

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by MORTON I. TEICHER, PH.D.

Trends and Issues in Jewish Social Welfare in the United States 1899-1958, Edited by Robert Morris and Michael Freund, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1966. 642 pp. \$7.50.

WHATEVER the variations, there has been one theme playing ironically throughout the history of Jewish social welfare in this country: The Americanization of the Jews and the Judaisation of the Americanized Jew.

Many Israelis point to this history as a circular exercise in futility. It is certainly true that the American Jewish community has come up with no Newtonian formula for the role of Jewish institutions here. At the 1966 annual meeting of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, one speaker paraphrased Tevyah: "Should I tell you what our role is? I'll tell you: I don't know." But, after all, Einstein, not Newton, is our scientist. American has been the experience of trying to forge an authentic Jewish existence in a brand new space and a brand new time. The collection in this volume of proceedings and key reports of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service over a period of sixty critical years documents this experience from the vantage point of Jewish welfare institutions. It shows that these six decades have not been an

exercise in futility, even though the same questions are being asked at the end of this period as were asked at the beginning.

The depreciation of American Jewish life by many Israelis has been colored by their failure to differentiate between America and Europe. One significant difference is that America is *everybody's* Diaspora. The Jewish struggle with identity has been part and parcel of America's struggle with the nature of a pluralistic society. This pluralistic experiment stretches beyond the context of ethnic patterns. It is over-arched by the total pattern of relationships between private life and public life, by our great cultural heterogeneity and by the massive social problems of a modern industrial state.

This quest for a viable pluralism runs as a thread throughout the history of Jewish social welfare, as revealed by these documents and as shaped by the issues of the moment. In 1906, H. L. Sabsovich said:

"Jewish organized charity should not only avoid duplicating existing agencies for dispensing charity in order to prevent waste of means and energy, but should especially abstain from competing with state and municipal institutions. To my mind, the principal function of Jewish organized charity is to step in, then and there, when and where the state

or municipality fails, or cannot act, and to cooperate with existing institutions.”

Sabsovich happened to be talking about agricultural education for Jews, and felt that there was only a need to provide elementary rural education for the citified Jews, after which they could be turned over to the general agricultural training institutions of America. But, in the same year, Julian Mack went further and urged, with respect to treatment of delinquents, that “a united public opinion should exercise pressure on the public authorities to provide full and complete facilities for all . . .” Jewish agencies were not only to avoid unnecessary separatism but they were to take the lead in promoting common and public agencies and facilities in which Jews could participate.

Out of such impulses, the experiment with pluralism proceeded. With them, came the false starts that characterize every experiment, and the constant re-evaluation. In 1904, A. H. Fromenson complained about the misconceived aspects of Americanization that he saw developing in Jewish social welfare, saying: “. . . there is not a Jewish institution which suddenly grows ashamed of the name ‘Hebrew Institute’ graven over its portals and covers it over with a sign-board bearing the non-committal phrase: ‘Educational Alliance’ . . . A Jewish institution is one that stands for Jewish ethics and Jewish ideals, that engraves its Jewishness over its doorposts and nails its Jewishness to the flagstaff and works in the light that comes from Jewish tradition and Jewish history and Jewish inspiration.” In other words, no Jewish institutions where common ones will do, but when there is properly a Jewish institution, let it be a proper Jewish institution.

The tortuous development of a Jewish welfare federation system side by side with a general community chest system, was a triumph in sophisticated pluralism.

Morris D. Waldman struck an important note about America—perhaps stretching it a bit in the polemics of the moment—when he said in 1927:

“I am constrained to believe that the existence of separate Protestant, Jewish and Catholic Federations . . . is not going to retard brotherhood. Because I am thoroughly convinced that if the universal brotherhood will ever come, it will not come in the form of a fraternity of individuals, but as a brotherhood of groups . . . The group will-to-live is at least as strong as the individual will-to-live. . . .”

In Jewish welfare, there was the constant emanation of “the light that comes from Jewish tradition and Jewish history and Jewish inspiration.” At times this light had to be rekindled. The poor immigrants who came to this country at the end of the nineteenth century were appalled by what was called “the record-and-account-keeping system” of the Jewish charitable agencies established by the older community. The agencies had acquired a fear of “unplanned giving,” and of “pauperization,” recurrently fashionable concerns of American social agencies. The immigrants felt that such concerns, at time of need, were unJewish. “Did not the Talmud say that small alms are better than one large donation?” In 1904, Solomon Lowenstein suggested to Conference attendants that “it should not be forgotten in any discussion of the possibility of pauperizing by means of material assistance, that the same result may as easily be brought about by too little as by too much relief.”

