish community."