

President Paul Kellogg

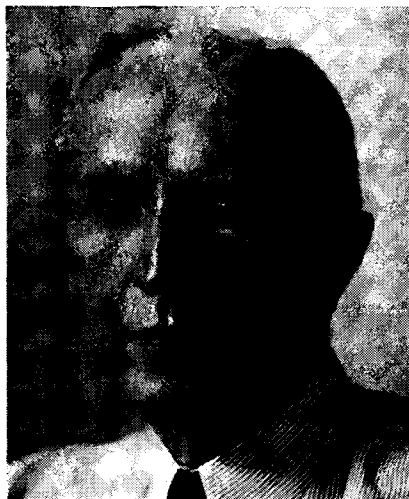
Buffalo and Points West

THIRTY years ago, beginning at our Buffalo Conference in 1909 and coming to a head in Cleveland in 1912, social workers boxed the compass of industrial hazards. Perhaps for the first time they correlated the principle of the industrial minimum not only with a living wage but with hours, with housing, with safety and health, with child labor; not only with workmen's compensation but with old age pensions and unemployment insurance.

Principles and standards then forecast are being hammered out today through the Wages and Hours Administration, our industrial hygiene bureaus, the assistance, insurance and compensation services of the Social Security Act.

These were objectives a Republican Roosevelt wanted mightily to come back and work for. They are objectives a Democratic Roosevelt has helped mightily to set in motion. These are objectives which social workers, close to the ground, have espoused for thirty years and more, along with their next of kin—the applied economists, the health experts; along with progressive lawyers and business men and labor leaders and citizens.

There are Democrats and Republicans among us; those to the right; those to the left. In all the discussion of these moves, it is about time for all of us as social workers to disasso-



Bachrach

ciate them in our minds from the misapprehension that they are merely offsprings of the New Deal; time to look at them in the light of our own history; time to consider them on their merits as constructive measures for human conservation. And it is high time to get the people in our communities and our states to see them straight in the same way.

We can share in the enthusiasm of our Democratic friends—for it was their imaginative party leadership, with the shove of the depression behind it, that put government to work as a friendly agency of the general welfare and set these moves going that had long been stuck in the grim preoccupation of the war years; the gilded pre-occupations of the boom. We can share with our Republican friends not a few of their criticisms of particular measures, for these are new models for social enterprise, new frames, new engines. But when anyone of any party talks of degrading or ditching them, they can be called neither Republican nor Democratic. They are reactionary.

They are going back on moves that give new underpinnings to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness among us. They would revert to the days when we did not know any better; when we failed to see that the future of our growing industrialism, no less than that of our citizenship, hangs on the protection and well-being, the chance and competence to live and to work, the earning power and the purchasing power of our people. Their counsels are like advocating that we should let the Mississippi bottomlands lapse again into swamps; and for the rest, let desert creep over the prairie states.

Pittsburgh, and Frank Bancroft of New York, the meeting was characterized by "outraged reason" through which ran a strong undercurrent of emotion. Resolutions forwarded to Congress were framed as appeals rather than demands, couched in calm, deliberate phrases which, however, carried the full weight of the social workers' faith in the WPA and NYA programs and their certainty of what curtailment would mean to helpless human beings.

On Friday evening the whole conference gathered again in the flag-draped auditorium to hear Josephine Wilkins of Atlanta, president of the Georgia League of Women Voters and a member of the Citizens' Fact Finding Committee of Georgia, and Paul J. Kern, president of the Municipal Civil Service Commission, New York City. Miss Wilkins told how everyday lay organizations in her state, churches, service clubs, fraternal orders, went to work collectively to find out what was the matter with Georgia, to establish facts out of which may grow a new economic and social program. A charming speaker, Miss Wilkins pointed out that the whole venture has a broad

meaning, "a bearing on democracy itself." Mr. Kern took his audience for a tour of the spoils system and a look at the shambles it creates. Civil service, he holds, while not perfect, is the only way to protect the public welfare services from marauding politicians.

At the final conference session, a luncheon on Saturday, the speaker was Dr. Alice M. Masaryk, former head of the Czechoslovakia Red Cross and first president of the International Conference of Social Work, who had come to America especially for this meeting. Dr. Masaryk spoke with deep feeling. On those grave lips the word democracy had poignant meaning—moving her audience to the tribute of a moment of utter silence as she concluded, "An eternal soul cannot be indifferent to an eternal soul. A spiritually free nation cannot be indifferent to a nation spiritually free. Good speed. Good luck. God bless you."

While not, strictly speaking, a general session of the conference the "laymen's dinner" on Tuesday night rose by its own merits to practically that status. Planned for board members and other persons concerned unprofession-

ally with social work and social agencies, the professionals heard about it and if they did not actually pack the meeting they certainly packed into it—right to the doors. Edward L. Ryerson, Jr., president of the Community Fund of Chicago, Inc., spoke of amateurs and professionals, rejecting the attitude that any program in social work, whether new or old, public or private, does not need the active participation of laymen. Sidney Hollander of Baltimore, president of the National Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, gave his audience the witty side of his tongue in his address, "Confessions of a Board Member," but his caustic wit did not conceal his concern over conditions as they exist today or soften his charge to his fellow board members that in not facing their full obligation "we are failing our agencies; we are failing ourselves."

