

The Future of Social Work in the Jewish Community Center; The Case of the Disinclined Student*

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A Hen is an Egg's Way of Laying Another Egg—Samuel Butler

The Problem of New Recruits

ANY occupational group is effective only to the extent its practitioners are. To defend successfully its mandate or to extend its domain, it must recruit individuals who can take the occupation beyond its parameters; who have the capacities for innovation beyond those of its current practitioners.

But effectiveness is measured in terms of goal achievement. Thus the effectiveness of Jewish Center workers is measurable only in terms of the goal achievements of Jewish community centers. Presumably, if the goals of the Center field were clear, we could embark on a recruitment program aimed at attracting creative, socially dedicated and Jewishly committed youth.

We do attempt to attract such staff, but it is my feeling that in looking to schools of social work for our professional staff, we delude ourselves. This is not to suggest that social work students do not possess many of the characteristics we seek. Many students entering schools of social work today are more intelligent, better prepared academically, more apt to be self-starters and independent, more committed to social work's values and ethical imperatives, more concerned with structural and systems change than with

problem amelioration, more activist in their orientations, than at almost any other period. But so are students in law and in medical schools.

A successful match between an individual considering an occupation and the occupational group requires some coincidence of: (1) the individual's reward-value hierarchy and the amounts and types of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards offered by the occupation; (2) the individual's social role characteristics and the social requirements of the occupation; (3) the individual's technical qualifications and the functional requirements of the occupation; and (4) the individual social objectives and the goals of the occupation.

Do students in schools of social work possess the characteristics needed for successful practice in Jewish community centers? Should Centers continue to recruit new staff from among social work graduates? The answer requires an examination of today's students and an examination of the characteristics and objectives of Jewish community centers. This paper will address itself almost exclusively to the examination of today's students.

Sources of Data

Most of the data in this paper was compiled in the fall of 1966 under the auspice of the Council on Social Work Education's Community Organization Curriculum Development Project. A self-administered questionnaire was sent

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to all entering students in all accredited schools of social work in the United States and Canada. Almost 95 percent of the questionnaires were returned. Of the 5,206 useable questionnaires the investigator eliminated all but 2,766 students. The resultant study population included only those students in community organization, group work or case-work at those schools in which all three sequences were offered. Later comparisons with findings on students at other schools suggest the findings herein reported hold true for all Jewish students and for all group workers.

The Use of Comparative Analysis

The research method used is known as comparative analysis.¹ Students in each concentration were first compared in terms of their demographic characteristics. The comparison was then extended to work experiences, educational preparation, social participation, influences on career choice, motivations for

¹ Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Chicago: Alden Publishing Company, 1967.

TABLE 1: STUDENTS IN EACH CONCENTRATION BY SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (percent)*

	All Students	Caseworkers	Group-Workers	Community Organizers
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	38.9	-4.7	+7.8	+18.4
Female	61.1	+4.7	-7.8	-18.4
<i>Race</i>				
Black	13.0	-1.1	-1.8	+ 7.4
White	87.0	+1.1	+1.8	- 7.4
<i>API</i>				
High	16.0	-1.0	+2.7	+ 2.7
Medium	49.9	+1.2	-2.9	- 3.9
Low	34.1	-0.2	+0.2	+ 1.2
<i>Religion</i>				
Catholic	22.6	+1.2	-5.6	- 1.8
Jewish	22.5	-0.9	+6.0	- 0.5
Protestant	54.9	-0.3	-0.4	+ 2.3
<i>SES</i>				
Upper	4.1	+0.5	-1.4	- 1.5
Upper Middle	21.1	-0.3	+0.5	+ 1.1
Middle Middle	34.9	+0.5	+0.4	- 3.0
Lower Middle	25.9	-0.2	+0.2	+ 0.5
Lower	14.1	-0.6	+0.2	+ 2.9
<i>Age</i>				
Under 23	28.6	-0.7	+8.7	- 3.3
23-29	46.0	-0.1	-2.9	+ 3.0
30 and over	25.4	+0.8	-5.8	+ 0.3
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Single	57.4	-0.6	+6.3	- 2.0
Married	42.6	+0.6	-6.3	+ 2.0
	N=2766			

* Statistical measures were not calculated—the investigator's concern was in direction of differences rather than in strength of difference or relationship.

entering the profession, and professional aspirations.

