Social Work Theory—New and Old; Implications for Jewish Communal Service*

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Introduction

J EWISH communal service is being challenged to prove its value to the Jewish community[1] at the very time that the profession of social work is attempting to reorder its theoretical base. The profession has been confronted with new ideologies which ask it to be more "relevant" and to shift its focus from treatment of the individual to modification of the social system.[2] In a sense, Jewish social work is faced with a similar challenge. In the midst of its efforts to absorb new theories into its methodology, it is being pressed to infuse into practice a communal concern for Jewish identity and continuity. Using the metaphor of a chocolate cake, Samuel Silberman states that we will have to write a "recipe" for the "chocolate" which will be "separable, visible, definable, controllable, capable of being tested and evaluated".[3] Whether Jewish social work, or any area of practice in the human services, can achieve that level of precision may be open to question. Yet, we cannot reject our responsibility for accountability[4] to the Jewish community which makes our practice possible. We can begin to approach Silberman's expectations only as we can develop a theoretical base rooted both in values and in knowledge, which defines our purposes, identifies the specific goals we seek, the methods by which we hope to attain them and a way of evaluating the degree to which we achieve them.

Purpose of Social Work

Development of such a theoretical base is an enormous task, particularly since we must turn to other sources for much of our knowledge. While general social work theory has, as we shall see, much to offer that can be helpful, it is not fully adequate to meet those needs of Jewish social service which are unique. As yet, social work has not been able to achieve a unified theoretical base acceptable to all. Social work theory is influenced by many factors; its values and purpose, the basic conception of man and his relations to nature and society, the state of knowledge in the related sciences, the nature of the specific clients and events with which the practitioner works, the tasks he undertakes and the society and agencies through which he works. Those who would define a unified theory for all of social work often overlook the tremendous variability in each one of the factors listed above. They fail also to appreciate the potential richness in diversity. Differences can lead to the kinds of questions which press outward the boundaries of the unknown.

[1] Samuel J. Silberman, "Jewish Communal Service—The Shaping of a Profession", this *Journal*, Vol. XLIX, No. 1 (Sept. 1972), p. 19.

[2] Harry Specht "The Deprofessionalization of Social Work", *Social Work*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (March 1972), pp 3-15.

[3] Samuel J. Silberman, op. cit., p. 19.

[4] For a discussion of accountability see: Emanuel Tropp, "Expectation, Performance and Accountability", *Social Work*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (March 1974), pp. 139-148; E. Newman and J. Turem, "The Crisis of Accountability", *Social Work*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (January 1974), pp. 5-18; George Hoshino, "Social Services, the Problem of Accountability", *The Social Service Review*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September 1973), pp 373-383.

The profession is coming to an increasing consensus on the need to deal concurrently with the individual and the social systems of which he is a part. This polarity is implicit in most statements of the purpose and goals which provide the basis for social work theory. There remains, however, a great deal of disagreement on the degree of emphasis on the individual, the social system or the interaction between them. In her recent reformulation of functional theory, Ruth Smalley defines the purpose of social work effort as follows:

> . . .to release human power in individuals for personal fulfillment and social good, and to release social power for the creation of the kinds of society, social institutions and social policy which make social realization possible for all men.

While many in the field would be in accord with Dr. Smalley's statement of purpose, others might disagree. Systems theorists for example might question the duality between individual and social implicit in this statement seeing the two as rather linked in a dynamic interlocking, and inseparable social system. Howard Katz defines the "central and distinguishing purpose" of social work as:

> . . .its capability for providing the *means* and the *opportunity* by which persons can work out, find alternatives for, organize about, contend with, or, in other autonomous ways, deal with conditions (internal, interpersonal, or environmental) which interfere with productive social living.[6]

Although both writers agree that the purpose involves both individual and social setting, Dr. Smalley does not limit herself to dealing with disturbances or discords in the system. Social work can help to release potential even in social settings not primarily based on need or trouble such as a group work center, a camp or day care center. Problem-oriented or task-oriented theories tend to assume that social work operates only in situations of conflict requiring change,[7] but give insufficient cognizance that the profession can have an equally important role in maintaining the stability of a social process or facilitating the maximum use of a service sought by the client and provided by a social agency. Community organization can be concerned with maintaining harmony and continuity as well as coping with failures to meet needs or problems in the interaction of the individual and social.

