

child in question. Such application is assigned for study to a field worker.

3. If a client has come to ask for the placement of a child and the Bureau has rendered no other than advisory or referred service, a second or third application from the same client may lead us to take on the case.

4. The Bureau accepts applications for temporary placement where no other social service agency is interested in the family. Again this does not imply that the child is actually placed in a temporary shelter. The outcome may be that the J.S.S.A.'s Visiting Housekeeper Service is called upon to make unnecessary the child's removal from the home during the mother's illness, or some other emergency.

5. Although the Bureau does not accept children for placement on the grounds of delinquency, it very often takes on cases of children presenting such serious problems as a Court might define as problems of delinquency. These are for the most part referred to the Bureau by child guidance clinics, hospitals, or other social service agencies, that have been treating the children while in their own homes, and now feel that placement in a controlled environment is necessary.

When applications come to the Bureau from case work agencies such as the Family Welfare Society, their acceptance for Bureau's service, or their rejection, are dependent upon a conference with the agency referring the case, and upon the possibility or impossibility of the Bureau's carrying out the other agency's wishes. Possibility is limited by the facilities offered by the community.

The Bureau makes a point of telling clients, during the first or second interview, of the resources of the community which might be called on to obviate the need for placement. The client may not have heard of the services of a family-care agency, of Visiting Housekeeper Service, of Big Brother or Big Sister Service, and when such facilities are described to him he may accept them much more readily than the idea of placement of the child.

Frequently, even when the client is well informed and knows the community's facilities, yet in the course of his first interview, in which the implications of placements, its possible effects upon a child and others in the family, have been described to him, he may realize that placement is not what he wants.

The Bureau today does not take on applications from families residing in Brooklyn, but refers them back to Brooklyn agencies. One of the consequences is that although the J.C.C.B. is supposedly the intake agency for the H.O.A., the H.S.G.S. and the H.H.I., yet it has almost no control over the admission of these children from Brooklyn.

If the first interviewer has accepted a case for study by the Bureau, and the case has been assigned to a field worker, this does not mean that the outcome of the study will invariably be the placement of the child in question. Frequently we are able, in the course of our relationship with the client, to help him to do his own thinking along new channels.

Sometimes, in the course of the relationship with the social worker, the client sees that he can solve his problem independently, though at first the difficulties seemed insurmountable; sometimes it is necessary to refer him for Legal Aid, Family Welfare Service, to a child guidance clinic, or elsewhere.

Whether an agency such as the J.C.C.B. should be organized in other communities that have not yet developed a satisfactory intake service, depends on so many factors that a positive or negative answer would not apply generally.

No matter what the facts in each city may be, our answer to the question "Which agency is to do a particular piece of work?" will always be conditioned by our theories of what constitutes an ideal set-up. For example, we may think that logically all case work should radiate from the family welfare society; or that intake into child-care agencies should be wholly controlled by the public agency that subsidizes the private institutions. But even if we all agreed as to the ideal set-up, we should split asunder in practice, for some of us evaluate a plan according to how it works; and others according to the logic of the relations of this plan to another plan.

Since I conceive of social work today as mainly a job of amelioration in behalf of as many individuals as possible, I cannot fit my concept into a rigid theory of organization that would apply everywhere. I have no faith that any set-up of social work is good for all merely because it is logical. I believe compromises must be made with theory in order to compensate for defects in the present social system, and in our agencies, and for character defects of men in power.

On the other hand, I admit that there might be developments in a complex community that might lead first to the establishment of a Bureau similar to the J.C.C.B., and ultimately to the transfer of that Bureau's functions to some other agency. But again, though we may agree on this, yet in a given case we might not be of one accord, because some of us believe in concentration of power in a few organizations; and others, like myself, are convinced that one of the greatest evils, one that blocks the way of helpfulness of man to man, is the power of one man over the fate of many. I am terrified by the power of social service agencies. I do

not like to see one organization, one executive, one board, cover an entire field to the logical limits, no matter how high-minded and socially-minded the group may be. I do not believe in any kind of even limited fascism. Living in a world full of confusion, I admit I am guided in my judgments as to community organization, by what I think will be of greatest help in

a given community to those who need help; not by what in a completely socialized society would be a proper set-up.

In my opinion, only in a perfectly organized society would a theoretically perfect system of social work result in the greatest good to the greatest number, and then undoubtedly in a perfectly organized society the character of social work would change.