While the gross findings were revealing, it was quite obvious that more lay beneath the surface. Summary data showed, for example, that CO students did not differ collectively from their colleagues in group work and casework in terms of religious affiliation, socio-economic background or undergraduate academic performance. Yet over twenty percent of the CO students were Black (as against less than ten percent in the other methods). Negro students generally came from lower socio-economic backgrounds and had low academic performance scores. Almost all were Protestant. Were Jewish students therefore over-represented among the Whites? Was it possible that different subgroups in each concentration had different characteristics and that some of these subgroups spanned the boundaries of the concentrations?

By taking core relationships (e.g., between race and sex, or sex and method), and then running these relationships progressively against every other variable, all conceivable relationships were explored. It was then possible to generate new conceptual categories of students directly from the empirical data. These new categories, in turn, were useful in explaining the differences between students in each method.

A summary of these conceptual categories will be presented together with their implications for social work in general and Jewish communal services in particular. First, however, it may be useful to summarize the differences between group workers and students in other categories, and between Jewish students and their non-Jewish colleagues.

Students: Who Are They?

Group workers accounted for 12.3 percent of the study population, community

organizers for 13.7 percent, and caseworkers for 74 percent. Jews made up 22.5 percent of all students (roughly the same proportion as Catholics). Among the group workers, Jews are considerably over-represented (28.5 percent) and Catholics under-represented (17 percent). At first glance Jews seem to be under-represented in CO, however the disproportion of Negroes in community organization (20.4 percent as compared with 12.9 percent in casework and 11.2 percent in group work) distorts the overall picture. If all Black students were controlled for, Jews would account for 1 out of 3 group workers, 1 out of 4 caseworkers, and 1 out of 4 community organizers.

Two out of five students are male. Men account for one-third of the caseworkers, 47 percent of the group workers and 57 percent of the CO students. Among the Jewish students, however, only 28.4 percent are men. Jewish women are particularly over-represented in casework (four females to every one Jewish male), but make up only 57.5 percent of the Jewish community organizers and 46.5 of the Jewish group work students (see Table 2). The high proportion of men in CO is explained in part by the fact that nearly all the Black community organizers are male. Jews are the only religious or ethnic group in which more women than men choose community organization. On the other hand, they represent the highest proportion of men choosing group work. They have the lowest proportion of men choosing casework.

Examination of the other demographic variables on Tables 1 and 2, and looking behind the gross percentages, yields some other interesting differences as well. Group workers are younger than their colleagues; almost 2 out of 5 being under 23, as compared to 1 out of 4 of all other students. Jews, too, are younger than

TABLE 2: STUDENTS IN EACH CONCENTRATION BY RELIGION AND SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Caseworkers			Group Workers			Community Organizers											
	Catholic		Jewish		Protestant		Catholic		Jewish		Protestant							
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N						
<i>Sex</i>																		
Male	42.4	(193)	20.8	(86)	34.4	(359)	48.1	(25)	53.5	(46)	43.0	(71)	61.4	(43)	42.5	(31)	61.5	(118)
Female	57.6	(262)	79.2	(327)	65.6	(686)	51.9	(27)	46.5	(40)	57.0	(94)	38.6	(27)	57.5	(42)	38.5	(74)
<i>Race</i>																		
Negro	8.6	(39)	0.2	(1)	18.8	(196)	7.7	(4)	..	..	19.3	(32)	7.2	(5)	..	..	35.4	(68)
White	91.4	(416)	99.8	(414)	81.2	(849)	92.3	(48)	100.0	(86)	80.7	(134)	92.8	(64)	100.0	(74)	64.6	(124)
<i>API</i>																		
High	11.8	(54)	21.0	(87)	13.8	(145)	15.4	(8)	19.5	(17)	19.3	(32)	10.0	(7)	29.7	(22)	15.6	(30)
Medium	50.2	(220)	55.9	(232)	49.1	(515)	40.4	(21)	51.7	(45)	44.0	(73)	51.4	(36)	50.0	(37)	42.7	(82)
Low	37.9	(173)	23.1	(96)	37.0	(388)	44.2	(23)	28.7	(25)	36.7	(61)	38.6	(27)	20.3	(15)	41.7	(80)
<i>Socio-Economic Position</i>																		
Upper	4.0	(18)	3.9	(16)	5.2	(54)	..	..	1.2	(1)	4.2	(7)	..	..	4.1	(3)	4.2	(8)
Upper Middle	14.5	(66)	29.9	(123)	20.4	(213)	13.7	(7)	29.8	(25)	20.5	(34)	19.1	(13)	25.7	(19)	20.3	(39)
Middle Middle	37.6	(171)	41.0	(169)	32.8	(342)	34.6	(18)	36.9	(31)	34.3	(57)	29.4	(20)	39.2	(29)	29.2	(56)
Low Middle	30.8	(140)	19.7	(81)	25.5	(266)	30.8	(16)	26.2	(22)	26.5	(44)	32.4	(22)	25.7	(19)	25.5	(49)
Lower	13.2	(60)	5.6	(23)	16.2	(169)	21.2	(11)	6.0	(5)	14.5	(24)	19.1	(13)	4.1	(3)	20.8	(40)
<i>Age</i>																		
Under 23	25.1	(114)	46.6	(193)	23.1	(241)	34.6	(18)	54.0	(47)	28.9	(48)	24.3	(17)	37.8	(28)	23.0	(44)
23 to 29	50.1	(228)	35.7	(148)	47.2	(493)	46.2	(24)	33.3	(29)	45.8	(76)	52.9	(37)	36.5	(27)	48.2	(92)
30 and over	24.8	(113)	17.6	(73)	29.8	(311)	19.2	(10)	12.7	(11)	25.3	(42)	22.9	(16)	25.7	(19)	28.8	(56)
<i>Marital Status</i>																		
Single	68.8	(307)	64.1	(259)	49.5	(485)	80.8	(42)	77.1	(64)	51.3	(79)	71.0	(49)	62.9	(44)	58.4	(88)
Married	31.2	(139)	35.9	(145)	50.5	(495)	19.2	(10)	22.9	(19)	48.7	(75)	29.0	(20)	37.1	(26)	51.6	(94)

