## A Family Case Work Program with the Institutionalized

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ITH the ever increasing numbers of commit-ments to correctional schools and penal institutions, it becomes obvious that our social case work program with those in and released from these institutions is lagging.

The ramifications of social case work with the institutionalized are legion. With a view to stimulate further thinking along these lines the following outline of a program of activities for a social case work agency with those in and released from public institutions is presented.

In the case of the offender, even the most vindictive opponent of assistance to the released prisoner will agree that something more than a ten-dollar-bill, a suit of prison-made clothes and perhaps transportation to some part of the state is all that is necessary to insure a satisfactory post-institutional adjustment. Our penal philosophy is based on the concept that all prisoners must be returned to society at some time and that society will not be protected unless they come into the community more efficient, more honest and less criminal than when they entered the institution.

An agency that has for its case work program those in and released from the penal institutions-state prisons, the county and city jails, has cases referred to it in much the same way as those in the state hospitals come to it. There are obviously no clinical histories available from institutions of this kind. Therefore, the staffs of these institutions should be made aware of the work of the particular agency so that cases may be referred directly by the staffs of the institutions. Another effective way is to post notices in the entry rooms or "tanks" of the jails or prisons informing those incarcerated that they may avail themselves of the service. Still another way is by checking at periodic intervals, say weekly, the records of the jail to secure the names of those not already referred. Frequently men already in the institutions will refer some of the newcomers.

Generally speaking, contact with the families of

hospitals. In this connection it is well to mention that the agency working with those in penal institutions and their families must always be on its guard and so interpret its work so as not to lead its clients to believe that it can prevent the arrest of or secure the release of anyone who so desires. Fundamentally, its concern shall be to secure the best possible and most advisable disposition of the case from a social work point of view. In other words, it will stress the social factors, the causes of crime rather than the crime itself. It will emphasize the non-legal factors rather than the provisions of the Penal Code which prescribes the sentences on the basis of the crime. In this connection the agency will prepare histories in the cases of those applying for probation so that the report of the social agency may become part of the Probation Officer's report and finally part of the court record. If probation is denied and the person is sentenced to a prison, this report will then become part of the "narrative" by which data the Board of Prison Terms and Paroles is guided in determining the definite sentence of the offender. One can infer that a program of this kind paves the way for a more socialized point of view on the part of our courts and other law enforcement bodies. To them is brought a larger picture of all the factors involved in the offense and how they influence the offender.

Another project of an agency working with the institutionalized is the collection of a mass of material on the mentally ill, the mentally deficient, the adult and juvenile delinquent and the drug addict, which if properly recorded should be exceedingly valuable for research purposes.

While it is a commonplace to say that the progress that a social work agency will make with its program is to a large extent dependent upon the degree of public support accorded it, this is particularly true of an agency working with the institutionalized.

## Recreation as Preventive Treatment

By Ida Oppenheimer

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NDER the auspices of the Lower East Side Community Council, in New York, a group of interested agencies recently decided that a study of the whole question of social clubs would undoubtedly reveal some valuable facts. A recreational worker social clubs are not vicious; they are a normal expresassigned on a C. W. S. project was put on the survey-an intelligent young Italian, a graduate of a Teachers' Training School with a Master's degree from Teachers College. With him was assigned a young Jewish law student.

The Lower East Side was divided into three areas and a census of unsupervised social clubs was taken in the first area extending from Houston to 14th Streets and from the Bowery to the East River, where about 50 clubs were found. Of these 23 were predominantly Jewish, 9 Italian, 2 Polish, 6 mixed with a sprinkling of Irish, the remaining 10 as yet undetermined. Most of these clubs were for boys only but here and there a co-ed club was found. The age range for boys was from 16 to 25, but most of the boys are 19 or over; the girls were much younger, ranging in age from 15 to 18. In all but the co-ed clubs, girls are welcome and since there are many less girls than boys, appearance at one of the club's functions is tantamount to an introduction. The average membership of the boys' clubs is 27, the co-ed clubs having a much smaller membership. It is estimated that the total membership of these clubs is over 2,000 and that they command a following of somewhere in the neighborhood of between 4,000 and 5,000.

Most of the clubs are situated in basements; some occupy the first or second floors of remodeled private houses and occasionally a store is used. Their quarters usually consist of one large and two smaller rooms decorated to give the club atmosphere. The lighting is as a rule extremely poor, lights often being dimmed almost to the point of keeping the place in darkness but the recent attention of the Crime Prevention Bureau has, to a great extent, improved this situation. A lighted sign with the club's name often adorns the front of the building. A piano, a radio, and victrola, a table, settee and a few chairs usually comprise the furniture. Nearly every club owns a pingpong table and some have pool tables. The average rental in this area is \$40 a month.

the main traffic arteries or in streets just off them. There seems to be a keen desire for clubs to be near each other and vie with one another in their limited activities.

Contrary to common belief, most unsupervised sion on the part of young people in a congested neighborhood of a desire for a meeting place of their own. They want more dances and longer ones than most settlements offer; they want the use of a room whenever they want it, which is impossible in most agencies where there are many more groups than rooms; they object to the set program under adult guidance which most organizations present. The result is cramped undesirable quarters, the only thing they can afford and with which they are by no means satisfied. Many of the young people have had settlement contact and they appreciate and want its physical advantages, but on their own terms.

One group of the clubs is made up of settlement boys for whom the program does not offer wide enough scope. They leave the settlement as a unit, set up as a club and develop a program whose motivation is a desire to do something for the community. They often have excellent programs such as forums and discussion groups and many times do what they feel lies in their power to help others, often to the despair of regularly organized agencies. Many clubs in this group are helpful in rehabilitating those of their members or other boys in the neighborhood who have been in trouble and many a worker has found them an invaluable aid in solving the problems of boys on parole or probation.

There is, however, a group of clubs which is definitely anti-social. Not only are their quarters meeting places for undesirable characters but their activities take on the nature of a racket. The quarters in which dances take place two or three nights a week are, to all intents and purposes, public dance halls. As many as 300 have been found packed in what was once the parlor and back-parlor of an old-fashioned private house. Because they cannot charge admission without a license, they have a hat-check fee which ranges from 10 to 35 cents or whatever the traffic will bear. There is no accounting of their funds and a small group often corners the proceeds which provide a good liveli-The clubs were found concentrated largely along hood. We have even had word of a club which had