

THE "JEWISH SETTLEMENT" AGAIN

Walter L. Solomon, Cleveland

In view of the preponderance of opinion at Memphis as expressed both publicly and privately in favor of "Judaizing the Jewish Settlement," a minority protest must seem Lilliputian. But a single voice raised in sincerity is worth while, and I venture to take up the gauntlet for the American settlement.

The very term "Jewish Settlement" seems to me a misnomer, for the settlement, as I conceive it, can be neither Jewish nor Christian, Mohammedan nor Buddhist. As was reiterated at the sessions of the National Federation of Settlements, the chain of Wesleyan Missions have no moral right to the name of settlements nor can the Catholic agencies in several cities legitimately employ the term. No one would place the Young Men's Christian Associations among the settlements, nor the Young Men's Hebrew Associations, splendid as their work may be. Why, then, insist on including in the settlement category similar institutions whose field of labor lies among the more recent immigrants and extends to children as well as adults, girls as well as boys. The German or Irish, Hungarian or Polish settlement is likewise unknown, and the "Jewish" settlement, conceived of as a racial or national group, is equally an anomaly. The work of these institutions may parallel in many particulars the activities of the settlement; but the Jewish social center, as it seems to me, such an agency might properly be called, lacks the essential, intangible something that gives the settlement its distinction.

No one can or would deny the value of social work among Jews by Jews. But to the minority it is rather distressing to find the roots of such efforts fast in a hardening deposit of religious or racial limitation. To some of us it would seem that we had caught but a reflection of the spirit of America if we consciously and deliberately surround the eager young souls clamoring to understand American ideals and American democracy with the atmosphere of any other ideals or of any other civilization. Of course, tender loyalty to the traditions of their own people would be a part of

these new ideals; for only on the basis of what one has been can one aspire to new dignities; and an American Jew is more truly American when he interprets the ideals of his new country in terms of the traditions of his fathers.

If our object as Jewish social workers is to inspire Jewish young people with the hope of a resurrection of a Jewish nation, then, it seems to me, the cry of "Jewishness in Jewish institutions" is legitimate. But if we conceive our function rather as a contribution toward preparation of Jewish immigrants and their children for participation in the best that is America, then I plead for the increase in Jewish neighborhoods of settlements. These real settlements will be Jewish in their reverence for all that is fine in the religious and social heritage of their people, but in their outlook on secular problems will be dominated by American ideals.

Send in Your Names

The following additional men and women have signified their intention to come to the Baltimore Conference:

R. A. Sonn, Atlanta.
I. Irving Lipsitch, New York.
Dr. Samuel Joseph, New York.
Mr. and Mrs. Stern, Philadelphia.
Leon Volmer, New Orleans.
Julia Rosenberg, New York.

EXCHANGE BUREAU

An Agricultural College graduate, experienced farmer, able teacher, organizer and overseer, desires institutional work. Efficient boys' worker. A cultured man of ideas who is capable of effective service. Character and abilities will stand the closest scrutiny. Farm or estate management acceptable. Terms liberal. Agriculturist, care of JEWISH CHARITIES.

Delegates desiring information in regard to the local arrangements of the Baltimore Convention should address "Jewish Charities."

PROCEEDINGS

Eighth Biennial Session National Conference of Jewish Charities
Memphis, May 6-8, 1914

FRIDAY MORNING—Continued

Advanced Settlement Work—Cont.

Discussion—Continued

It was moved to postpone discussion of Mr. Billikopf's paper to the afternoon.

It was moved and seconded that the discussion of Mr. Billikopf's paper take place without postponement.

It was moved that fifteen minutes be spent in immediate discussion.

MR. PEDOTT: This is the only chance the social workers have had for discussion.

A DELEGATE: I believe there is more value in discussion than in read papers.

ANOTHER DELEGATE: Why not have a round-table?

THE CHAIRMAN: A motion is pending to limit the discussion to fifteen minutes.

The motion was put and carried.

Moved and seconded that individual discussion be limited to three minutes.

Carried.

MR. SULZBERGER: Mr. Bernheimer stated that the religious school and synagogue have failed to reach the element with which we are dealing, but that the settlement and the neighborhood house have reached them. I consider this a gem of untruth, and want to impress it on your minds as such. It is the kind of thing the thoughtless and superficial very rapidly accept as true, and it is because it is fundamentally untrue that I want to speak of it.

When Jerusalem was destroyed it was not a social settlement that was founded; it was a school, and it is the school that has kept Judaism alive for two thousand years, while it is within my memory that the first social settlement was established. There can be no greater fundamental blunder than to imagine that the social settlement is a substitute for the school or that it can do what the school has done.

Mr. Billikopf has pointed the way, and Mr. Bernheimer has emphasized it when he

says he has 125 Jewish children in his settlement school, and right at the side of it the Talmud Torah has 2800. If his institution was not a failure he would have the 2800.

MR. BERNHEIMER: What I said must be taken in connection with the general presentation. I repeat that the *Cheder*, the *schul* and the synagogue have not reached these people in the same way that the settlements have. Anybody who knows of the development of the reform synagogue to the present time knows it has not held the young people; that from our point of view it has not done anything to develop them in character or in Jewish knowledge or ideals. The same is true of the orthodox synagogue. I do not assume that the settlement is a substitute for any other institution, but that it is a co-operating influence and has its place which cannot be taken by any other organization. I say most emphatically that if we take the concept of the settlement as an organization or agency trying to develop the young people and imposing on them the Jewish ideals we are serving a Jewish purpose, and this I say the Jewish schools have failed to do. There may be some Jewish schools developing in the direction of some of the settlement features, and settlements taking on Jewish educational features, and I think the time is coming when they will intertwine their efforts, but I insist that at present these older organizations, whether orthodox or reformed, have failed in the sense of reaching the people and making them realize their Jewish consciousness.

So far as our institution is concerned, I would say the Talmud Torah performs its functions in its own way, and we do not quarrel with its methods, but because we are willing to have a smaller number in our Hebrew classes I do not consider that we are a failure. If the numbers that we have for all our purposes—gymnasium, club meetings, social functions, lectures on Jewish subjects Friday nights, Yiddish lectures