others. In fact 54 percent of the Jews in group work are under 23 (the figures are 47 percent in casework and 38 percent in CO).

Younger students have better Academic Performance Indices than others. The API is a measure reflecting both a student's grade point average and the selectivity of his undergraduate school. Jews have higher API's than non-Jews, Catholics the lowest. Females have higher API's than men; whites score better than blacks. Among the Jewish students, the highest academic performance indices are found among the younger females in community organization, almost 80 percent of whom had high API ratings. Younger Jewish men do almost as well. By contrast, only 40 percent of the Jewish women and 20 percent of the men in group work had high API's. This is an important finding. It suggests that while Jews continue to outdistance others in terms of academic preparation, the brightest of them are no longer going into group work.

API correlates very highly with socioeconomic background as well. Thus, as one might expect, many CO students come from upper-middle-class families. This is most true for young white Protestants and Jews, especially the women. Both Blacks and Catholics tend to come from less advantaged backgrounds.

Jewish students were twice as likely as Catholics and one and one half times as likely as Protestants to come from upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. The percentages were roughly 15 percent for Catholics, 30 percent for Jews and 20 percent for Protestants. Among the Jews there were no differences within the methods.

To recapitulate: Jewish students tend to be somewhat younger than others, to have done better academically as undergraduates, and to reflect middle- and upper-middle-income backgrounds. Jew-

ish group workers are by and large younger than any other sizeable ethnic or religious group.

The brightest, although not necessarily the youngest, of the Jewish students tend to choose community organization. Why is this so? Has the growth of community organization sequences drawn students from group work? Would these students have chosen to enter a group work concentration if CO were not an active possibility?

Timing of and Influence on Career Choice

Almost half of the Protestant and Catholic group workers and two-thirds of the Jewish group workers entered graduate school within one year or less of receiving the baccalaureate degree. While about half of all students decided on social work after leaving undergraduate school, three out of five group workers had made their decision prior to graduation. This was especially true for Jewish group workers, 70 percent of whom decided during their undergraduate tenure. Community organization students, on the other hand, were more likely to decide on a social work career after graduation (see Table 3).

Just as significantly, a sizeable number of younger and brighter CO students, Jews among them, had chosen their method before having chosen social work, and in some cases, prior to even being aware of social work as a career possibility. By the time they decided on social work, moreover, 90 percent of the community organizers were equally aware of the other two methods, while only 78 percent of the group workers and barely half of the caseworkers were.