Special Purpose of Jewish Communal Service

Social work in Jewish communal service shares the generic purpose of the profession in its concern with the freeing of resources both in the individual and in the social settings of which he is a part to enable him, the individual, to live productively and responsibly within those social systems. Jewish social work though must move beyond this responsibility to what is described by Charles Zibbell as the "Jewish commitment".[8] Not only are we concerned with provision of services for individual Jews and the maintenance of the Jewish community but we also must have a commitment to Judaism, its enrichment, strengthening and continuity. Assumption of this added role involves a pervasive concern for Jewish identity in the agency, in each staff member and in the clients and social systems they serve.

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[6] Howard Katz, *Social Work Practice A Unitary Approach*. (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), p. 5.

[7] See Helen H. Perlman, *Social Casework: A Problem Solving Process*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), and William J. Reid and Laura Epstein, *Task Centered Casework*, (New York: Columbia University Press., 1972).

[8] Charles Zibbell, "Strengthening Jewish Commitment", this *Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 3, (Spring 1972), pp. 199-205.

We must be cautious lest emphasis on Jewish continuity lead us to overlook the importance of the individual and his identity as a Jew. Definitions of the purpose of Jewish communal service tend to be posed in terms of the group. One such definition by Herbert Millman describes the role of Jewish communal service as: "The welfare of the Jewish group and its capacity to protect, preserve and enhance the lives of its members and to contribute to raising the level of civilization for all members and groups".[9] It would seem equally important to help each individual we serve to affirm and use his own Jewishness most productively and to contribute as fully as he can to the strength and continuity of the Jewish community. The commitment to Jewish continuity provides a filter through which to sift the potential usefulness of concepts from social work theory or from the basic social and psychological sciences from which social work derives much of its knowledge.

Developments in Social Work Theory

During the past decade, there has been what Briar and Miller point out as a "a veritable explosion of new conceptions and techniques within the field of casework—and the extent and confines of this movement cannot yet be predicted."[10] The same has been said of group work, community organization and social work in general. Briar and Miller use the term "new" as though these ideas had no connection with the old. Two recently published reviews of current theories about casework, for instance, find that both functional and psychoanalytically-oriented theories continue to have an important influence on practice.[11]

It is interesting in this regard to note that much of the criticism of casework has been based on an attack on the psychoanalytic clinical model as though that were the only form of casework practiced. In fact, as one reads much of the literature of the sixties and reviews the reading lists of most schools of social work, he might conclude that the functional school had ceased to exist. Yet, Francis J. Turner in his review of current practice indicates his "unexpected" observation of the continuing influence exercised by the functional school on current practice. He states further: "I think there has been a tendency to overlook, or indeed to forget about this tradition as a separate entity".[12] Overlooked in most of the discussion of the difference between the schools, was the fact that many practitioners, in dealing with the realities of clients coping with a variety of social systems, would not be bound by the strictures of one school and drew from whatever source the concepts and methods they needed to facilitate their work.

Herbert Aptekar in 1955 attempted to reconcile the functional and diagnostic points of view indicating how both could be helpful if used dynamically in the counseling or therapeutic relationship.[13] That effort, brilliant and prescient as it was in focusing on the dynamic nature of the interaction between social worker and client, was largely ignored by both schools. Yet as practitioners of both per-

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[9] Herbert Millman, "Jewish Communal Service—The Shaping of a Profession", this *Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Fall 1972), p. 27. For another such group-focussed definition see: Charles S. Levy, "Toward a Theory of Jewish Communal Service", this *Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Fall 1973), pp. 42-49.

[10] S. Briar and H. Miller, *Problems and Issues in Social Casework*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

[11] Two excellent compilations of casework theories have recently been published: Francis J. Turner, ed., *Social Work Treatment*, (New York: The Free Press, 1974), and Robert W. Roberts & Robert H. Nee, *Theories of Social Casework*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.)

[12] Francis J. Turner, ed. *op. cit.* p. 501.