THE SECTION AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS that fill the morning hours every day are the backbone of the conference. Here is where people look for the particular things they want out of the conference; here are the papers and dis-

cussions that afford a real measure of the content of the whole program. Many months before the Buffalo meeting, conference headquarters had gathered suggestions from the field at large on what the social workers themselves actually wanted when they came to Buffalo; what they wanted to hear talked about at the conference and by whom; what they wanted to talk about themselves. The result of this inquiry, shaped up and dovetailed by committees in each section, was clearly evident at Buffalo. The programs had content and timeliness, with less of esoteric theory than in certain other years and more of the realities of social work practice. Younger workers, and there were many of them present, found what they wanted and liked it. As a result there was much less straggling in and out of meetings, much less "shopping around."

Clearly it was practice that the social workers at this conference wanted, light and leading in making principles work whatever the setting. That is why, or so it appeared to these observers, that the case work and group work sections drew their large attendance. Many younger workers seemed to take these sections like an institute with a particularly bright constellation of leaders, and worked at them through the entire week.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any to drop in a handful of figures on the attendance at various meetings as an index of currents of interest in relation to topics and speakers. Estimates were made by the supervisors assigned by the conference management to each building where meetings were held. A word is in order about these supervisors. They were men of the Forty-Plus Club, formed under the wing of the New York State Employment Service, all of whom in the past had held well paid executive positions. Their services had much to do with the generally smooth functioning of the meetings and afforded the conference management for the first time an estimate of attendance at widely scattered sessions.

Coming back now to figures, picked more or less at random from reports of the first day's sessions, held at various hours:

Problems of Interstate Migration.....	170
Social Work Publicity Council.....	230
Community Organization.....	300
National Federation of Settlements.....	300
Public Welfare Administration.....	300
Education for Social Work.....	500
Social Aspects of Children's Institutions..	520
Trade Unions in Social Work.....	540
Child Welfare League of America.....	550
Group Work.....	550
Rural Social Work.....	700
Social Action.....	900
Case Work.....	1000

This proportion of attendance to subject matter seemed to run pretty consistently through the whole week, though occasionally a figure went skyrocketing, for example at the Tuesday afternoon meeting of the American Associa-



Mayor La Guardia of New York, arriving at the Buffalo airport, gives his address a last look before turning it over to the press represented by Frank Murphy, assistant, and Harold P. Levy, director of the conference press service

"**W**E are a great democracy now. We have established, safely and fundamentally, individual freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion, and that is our great boast to the whole world—it is our greatest heritage. But, my friends, you can't enjoy these

freedoms on an empty stomach. And there is no use boasting about our freedom unless we provide economic security for all the people so that they have the fullest measure of enjoyment of the freedom that our form of government can give to every individual."—FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA

tion of Psychiatric Social Workers which drew close to 1200.

It is obviously impossible in this overall chronicle of the events of conference week to do justice to the section and committee programs. Indeed it is only possible here to indicate their content with some allusion to a few of the contributions that aroused particular interest—and this with full and regretful realization that many equally notable contributions must be passed over.

THE SOCIAL CASE WORK SECTION, chairman, Prof. Florence R. Day of Western Reserve University, Cleveland, came out of its first meeting with the boast that any paper presented anywhere the rest of the week would have to "go some" to surpass in closely reasoned philosophy and realistic application that of Dorothy C. Kahn of Philadelphia on "Democratic Principles and Public Assistance." Right up to the end of the conference the case workers maintained that their section had produced the "best paper of the week," though they admitted that there were quite a few others that they had not heard. Miss Kahn, a case worker seasoned in private and public practice, spoke less of the techniques than of the spiritual

aspects of the case work process and its functioning in relation to people who have undergone "the spiritual disfranchisement of dependency." Out of deep insight and long experience came her observation; "There is no more challenging social disability or emotional situation than that of loss of self-maintenance."

On Tuesday this section divided itself into five groups for specialized discussion of case work techniques. After coming together again for a general meeting on the ways in which the case worker, through everyday contacts, can learn to know the child, his thoughts and his feelings, the section again broke up into five groups largely concerned with reports of specific experience in the field of case work. At another session papers were presented in response to a demand from the field for material illustrating good case work practice, what it is, how it is done, and an evaluation of results. The final session considered the adolescent, the stresses he is under and efforts to deal with him in direct and indirect treatment. Notable for the humor overlaying its shrewd observations was the talk recounting the experiences of an educator given by Fritz Redl, education adviser of the

Cranbrook School, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

BUFFALO WILL GO DOWN AS A FOUR-star show as far as group workers are concerned. To begin with, it marked the rounding out of the fifth year, as a full-fledged member of the conference, of the Social Group Work Section, chairman, Lucy P. Carner, Chicago. And as it enters upon its sixth year its first chairman, Grace L. Coyle, becomes the president of the conference itself.