Influence of Work Experience on Occupational Choice

Slightly over 80 percent of all students were influenced in their career decisions

TABLE 3: TIMING OF CAREER DECISION AND AWARENESS OF METHOD OPTIONS (percent)

	All Students	Caseworkers	Group-Workers	Community Organizers
<i>Timing of Occupational Choice</i>				
Prior to College	4.8	+0.5	+ 0.3	- 3.4
During College	45.6	-0.5	+ 6.7	- 2.8
After College	48.5	+0.2	- 6.2	+ 4.3
Don't Remember	1.0	-0.1	- 0.7	+ 1.0
<i>Timing of Method Choice</i>				
Prior to Social Work	4.9	-1.0	+ 0.9	+ 4.1
At Same Time	29.0	+2.3	- 7.6	- 5.6
After Soc. Wk.	60.9	-0.2	+ 2.8	- 2.6
After Admission	5.3	-1.2	- 3.9	- 2.9
<i>Awareness of Other Methods</i>				
Equally	60.2	-8.6	+18.0	+30.2
Less	38.9	+8.5	- 7.7	-29.8
Not At All	0.9	+0.1	- 0.3	- 0.4
N=2766				

by a work experience (full time, part time, summer or volunteer) in a social work setting. This was true of 86.5 percent of all Jewish students and 93.1 percent of Jewish group workers.

A number of occupational theorists

have suggested that such trial work experiences give the novice a chance to test himself out, to see if he likes the work and can do it well, to do something worthwhile while putting off final or more permanent career decisions. More-

TABLE 4: STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCES (percent)

Work Experiences	All Students	Caseworkers	Group-Workers	Community Organizers
*Full or Part-Time in All Settings	93.4	93.3	94.3	93.2
Full-Time in All S.W. Settings	59.8	61.6	53.0	55.6
Full-Time in Selected S.W. Settings				
Public Assistance	28.2	31.0	16.0	23.9
Group Services	6.8	3.3	19.4	14.5
Com. Planning	3.5	1.7	1.5	14.8
Full-Time in Great Society Programs	21.5	16.8	26.2	42.9
Peace Corps	3.0	1.7	4.5	8.6
VISTA	1.6	1.2	1.8	3.1
CAP	9.4	6.9	10.2	22.1
Other OEO	7.6	7.0	9.6	9.1
N=2766				

* Students may have worked in more than one setting.

over, while playing an important game, in personal terms the game is not quite for keeps; he can afford the luxury of mistakes. Predictably, the nature of that work experience may have much to do with the particular career track he selects.

The influence of working in such Great Society Programs as VISTA, the Peace Corps, Community Action Agencies and such other OEO Programs as Headstart, the Job Corps, the Teacher's Corps, Upward Bound, etc. cannot be over-emphasized. Almost 9 out of every 10 community organization students with fulltime work experiences had been employed in one of these agencies (42.9 percent of all CO students). In contrast, 26.2 percent of the group workers and only 16.8 percent of the caseworkers had been employed or served as volunteers in a Great Society Program. Thirty-five caseworkers, thirty-three community organizers and fifteen group workers had been in the Peace Corps. Of these, 18 were Jewish (7 in casework, 5 in group work and 6 in community organization).

Fifty-one students had been in VISTA (29 in casework, 7 in group work and 15 in CO). Only four (2 of them in group work) were Jewish. Proportionately CO students were twice as likely to have been in VISTA and three times as likely to have served in the Peace Corps than other students. One out of four community organizers had community action program work experiences as against one out of ten for each of the other methods. Jewish group workers were no more likely than others to have worked in community action agencies, but they were more apt to have worked in other OEO programs.

There is little doubt that these work experiences were decisive in influencing students to enter school. Almost none of the Peace Corps returnees has even considered social work prior to voluntary

service. Very few of the others had decided on social work prior to their work in anti-poverty programs. The likelihood is that they would not have entered the profession had these career testing employment possibilities not been available.

This suggests that a number of caseworkers, a somewhat larger number of group workers, and a considerably larger number of community organizers found their way into social work schools through newer routes. The proportion of students with such backgrounds who enter casework or group work concentrations in schools that have no CO sequences does not vary significantly from their proportion in the population herein reported. CO sequences, rather than drawing students away from group work or casework, may be attracting this "new breed"² of social work student in disproportionate numbers.

Group workers continue to exceed others in the extent to which they have worked in settings that offer group services. Many group work students, in fact, report that not only their work experiences in group work settings, but their experiences as members in groups sponsored by such agencies were factors in career choice.