## As It Is Done by the Child Care Agency

By LUBA A. JOFFE

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IN THE consideration of admissions to dependent children's agencies, we find ourselves with two main objectives. The first is to analyze the whole situation of the child so that we understand his needs (social, physical and emotional)—to understand his own conception and feeling about his relationship to those with whom he has been most closely associated; to know what these people think their relationship to him to be; to understand, if we can, what these relationships really are and to estimate what they offer or what they may offer in the future.

Our second objective is to so organize ourselves as to keep in the hands of those who will actually give the child care, those finest threads of understanding, and to do this even while preserving for the parent and the child a maximum of privacy and minimum of case-workers and varieties of caseworker concepts. In other words, how quickly and with how little adverse experience can the child go from its own home situation to its final child care plan, that plan selected from the community's facilities which can fulfill more of his needs than any other plan would.

It is possible, even in a very large city, to create a division of labor with regard to intake between the family agency and the children's agencies themselves, the family agency taking for study those situations where first interview indicates a possible hopeful family prognosis; the children's agencies taking for study those situations which from first interview indicate care away from home—where there is no mother functioning or where there is a request for placement away from home. The division of labor can be further clarified by a case conference committee made up of representatives of each children's agency and the family agency, functioning to review initial interviews in some cases, and subsequent to some study in others.

Since casework concepts are being recognized as having a fundamental basis common to all types of casework rather than particular to the functional division the presumption would be that the children's worker could study the whole situation intensively and with the first view toward the preservation of the original family unit for the child wherever possible. Should a family apply directly to a children's agency for placement and should study of the family by the institution caseworker or child placement worker reveal resources within the group which could be developed, or indicate a development on the part of the family unit to carry its own problem, the same caseworker could carry the family to the point of independence to avoid placement or transfer for continued supervision to the family agency. With our greater understanding of human beings, type situations formerly used as a basis for functional division of labor no longer present themselves as valid. A continuous interplay between the family and the various children's agencies, with a flexibility for the best interpretation on individual cases can be the only basis for the best service to families coming to us. This division in intake could eventually mean transfer of some families from family agency to children's or from one children's agency to another, but would certainly eliminate any transfer between agencies for a large proportion of children and their families.

The situation of children both of whose parents are dead or permanently incapacitated is fairly easily recognizable at first interview as indicating the need of a child-care agency—sometimes even the particular child-care agency. How important would it be for a child-care agency to contact a family even for the first interview? Does treatment sometimes begin in that first interview? Who but the person who has done the actual study of the original situation should deter-

mine who is to be the thread of security for the children through the breaking period and into their new experience? Where a relative cannot or should not carry that thread, has not the caseworker a continuous function in relation to the children throughout the period of study and into the final child-care plan—right into the particular cottage, the special institution group or into the foster home?

Children's agencies have sometimes felt that there is an advantage in having the separation of the child from its own home carried through outside of the child-care agency associations, so that the break has been made and the child perhaps more ready to accept the next step without adverse associations with the agency itself. Children's agencies who have done their own intake do not consider this an advantage especially as against the values of the caseworker knowing and understanding the child well enough to select the person to be associated or disassociated with the break. Some institutions have come to feel that continuous case-work contact is necessary during the period of care irrespective of the short period of therapy which the child in the institution or the parent on the outside

might have been given. It would seem too that a continuous plan for casework by the child-care agency itself is more necessary now, during this period when casework concepts and philosophies are changing so rapidly and when it must mean only confusion and additional inter-agency misunderstandings to have one group do the intake study, another handle the child during care and still a third do after-care.

The suggestion is that each child-care agency do its own intake study or enter the situation as soon after the first application as possible. Those agencies in large cities who are doing their own intake studies are not swamped by a large number of applications. Their answer is repeatedly, "The community gets to know what children we take."

An inter-agency case conference committee (always including those caseworkers handling the particular children) can further emphasize agency care lines, determining which agency could best serve particular children and arranging transfer from the agency which had taken the first interview or first study to that agency selected by the group—that transfer to take place as early in the intake study as possible.

## As It Is Done by the Regional Child Care Agency

By HARRY L. GINSBERG

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AN INSTITUTION which attempts to serve a large region is confronted with a unique problem in its intake policy. Obviously if the institution were to attempt to make its own case work investigation, the cost would be high. The institution must, therefore, to a great extent depend upon the various communities which it serves for the investigation and the information required to build up a sound intake policy. Some of the communities have well-organized social work organizations which are competent to perform this task. Others are lacking in such facilities. A uniform policy is therefore hardly possible.