Three major themes were developed in the program of the section: the democratic, the scientific, and the educational process in group work.

High point in the conference for many delegates was Eduard C. Lindeman's profoundly moving address in which he undertook to create a set of criteria by which to test both our pretensions and our performance as agencies and as agents of democracy. The fact that he was unable to complete his analysis and that the dinner meeting of the American Association for the Study of Group Work at which he continued to develop his theme was a "standing room only," added further testimony to the social significance of his statement. Theory, however, by no means held the

center of the stage. At least four carefully documented descriptions of group work in which a deliberate attempt was made to square practice with the democratic ideal were reviewed before well attended meetings.

A theme that recurred at frequent intervals in this section turned on the discovery and development of a scientific basis for group work. Most talked of here was the brisk, staccato treatment which Dan Adler, of the Child Welfare Research Station of the University of Iowa, accorded "An Experimental Approach to Group Work—Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-faire Social Atmospheres." The way in which this almost severe scientific study harmonized with the earlier theme on democracy lent added significance to its findings. Throughout the entire program the influence of the social scientist was everywhere apparent—in the discussion of the indigenous leader; of grouping practices and of the narrative record; and particularly in the two discussions, under the leadership of Neva R. Deardorff of New York, devoted to "Some Experiences in Evaluating Group Work Agencies."

Accorded first place at the first session of the section's program was a con-

sideration of the problems of the young adult when Owen R. Lovejoy of the American Youth Commission and Joseph Cadden of the American Youth Congress outlined the problem and Clara A. Kaiser of New York and Neva L. Boyd of Northwestern University described experiences in working with this age group.

Of special significance too was emphasis upon the use of the arts in group work. At no conference program in the last five years has this received such major attention. One of the sessions, held jointly with the National Conference of International Institutes and the National Institute of Immigrant Welfare, afforded a wide consideration of the role of different cultural backgrounds in the creative arts and crafts programs of agencies engaged in group work.

A realistic analysis was made of the "Possibilities and Limitations of Vocational Education and Guidance in a Group Work Agency." With schools and state employment service agencies assuming larger responsibilities in this area, the need for redefinition and rethinking of group work responsibilities and relationships in this field has become acute.

The several sessions and the annual

The Call of Our Great Traditions

SOLOMON LOWENSTEIN, *past president, National Conference of Social Work; executive vice-president Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies of New York City.*

Surely one of the fundamental conditions of the American system is tolerance and understanding of the differences among men, the creation of an opportunity for the free expression and development of these differences so long as they contribute to a common whole beneficial to all, a respect for the individual soul of man as embodied in our Bill of Rights and in our Constitution as a whole. . . . When the immigration of Jews into this country began . . . they brought with them a tradition of liberty and equality, of communal ideals and social justice comparable and in effect in largest degree similar to or identical with the great tradition of America. . . .

They were Americans without any hyphenization of any kind. As rapidly as the law would permit, they could with wholehearted sincerity accept the privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship. . . . The overwhelming majority of Jews, as I believe to be true of the overwhelming majority of Americans generally, are devoted to the democratic ideals and will make their contribution to this country's political life through the form of democratic expression. . . .

GEORGE N. SHUSTER, *associate editor, The Commonweal, Glenbrook, Conn.*

I am impelled to believe that the permanent substance of our minorities is religious. It is because Catholic, Protestant and Jew clung to views of life endowed with permanent sacredness that the decision to defend views at all could awaken enthusiasm and summon forth resolution. They have quarreled plentifully and angrily; they have hurled fierce

names at each other in the name of God; they have indulged in mutual slander and vituperation. But at bottom all were agreed upon the right to believe, and therefore that right survived. . . .

A Catholic cannot do otherwise than be sincerely grateful to the Protestant for the uncompromising defense of religious freedom which he undertook; for without that defense, Catholics would never have been able to hold their ground. And every Jew understands that the principal guarantees of his continued liberation is the fact that Christians must of necessity keep the state untainted by attempts to subordinate the worship of God to the whims of majorities or minorities.

FLORENCE E. ALLEN, *judge, U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Cleveland, Ohio.*

In all departments of life, faith is the essential element. . . . If the living traditions of America are to be a vital force in our government, we must believe in the ideals which they embody. Today . . . the political philosophy has not yet been constructed which enables (the) Constitution to be the living essence of our government. Politically, the American people are as a church which has a creed but no faith. . . . In the Bill of Rights for the first time in history, and to a degree never before stated, freedom of inquiry was guaranteed to every resident within our borders. . . . It has been enforced in ringing declarations in the Supreme Court, but in the lower tribunals and in the hearts of the people the First Amendment has not been properly enshrined. Never until police officers, mayors, legislatures, governors, and plain citizens understand and believe in the First Amendment as an article of faith, will it be actually as well as in the words of the instrument, the supreme law of the land.