Other Influences on Occupational Choice

Students in each concentration reported a number of other influences on their occupational choice. Two out of five students credited the influence of friends or relatives in social work or of taking a particular college course or sequence of courses. CO students were twice as prone to cite their participation in college or community organizations

² John L. Erlich and John M. Riley, "A New Breed of Social Worker?" *Renewal*, January-February, 1968.

and friends or relatives active in community projects as influential. This is not surprising.

CO students are at least one and one half times as active in organizations as are group workers, who in turn are more active than caseworkers. Whereas one out of every three community organizers frequently undertook leadership roles, only one out of four group workers and one out of five caseworkers did. Community organizers were almost twice as active as their peers in civil rights groups and in political organizations. More than one-third of all social work students active in labor unions were in community organization (a factor attributed in part to the work experiences of older CO students).

Organizational participation is highly correlated with the degree of social commitment and identification with the goals of social work evidenced by CO students. For group workers, such participation is more highly correlated with their search for self-fulfillment and their enjoyment in working with people. Jewish group workers are less likely to have been organizationally active than non-Jewish group workers, while conversely, Jewish community organizers were more active than non-Jews.

Jewish students were not influenced in career choice by religious leaders (1.1 percent of the Jewish group workers as against 17.3 percent of the Catholic group workers and 11.4 percent of the Protestant group workers). Quite obviously this has to do with the separation of Jewish communal services from religious auspices. One might hazard two other guesses as well: (1) Jewish religious leaders if they are of any influence on the occupational choices of Jewish youth, would tend to direct them towards the rabbinate or Jewish education; (2) Jewish students who tend to be most clearly identified with religious institutions do

not perceive social work as an occupational expression of their religious identity and feelings. As might be expected, Jewish group workers are twice as apt to be influenced by membership or recipient experiences in recreational programs. One half of all group workers had had such experience. Almost all the Jewish group workers had. The influence of Jewish camps and Jewish community centers is strongly suggested.

Whereas in general 51 percent of all students had come across social work recruitment pamphlets (it was almost 59 percent for group work students), 72.4 percent of the Jewish group workers reported having read such pamphlets. Jewish students and group workers, however, were no more apt than others to have read books on social work careers. Community organizers were least apt to have done so.

Reasons for Entering a School of Social Work and for Choice of Concentration

Community organizers were almost twice as likely to give only altruistic reasons for their choice of social work (e.g. "I want to contribute to individuals and to society") and to find the profession "interesting and exciting." The younger the CO student, the more affluent his family background, the more likely he is to give altruistic reasons for choosing the profession. Most other students gave combinations of altruistic and personal reasons for their occupational choices, such as their enjoyment of working with people, their finding that social work is interesting and exciting, their assessment of success possibilities in social work, and so on.

Two out of three group workers, as compared to three out of four caseworkers, chose their concentration because of its "close fit" with their personalities. One out of two community or-

ganizers chose CO because of their identification with social work's goals. Jews in general tend to cite the goals of social work as factors in choice of method more frequently than do other students.

Aspirations and Future Plans

The first month or so of graduate school may not be the best time to query students about their future plans. Nevertheless, almost all students had some notions and were able to discuss their aspirations. Jewish students do not vary significantly from others. More than three-fourths expect to enter employment in direct practice positions. Less than one out of five expect to continue at that level through the peak of their careers. One out of five caseworkers, one out of four group workers and one out of three community organizers expect to eventually become administrators. Many group workers (one out of nine) expect to become teachers. In this case, only, do Jews predominate, one out of seven envisioning academic careers.

Jews also have very different notions about where they will be employed upon graduation. About 10 percent of all students expected federal government employment (this is 23 percent for CO students) and 56 percent expected to be employed in local government (only 42 percent of the group workers and community organizers). Twenty-four percent looked to local non-sectarian services (32 percent of the group workers), and 11 percent to local sectarian services (16 percent of the group workers). Among the Jewish group workers 14 percent expected federal employment, 29 percent local government employment, 35 percent local non-sectarian employment and 22 percent local sectarian employment. One might assume that the latter would be in Jewish community

centers. This is optimistic, however; the actual number of these Jewish group workers was only 11. If the proportion held for group work students at the schools not studied, this would net a figure of 18 or 19 who at entrance expected employment in a sectarian agency. This is far from an optimistic forecast for Jewish Centers.