The principle of “maximum feasible participation of the poor,” now canonized by the government’s antipoverty program, was articulated early by Jewish social workers as they called for more participation by, and more attention to the desires of those being helped. In 1904, settlement houses were criticized because “instead of shaping the work

of these institutions in accordance with the real needs and desires of the people, the effort has been to shape the minds of the people in accordance with the theories of those who instituted the work." And Jeannie F. Purvin suggested in 1915 that "if the boards of education will but provide an official organizer for each school, the neighborhood can be helped to help itself. . . ."

The Jewish emphasis, not on the fallen individual, but on the failing society, constantly charged Jewish social work with an urgent search for preventive social change. "The careful study of the causes of distress and poverty, and the endeavor to remove them, must, of course, constitute the ultimate endeavor of our relief organization," said Lowenstein in 1904, without the accompaniment of tambourines. And in 1931, the National Conference of Jewish Social Service called on the leadership of the country "to re-examine and if necessary to modify our social structure, so that human life and happiness, the ultimate goals of social organization, be not destroyed." The Conference had some specific political suggestions, which later became national law.

There are several sides to the positive meaning of Jewish communal life in America which emerge from these pages. Jewish communal life has made a considerable contribution in helping to shape the working concepts of American pluralism. The Jewish social services have also made a constant contribution to social work philosophy and to social philosophy in general. This has all been said before. During the Tercentenary of Jewish life in this country, when some evaluation of the Jewish role in America was called for, it became clear to Jew and non-Jew alike that these communal contributions must stand at the top of the list.

But one meaning has perhaps been overlooked. Jews, Jewish religion and

history, have invested Jewish community activities with their directions and values. But in turn, these activities have constantly revitalized the Jewishness of American Jews. They have had to create a new Jewish community, in new circumstances with new challenges. In doing so, they have had to act as Jews, and have had to learn constantly how to act as Jews. McLuhan says the medium is the message; perhaps the Jewish community is its own Jewish content. As one reads these reports and proceedings, one is struck most of all with the fact that this is by and large not a European ghetto response. It is an active and open, authentic *Jewish* participation in a unique society that is America.

Robert Morris and the late Michael Freund have put together a volume which perhaps has more meaning than they have drawn from it. Their own comments are addressed narrowly to social work practitioners. But the material is there. Students of Jewish life in America will find this a required source book. There is perspective here for both the long questions and the short ones that face us today. Jewish life in America has constantly been driven by internal questions of direction, and at times by the need for sharp reevaluation. The end of the 1920's was one of those periods. Immigrants were being successfully absorbed; the structure of the community had coalesced; optimism was high. Then came the depression. Then came the oppression of world Jewry. With great travail, the Jewish community met these new challenges and turned in new directions. At the end of World War II, there was another brief plateau of stability and optimism. The forces of world tyranny seemed crushed. Israel was established; Jewish community life prospered; even religious school attendance flourished. Now, there are new crises for world Jewry, in Israel and in Russia, and there is a pervasive crisis in

American urban life which touches the American Jewish community directly and deeply—and which confuses the Jewish community as it casts about for effective relationships to the crisis.

Some perspective is provided by Harry Lurie's comment in 1939: "If we are to deal with the problem of anti-Semitism . . . we must deal directly with the forces of reaction which are using it for their own ulterior motives. This is a task for all Americans; but the added threat of anti-Semitism compels us Jews to greater activity than we can expect from other groups. It is obvious that Jews, particularly, cannot afford to ally themselves with the programs of reaction, even if the tie to anti-Semitism is hidden or delayed in these movements . . ."

Still another source of perspective is a 1931 symposium report: "The present period for Jewish social work is not a period of discouragement but of readjustment. It is a challenge to marshal energies and abilities, to examine new problems and old philosophies, to formulate new objectives and new programs. Already there are new and hopeful trends, indicated by a more critical attitude toward established assumptions, an enlarged perspective, a greater preoccupation with economic issues, diminishing isolation, and a consequently greater participation in community-wide programs on the part of Jewish social agencies and professional and lay leadership."

The same questions have been asked for over 60 years. But in the process of searching for the answers in each changing period, the Jews have created a Jewish community which is more than a temporary refuge. There will, hopefully, be no permanent answers, not in America, not in Israel. When the search for Jewish identity comes to an end, so will the Jews.

EARL RAAB
San Francisco, California

The Social Worker's Use of Group Approaches in Work with the Aged, Proceedings of an Institute sponsored by the Central Bureau for the Jewish Aged, 1966. 56 pp. \$2.00, single copy. \$1.50 each for five or more.

PROFESSIONALS from a wide range of functional fields met at a one day institute under the auspices of the Central Bureau for the Jewish Aged of New York to share experiences and to explore different ways that group approaches could serve as a medium for more effective work with the aged. This book is a short and readable summary of the institute.

