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**MS-53: Moses J. Gries Papers, 1850-1934 (bulk 1890-1930).**

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“Charity,” 1904 June 5.

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I desire to make a brief report concerning the recent convention of the National Conference of Jewish Charities held in the city of New York. The Conference was organized in the city of Chicago, four years ago. It convened in Detroit two years ago. Every important Jewish community has affiliated as a member of the Conference. About 100 delegates were present - representative, capable men and women, workers in the cause of charity. Their unselfish service without pay and without unusual glory or honor merits a full measure of praise.

New York City contains the largest Jewish community. The Jews of New York outnumber the whole population of Cleveland. . The New York Jewish societies and institutions are splendid monuments to Jewish charity.

Various important problems were presented to the Conference. The chief problem is with the thousands of emigrants who come every year, and who, we Jews are determined, shall never become a burden to city or state or nation. This problem should not belong to New York and the seaport towns. It is an obligation upon every Jew in the land.

Interesting and impressive was my visit to Ellis Island, the new Castle Garden. There I saw how the immigrant is received, examined, inspected, cross-questioned and finally permitted to land or detained for further examination - perhaps for deportation. Who shall tell the story of the immigrant, - his feelings undergoing this severe ordeal? Who has power to picture the happy and the sad reunion of families long separated - the wife and the children coming to meet the husband who has founded a home for them in the new world?

What does America ask of the immigrant? A healthy body and a healthy mind, that he shall not be criminal and not diseased - that he shall not be penniless, that he shall be able to work - in order that he may become an honest working citizen of the nation.

We Jews must teach our Jewish immigrants that our government is a government of justice, that its rulers are in the main upright and just. We must teach

a true understanding of liberty - liberty not license, liberty under law.

Impressive the salute to the flag by immigrant boys and girls scarcely able to understand the meaning of the words they speak. How quickly they learn. I heard boys and girls in this land but two and three weeks reading English sentences. Splendid the work of institutions like the Educational Alliance which so quickly prepares these immigrant children to join our American army in the public schools and so wisely helps the immigrant elders to play their part in our American life.

I was particularly impressed with the training and technical schools for young men and young women. Russian Jews are artisans in Russia. An analysis of our immigration statistics shows a surprisingly large number of Jewish artisans. In this land, too often by necessity they have been compelled to seek other means for a livelihood. It was a pleasure to know that hundreds were upon the waiting lists, eager to be taught a trade, to become skilled workers with the hand. These are useful institutions which prepare young men and young women for a definite work in life and equip them for increased usefulness and increased earning capacity.

Am I my brother's keeper? The answer should be an unhesitating and an unqualified "Yes." Yes, you are your brother's keeper - your brother every human being and especially every Jew in distress needing a brother's help. Jew must be for Jew, as long as any nation is against the Jew. This is not clannishness, this is human interest and human duty. If every family cared for its own the world would be far better and far happier. Jews historically have cared for their own that none should ever be a burden to any state or nation.

Jewish philanthropy is world-wide. The Jew has a natural interest in his unfortunate brothers. I desire to emphasize especially the noble spirit and the noble work of our American Jewish communities during the past quarter of a century. Great burden has been cheerfully borne. Great labors have been willingly wrought. Hundreds of thousands of unfortunate Jews, exiled from their native land, have been helped to a home under the flag of freedom. The injustice and the inhumanity of Russia touch us very quickly. Many thousands every year seek refuge in our land. Like brothers let us welcome them with help and the hand of fellowship.