It is quite evident that a large number of Jewish and non-Jewish students may enter the profession through newer routes and are motivated and have aspirations different from those of their colleagues. A large proportion would not have come to social work at all were it not for specialized work experiences. These students have many characteristics in common. Younger and brighter students with Peace Corps and VISTA work experiences, for example, are quite similar in their motivations and aspirations whether in group work, casework or community organization. While demographic variables, work and school experiences, organizational participation, motivations and aspirations all conspire to direct students into different concentrations, they also suggest differentiation within concentrations. Not all group work students are alike, nor are all caseworkers or community organizers.

Alternative Groupings of Students

The use of comparative analytic methods made it possible to generate new conceptual categories of students. Cutting across method divisions, these categories are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Such major sub-groups as "social actionists," "vocationalists," "professionals," "activist retreads," "vocationalists-retreads," and "ex-homemakers," are quite useful in explaining the differences among students in each concentration.

Social actionists are a "new breed" in

social work. Though a distinct minority in group work and casework, they are found disproportionately in CO sequences. These students are generally white, Protestant or Jewish, tend to be in their early and mid-twenties, have high API's, and come from upper-middle-class families. Identifying strongly with social work's goals, they indicate predominantly altruistic reasons for having entered the profession. Most are personally active in community life, primarily in civil rights and political organizations.

Almost all these students had work experience in social agencies and related settings. More than half had been in the Peace Corps, in VISTA or in other OEO programs. Like their fellow social work students, they majored in the social sciences, but were more likely to choose political science and economics. At least one out of five social actionist males were humanities majors. Social actionists were undecided about social work until after college graduation. They tended to use their post-college years for trial work experiences. It is unlikely that many would have otherwise come to social work. Social actionists are among the most vocal, the most critical about the shortcomings of their education, are more apt to suggest changes, and most likely to take responsibility for the direction of their own academic programs.

In sharp contrast, *vocationalists* decided on social work as a career possibility quite early, and remained loyal to their first choice throughout college. These students rarely considered other occupations, were less concerned about the profession's goals than with achieving some sense of personal and occupational satisfaction. Many look at social work as a means of upward mobility, a way of achieving prestige and economic security. In their early twenties, vocationalists are generally females from

lower socio-economic backgrounds who attended the least selective colleges. Most have mediocre to low academic performance ratings. Vocationalists are predominantly Protestant with a good sprinkling of Catholics. They include a disproportionate number of Negro females. They also include some of the Jewish males in group work.

Professionalists are composed of students with many of the same characteristics. Most, however, come from middle- and upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. Including fewer Negroes and Catholics, this group also includes a somewhat larger proportion of students with medium API's. They, too, considered social work early and tended to be primarily concerned with self-fulfillment than in fulfilling the social goals of the profession. Like the vocationalists, professionalists tend to be narrow in their interests and their consideration of other occupational possibilities. Neither the vocationalists nor the professionalists were active in organizational life. Neither were influenced in their decision by others active in the community. Both were likely to be psychology, sociology or social welfare majors. With the exception that they were active in organizational life, (but not as much as social actionists), there are a great many Jewish group workers who possess these characteristics.

Several sub-groups of students might be lumped into a general category of "occupational retreads." These are older students, many with considerable work experience, who return to school so as to advance themselves occupationally or to shift into new career lines.

Activist-retreads resemble the social actionists. Active in organizational life, many were in the union movement, others were in the forefront of civil rights and political activities. A great many Negro males, especially those in CO, fit

this category. Unlike social actionists, however, activist-retreads tend to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and do not have distinctive undergraduate academic records. Perhaps because of their age and experience, these students are more likely than social actionists to aspire to administrative positions upon graduation. Activist-retreads may have had a variety of work experiences outside of social welfare prior to admission to professional schools. Some were unable for financial reasons to start their professional education earlier. Some may have tried other occupations, such as the clergy or business, only to find these not fully satisfactory in terms of their life goals. There are almost no Jews among them, certainly no Jewish group workers.

Like the actionist-retreads, vocationalist-retreads entered schools of social work in their thirties or later. Unlike them, however, many vocationalist-retreads considered social work years earlier but were unable to enter schools because of poor academic backgrounds and the press of economic needs. Their work histories were almost exclusively in social agencies, especially public assistance or child welfare. At the point of having reached some modicum of occupational success, they may have recognized the need for further professional training. Many entered the school of social work with the intent of returning to their former employing agencies. There are no Jews among them.