Probably the major message of the volume is contained in the workshop proceedings written by Esther Lentschner, Wurzeiler School of Social Work faculty member. This summary, together with the collection of recorded experiences, offers an excellent outline of how group programs lend themselves to different settings and purposes. While the focus of the experiences is on the aged person, the principles are equally valid for people of all ages. The group emerges as an important tool to be used by many professional workers in many settings towards many different purposes.

DAVID ESKENAZI
San Francisco, California

Adaptation and Adaptability, by Melvin E. Allerhand, Ruth E. Weber and Marie Haug, Child Welfare League of America, New York, 1966. 188 pp. \$5.

THIS Bellefaire followup study is a unique contribution to the study of residential treatment. Fifty boys discharged from Bellefaire, a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children, were followed up for their adaptation (actual role performance) and adaptability (potential for adaptation)

measured at four points in time, beginning with admissions and ending one or two years after discharge from the institution. The efficacy of the "internally-oriented" psychotherapeutic methods of treatment is questioned since they seem to be effective for only a minority of the children. This implies the development of other approaches, including group methods, which focus on interpersonal interaction within the institution and early preparation for return to community living.

One striking finding of the study is that a child's positive adaptation within the institution is not an adequate index to his adjustment after his discharge. Of crucial influence are the situational factors to which he will be exposed. The gains achieved during residential treatment tended to break down in post-discharge situations of stress; they were nurtured and strengthened in supportive environmental situations. Gradual exposure to community living experiences while the child is still in residence and continued supportive aftercare services are viewed as vital. Since the majority of children return to their own families, effective residential treatment programs must include work with members of their families. The study confirms what has long been known to be desirable in residential treatment programs.

The book should be of interest to a wide range of readers, including psychiatrists, social workers, social scientists and researchers. It is well written, concepts are lucidly presented, and the methodology is sound.

JACK ADLER, Ed.D.
New York

Religion and Society: The Ecumenical Impact, by Claud D. Nelson, Sheed and Ward, Inc., New York City, 1966. 181 pp. \$4.50.

CLAUD NELSON brings a 40 year professional career with the YMCA here

and in Europe, the National Council of Churches, the civil rights movement, and the National Conference of Christians and Jews to the writing of this book. The point is relevant since this is a pragmatic, simply written review of a broad spectrum of issues involving the responsibilities of religion and religious bodies for social order—religious liberty, church-state relations, race relations, anti-Semitism, peace, etc.—based on the author's working experience. This is not a profound study offering definitive answers but, in the sense of real ecumenical dialogue, it raises the basic questions so that all points of view can be heard and considered. The book is primarily for the layman interested in these matters. It would be useful orientation, however, for students, community center workers, discussion leaders and others concerned with adult education who need to acquaint themselves in a general way with Judeo-Christian interreligious efforts to understand and deal with contemporary social issues.

WILLIAM KATZ
New York

Working with People in Community Action, by Clarence King, Association Press, New York, 1965, 192 pp. \$3.50.

IN simple descriptive terms, King presents case illustrations of community workers acting as community organizers and community leaders in interesting settings. The communities in which these workers function seem at first reading to be too primitive to be found in America. The author shows how stereotypes limit one's thinking so that one often does not recognize similarities of need which underlie different behaviors.

He skillfully argues for careful process and sensitive recognition of the needs that arise out of different cultural groups. He dramatically demonstrates why a worker must understand cultural

and social values in determining the responses of people. He also indicates how to avoid the pitfalls of imposing an alien set of values and standards.

The theme of the book is: "It might be assumed that so-called 'well-developed' countries would have few unmet needs and hence less need for self-help community action. The reverse is the case. Appreciation of need grows with community education."

EARNEST SIEGEL
Norfolk, Virginia

The Jewish Day School in America,
by Alvin I. Schiff, Jewish Education Committee of New York, 1966.
294 pp. \$5.00.

THIS is an informative report by a devotee dealing with the rise, the current situation and the unsolved problems of the various types of Jewish day schools in the United States and Canada. Its strongest portions describe the impressive expansion of these schools between 1940 and 1964 when "271 schools and departments were organized in 110 new communities and 27 different states," a rise in their number by 780 percent, in the number of communities by 1,600 percent and in enrollment from 7,700 to 65,000 or 860 percent.

Are these schools, as Schiff insists, "a major educational force in American Jewish life?" Are they, as he concludes, "the best way of combatting the corrosive effects of assimilation . . . the most effective instrument for transmitting the Jewish heritage to Jewish youth, and consequently the surest method of insuring American Jewry's creative continuity and ability to enrich American life?"

Doubts arise when one realizes that "not more than a small minority of Jews will become committed to the Jewish Day School idea," that only 9 percent of those attending any Jewish schools and only 5 percent of the total Jewish

population 5-14 years of age are enrolled in day schools.