The Jewish Children's Home in New Orleans has an agreement with the District Grand Lodge of the B'nai B'rith which permits the lodges to make application to our Home for the admission of children. These applications are reviewed by a committee of the Board in cooperation with the Superintendent of the Home, and in those communities where there is an organized federation, the application is referred to them for investigation. Where there is no such federation, some-

times the Rabbi, sometimes some prominent citizens are asked to make the investigation for us. In all cases the decision rests with the committee and the Board.

This is a policy of intake which may be improved upon. Some communities have a better conception of their responsibilities than others. There is a tendency upon the part of some to get rid of a problem quickly by asking for the admission of a child rather than go through the more difficult task of solving the family problem in a more humane way. In some cases, financial assistance to the surviving mother might keep the family together. In other cases, relatives might be induced to accept the child and give it a decent private home surrounding and rearing. It takes more initiative and work to make such adjustments than it does to make formal application for the admission of a child to an institution. These are factors well recognized by us but difficult to correct, because the same communities which send children to our Home also give us financial support, and antagonisms and misunderstandings must be avoided.

A regional institution is confronted with this problem, that whereas it serves a large area, the methods and policies are controlled by a local group. The outside community tends to feel that in making a request of a regional institution, it is dealing with an outside organization, and a difference of opinion is often interpreted as a refusal to help that community out of its difficulties.

There has been a trend towards the establishment of local agencies for local work and I believe that this trend should be encouraged. Where an institution serves an area beyond the confines of municipality, the smaller the area served, the better and more scientific work that institution can do. An institution such

as ours, which covers seven states, is not in a position to do its own social work investigation; much less any extended family adjustment service. It must, therefore, often accept children whose problems can well be handled in a better way. It might be interesting to discuss the question of the advisability of having a regional institution. They may possibly serve a good purpose for some communities which are too small to do their own work, and must depend upon the larger communities to come to their assistance. It might be well then, to discuss the practical question of how large an area a regional institution may serve, and still be in a position to do a good piece of social work.

## Social Workers and Social Work in Jewish Child Caring Institutions

By LEONARD W. MAYO

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THIS is a joint project. Last winter, Benjamin Winfield, Executive Director of the Jewish Children's Home, Newark, N. J., and chairman of the Program Committee of this section, invited Mr. Hopkirk of the Child Welfare League of America to speak on this topic, *Social Workers and Social Work in the Jewish Child Caring Institutions*. Mr. Hopkirk accepted but was forced to withdraw early in May due to urgent engagements on the west coast. However, he did assist your committee in drawing up a questionnaire to be used as the basis of our discussion at this meeting, and in that way, made his contribution to this paper. Many of you now in the room have already contributed through your replies to the questionnaire. A graduate student of the New York School of Social Work, Miss Lois Russell summarized the replies, Miss Edith Mozorosky of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research was helpful in furnishing general orientation and it fell to my lot to correlate all this material and write the paper.

The questionnaires were mailed to forty Jewish institutions caring for dependent children. Thirty-one replies were received—an excellent return. The replies covered a wide geographical area for the west coast, middle west, south, middle Atlantic sections and New England were all represented by sixteen different states. The population of the institutions and the yearly budgets were not given. I judge however, that

the institutions range in size from those caring for 200 to 75 children or less, with the majority perhaps having a population of approximately 100.

The questionnaire method of gathering information has certain limitations as you know. However, some factors stand out rather clearly. In February 1932 a rather complete study was made of the status of Jewish Child Caring Institutions, and in a sense this study is a follow-up of certain sections of the earlier study.

The first question is:

I. *Have you made changes since February 1932 in your pre-admission examinations or your service on admissions and discharges?*

To summarize the replies to this question: These institutions which have them found it necessary to make but few changes in their social work personnel during the depression, but in only nine institutions or 29% have definite progressive steps been taken in the improvement of pre-admission, admission and discharge services. These improvements include the use of a central children's bureau in two instances, the enlargement of the institution staff in another, addition of psychological examination in two cases and a closer tie-up with other community agencies.

II. *Have your rules or policies in admissions or discharges changed since February 1932?*

This relates very closely, of course, to the first ques-