A group of *ex-homemakers* in their mid-thirties may have returned to school at the point they felt no longer needed at home for child rearing and house-keeping purposes. Apparently very much encouraged by their spouses, these women tended to come from middle and upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. A great many are Jewish. Most attended good colleges, did well academically, and give as their primary

reasons for returning to school the desire to help people and to fulfill themselves. Most were organizationally active. While the majority chose to enter casework concentrations, about one out of five chose community organization, and one out of six entered group work.

These sub-groups are not dispersed equally within each concentration. Social actionists are found disproportionately among community organizers, as are activist-retreads and to a certain extent ex-homemakers. Vocationalists are found almost exclusively in casework sequences. Professionalists are found predominantly in group work, although they are also over-represented in casework. Vocationalist-retreads are found primarily in casework. Some may be in community organization, and a smattering in group work. Ex-homemakers will be found in all three concentrations, somewhat disproportionately in casework and community organization. Jewish men and women tend to be professionalists. Older women ex-homemakers. A large proportion of the men are professionalists.

Implications for Jewish Community Centers

Students and Jewish Center Work

I am strongly urged to say no more. There is always the temptation in reporting research, to present the empirical findings and to allow the audience to draw its own conclusions. In a sense, these data do speak for themselves. They say a great deal about the recruitment potential for Jewish center work in schools of social work.

Optimists among us reading or listening to this report will laud the presence of a "new breed" of social actionist students. These students, however, will not enter Jewish community center work. There is nothing in their backgrounds

or interests, nor anything in their aspirations that would suggest the Jewish community as a locus for either self-fulfillment or realization of their social goals.

The reasons why Jewish students enter schools of social work are no more related to their Jewish commitments than are the reasons of students who enter medical schools, engineering departments, law schools or graduate literature programs. It is true that taking the population of this country as a whole, Jews are over-represented in schools of social work. Twenty-two and one half percent of all students in the study population were Jewish, 22.6 percent were Catholic, and 54.9 percent were Protestant. Jewish students, however, tend to bunch up in those schools in metropolitan areas. About 50 percent of the student bodies at Columbia, Hunter and NYU are Jewish. One-third of the students are Jewish at such schools as Rutgers, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, UCLA, Chicago, Adelphi and Boston University.

In point of fact, well over half of the Jewish students in schools of social work come from the New York Metropolitan area. This would suggest that Jewish students are not significantly over-represented in other areas of the country. Social work schools draw proportionately smaller percentages of Jewish students than do other graduate programs. Frequently the percentage of Jews in undergraduate programs is considerably higher than their percentage in schools of social work at their host universities.

In my own teaching experiences, I have not found any Jewish students who seek professional education as a way of fulfilling their Jewish commitments. In this respect they are no different from other Whites, but they do differ from a number of Black students. While the percentage of black students in schools of social work has declined since 1960, their percentage in CO sequences and

among the social actionists and actionist-retreads is quite high. Many have entered schools of social work with the specific intent of returning and providing service to the Black community. Those who do not enter schools with such commitments are soon socialized by their Black brethren.

Leonard Fein, Assistant Director of the Harvard-MIT Joint Center for the Study of Urban Problems, suggests that the overt expression of Black pride may kindle a similar resurgence of Jewish ethnic identity. I hope he is right, but I see very little evidence of it. My own observations are closer to those expressed by Nathan Glazer in a recent issue of *Commentary* magazine.

Many Jewish students identify strongly with their Black friends in their struggle for emancipation, but identification frequently results in self-flagellation and may go as far as acceptance of Black anti-Semitism as fair and legitimate.

Schools of Social Work and Jewish Centers

The process of socialization at schools of social work, whether effectuated by the faculty, the curriculum, or fellow students, does little to enhance a student's Jewish identification or commitments. More than likely its force is spent in the opposite direction. In an extraordinarily provocative and wide-ranging paper, Bertram Gold and Arnulf Pins as far back as 1962 suggested that social work education does no more than form a base for training.³ They suggested a number of strategies for re-establishing two-way channels with schools, pre-employment orientation programs for new workers, and staff development programs within Jewish commu-

³ Bertram H. Gold and Arnulf Pins, "Effective Preparation for Jewish Center Work," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1962.

nity centers. Many words have been spoken at conferences since then. We have heard it argued that the Jewish community center is in the mainstream of social work. In 1964 Herman Eigen suggested that some faculty at some schools of social work had wrong attitudes about both the Jewish centers and the nature of social group work practice.⁴ If only schools could see that enhancing or enabling functions go hand-in-hand with the treatment functions of social group work, he argued, they would not project such negative attitudes towards the centers.