In general, one is likely to return to this book because of its facts, figures and references to individual institutions. It is in school administration that Schiff speaks with authority. However, American Jewish sociology, educational philosophy and American legal history are not his fields of scholarly inquiry.

MEIR BEN-HORIN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Social Action and Social Work,
by Benjamin Z. Youngdahl, Association Press, New York, 1966. 190 pp.
\$5.95.

IN this period of rioting in our major cities, Dr. Youngdahl's timely book presents a challenge to the profession to play its role as a healer of social ills.

The book, a compilation of papers previously presented to various groups or published in professional journals, presents the development of Dr. Youngdahl's social work philosophy over the past quarter of a century as social worker and social work educator.

His theme is that the social work profession has as its first responsibility the institutional reform necessary to *prevent* social ills. He identifies social action as an essential component of social work and as the means by which institutional reform can be achieved.

"Change by *preventive* action through *group* programs, as distinguished from *remedial* action through an *individual* approach implies social action," states Dr. Youngdahl, as he exhorts social workers "to provide the necessary leadership to help make basic social policy which will give us the socio-economic climate within which to work and provide services to people." He decries the fact that we are not providing the leadership nor training workers for administration.

He challenges social work to remember that we are our brother's keeper. In his chapter, "Civil Rights versus Civil Strife," he calls for the profession to examine its own practices in race relations.

He reminds us that major social revolutions are taking place and that social change is greater now in depth and breadth than at any other time in our country's history. The endurance of social work as a profession rests on how we play our role in this social revolution.

BELLE GLICKHOUSE
Newark, New Jersey

Social Indicators, Edited by Raymond A. Bauer, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1966. 357 pp. \$10.00.

THIS book, edited by a professor of Business Administration and prepared by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, has its origin in the concern with the social impact of outer space exploration. It is—or should be—of importance to social work and social workers. Its substance "deals with the problems and difficulties of anticipating the secondary effect of the space program; it also proposes a means by which our society can assess where we are now and where we have been, and provides a basis of anticipation—rather than prediction—of where we are going in a number of areas critical to our national welfare."

While not always easy to read because of its complexity and necessary attention to technical details, this is a stimulating and provocative study. Social work's performance in the field of social accounting has been notably poor, and we have much to gain from the kind of analysis presented by Professors Bauer and Goss. The critical review of Crime

Rates provides a pertinent example.

I found particularly rewarding the discussion of "output" measurements and of accounting for social performance, as distinct from cost accounting. The authors' emphasis on the need for social indicators, which reflect purpose and objectives, as the basis for planning social change, is timely and relevant.

PAUL SCHREIBER
New York

Silk Stockings and Blue Collars: Social Work as a Career Choice of America's 1961 College Graduates, by Galen L. Gockel, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, 1966. 163 pp.

THIS is a comprehensive report of the results of a questionnaire which was given to a large sample of college students. They were initially contacted during their senior year in 1961 and then followed up annually through 1964. The responses of the social work aspirants were compared with those of other college seniors and graduates on such factors as age, sex, academic performance, parental income and occupational values. These factors were analyzed singly and in combination by means of Yule's Q as the most appropriate measure of association for these kinds of data.

The research staff was interested primarily in the characteristics of persons declaring social work to be their career choice at different time intervals. They analyzed the correlates of these decisions and accumulated a great deal of objective and authoritative information concerning the ebb and flow of college students and graduates towards and away from the field of social work. There was a sizable defection from the field on the part of those who declared for social work in their freshman and even in their senior years of college. The most prom-

inent factors found to be closely correlated with successful recruitment into social work were occupational values described in short hand terms as "helpful" and "people." These values held up, by and large, as the correlates of retention in social work, but there were some others such as "only child" and "single status" that also figured prominently. Nevertheless, there are important differences between the recruits and the loyalists.

In view of the current shortage of competent and qualified professional personnel in all Jewish communal services, the results of this study are especially timely for Jewish agency administrators and their supervisory staffs. While an effort was made to sort out and highlight the essential findings and conclusions, this was not satisfactorily achieved. Persons who are not attuned to detailed statistical research will find that reading this volume tends to be quite a chore and a dull one at that. This should not deter those engaged in social work recruitment and career counseling from recognizing the value of longitudinal approaches to student decision-making in career development based on statistical analyses.

A study such as this falls short in conveying to us the necessary insights regarding the cognitive and motivational factors that determine entry into social work and retention of it as a meaningful

goal through the point of actual entry. The possession of such information will enable us to improve the strategies that should be followed and to institute the necessary innovations in order to bring about basic improvements in the personnel situation that confronts most of our agencies.

BERNARD STERN
New York, N.Y.

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