Only three years ago Emanuel Berlatsky⁵ addressed himself to the same problem and made a series of recommendations aimed at alleviating the manpower shortage. Unconvincingly he concluded that social work as a method is not only appropriate but essential to the achievement of the goals (and presumably the Jewish goals) of the Jewish community centers.

There is little doubt that the group work of another day and the Jewish community centers of another day were well suited to each other. The small group method with its focus on citizenship development and "enhanced social functioning" were well suited to the Americanization function of the centers. Group work has changed however. It has become more treatment- and problem-oriented on the one hand, and neighborhood- or community development-oriented on the other. The Jewish centers have shifted their emphasis from Americanizing Jews to Judaizing Ameri-

cans. As Leon Jick expressed it so eloquently, current Jewish institutional forms (including the Centers) are largely the product of another period. If our objectives have changed or must change, then presumably the means we select to achieve our ends must shift as well.⁶ Overdependence on group work in particular, or social work in general, seems foolish indeed.

It should be obvious that we will not easily attract graduates from social work schools. As Green, Kasden and Segal document in their study of first year field work students in New York, students showed less interest in Jewish center work after having their field placement in such agencies.⁷ They pointed out that an increase in the use of centers as field placements may result in a decrease in the students that view the Center as a career possibility.

Charles Levy in the First Annual Irving Cantor Memorial Lecture outlined four disparities between idealization of professional practice and the actual experiences of the Center worker:⁸

- (1) His place within the Jewish Community Center has no meaning unless the focus of his activity is on Jewish survival, but his professional role idealizes service to people as individuals, in families and in groups, not their manipulation for some ultimate community end;
- (2) Group workers employed precisely because they are social group workers find themselves deprived of opportunity to do what group workers can do—rather they must

⁴ Leon A. Jick, "Apathy of the Jewish Middle Class To Its Jewish Identification," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1967.

⁷ Allan Green, Barry Kasden and Brian Segal, "Jewish Social Group Work Students View the Jewish Community Center Field as a Placement and Career," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Winter, 1967.

⁸ Charles S. Levy, "Professional Practice in the Jewish Community Center: Disparities Between the Idealizations and Experience of Center Personnel," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1967.

⁴ Herman A. Eigen, "Faculty and Agency Expectations for Student Training," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1964.

⁵ Emanuel Berlatsky, "Direction and Dimension in Jewish Life: Their Significance in the Practice of Social Group Work in Jewish Community Centers," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1966.

increasingly perform work which does not utilize their core professional skills;

- (3) While social work puts priorities on people who need a great deal of help, Center members do not come to their agencies because they look for help, and frequently have access to all the resources needed;
- (4) The fourth discrepancy, the ideal of ethical practice and the reality of unethical experience is, of course, not peculiar to the Jewish community centers alone.

Levy's analysis receives empirical verification in a paper presented by Bernie Scotch at this conference last year.⁹ He found that the single characteristic which accounted for the highest degree of variance between those Jewish Center workers who have left the field and those who have remained has to do with the primacy of loyalty to the profession of social work as contrasted to loyalty to the Jewish community or Jewish community center. While among those with high Jewish identification, 56 percent of the workers in one agency eventually left the field, 85 percent of those with low Jewish identification left. High Jewish identification results in high retention; low Jewish identification results in low retention.

⁹ C. Bernard Scotch, "The Impact of Alternative Job Opportunities for MSW's Upon the Manpower Resources of the Center Field," *Conference Papers*, New York: NAJCW, 1968.

It does not take much imagination to draw these observations together. Jewish youth do not enter schools of social work because of any strong commitments to their ethnic identities. Nothing in the school of social work experience, including field placements in Jewish centers enhances such identification. Social work methods, as they have become refined, have become more effective instruments in achieving social work's goals. Simultaneously as Jewish community centers have shifted their goals, Center personnel have found their relationships to schools of social work increasingly uncomfortable. The graduate schools are a shrinking resource for manpower recruitment.

Old ties and old relationships are hard to sever. Still, I would hope that this is the last time a paper such as this must be entertained at our annual meeting. There seems to be little logic and little reason in selecting out students in schools of social work for special focus. Their characteristics, their backgrounds and their interests are no more pertinent to the manpower needs of Jewish Centers than are those of students in other professional schools. They may be even less so. A tradition has ended. A door has been closed, gently but firmly. Let us search for another one to open.