[13] Herbert Aptekar, *The Dynamics of Casework and Counseling.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Press, 1955).

suasions continued to test out their theories in practice, changes became apparent in the positions, although often unacknowledged. Florence Hollis, a leading theoretician of the diagnostic school took increasing note of the social component in treatment, titling her latest work, *"Casework, a Psychosocial Therapy."*[14] Ruth Smalley, in her reformulation of functional concepts, establishes "diagnosis" as her first principle.[15] Both writers as well as the workers on whose practice they drew were influenced by the tremendous developments in the social and psychological sciences which were having a profound influence on practice.[16] Group work and community organization, at first seen almost as peripheral to the central concern with casework in the profession, were identifying their own processes more clearly and making substantial contributions to the understanding of the social dimension of the helping relationship. Increased emphasis was being placed on the holistic nature of man and the fact that every person was simultaneously an individual as well as a member of a variety of social systems. Psychoanalysis itself was changing with new schools emerging which focussed on the autonomy of the ego. What earlier had been a "functional" emphasis on the social factors in helping, was now generally accepted. Emphasis was placed on the acting, organizing and thinking aspects of the self as it coped in the present with critical situations. Dealing on a planned short-term basis with crises in social living increasingly was substituted for long-term

treatment. The family rather than the individual was becoming the focus of concern in many agencies.[17] Emphasis in helping in many settings moved away from the construct of client as *patient* to seeing the client as an active participant, as a contracting agent who helped to define both the problem he presented and how he wanted to work on it. The emergence of group counseling, group therapy and family therapy as methods of treatment in the family and children's agencies led to a broadening of the skills of the social worker. Communications, small group and role theories clarified the interactions within the family.[18] The development of systems concepts in the biological sciences initially and then in the social sciences stimulated an increasing number of social work theoreticians and practitioners to apply it to practice with the resulting emphasis on the generic nature of all social work processes.[19] The rapid absorption of

[14] Hollis, Florence, *Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy*, 2nd ed., revised. (New York: Random House, 1972).

[15] Ruth Smalley, *op. cit.*, pp 134-142.

[16] For a clear summary of recent developments in the sciences relevant to social work, see: Sheila B. Kammerman et al, "Knowledge for Practice; Social Science in Social Work," in Alfred Kahn, ed, *Shaping the New Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), pp. 97-147.

[17] It is striking how many of these developments reflect essential elements in functional practice, though one does not often find acknowledgment of that fact. It might be of interest to note that Almena Dowley, a leading social work practitioner working at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic with Frederick Allen, was one of the first social workers to stress the crucial role of the family relationships in treatment. See: Almena Dowley, "Interrelated Movement of Parent and Child in Therapy with Children", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, IX, October, 1939, pp. 848-54. Also: Almena Dowley and Frederick Allen "Social Aspects of Personality in Child Guidance Clinic Practice, *American Journal of Psychiatry.*, Vol. 106, December, 1949, pp. 462-467. For the application of this approach in the Jewish family agency see: Saul Hofstein "Inter-related Processes in Parent-Child Counseling", *Jewish Social Service Quarterly*, Vol. 26, December, 1949, pp 286-299.

[18] For a particularly sensitive and effective description of the process of absorbing new concepts, see: Gertrude Einstein, ed. *Learning to Apply New Concepts to Casework Practice*. (New York: Family Service Association of America, 1968).

[19] See Gordon Hearn, "General Systems Theory and Social Work" in Francis J. Turner, *op. cit*, pp 343-372, for a summary of this development; also Howard Katz, *op. cit.*

many of these ideas as well as the reinterpretation and rediscovery of concepts from an earlier stage of the profession, have led to the recent emergence of a series of "new" formulations of practice, particularly in casework but also in group work, community organization and social planning as well. All too often, instead of being presented as a modification or change in a previous formulation, each "school" has needed to present itself as "new". Currently identified approaches to casework practice for instances are, in addition to the functional and psycho-diagnostic theories, the problem-solving, ego-oriented, crisis-directed, gestalt, behavioral, task-centered, cognitive, psychosocial, family integrative and systems orientations. We do not have the time here to present an analysis of each of these schools. It is clear though, when we cut through the semantics, while each introduces a somewhat different emphasis, they have much in common and considerable connection with past theory as well. In his review of the various theories about casework practice, Francis J. Turner comments that while authors note areas of difference from other schools," . . . their description of the position of the other viewpoint is not what that school would say about itself".[20] Jewish agencies and workers have been at the forefront both in the development of these changing concepts and in using them in enriching their own practice.

Limitations of Social Work Theory

Even as we assert the richness in the developments noted above, we have to add a word of caution in assessing their significance for social work practice. Faced by the extent of the unknown and unpredictable in the clients and social systems with whom we deal, we have

often been tempted to assume a degree of knowledge and effectiveness that is unrealistic. We have sometimes assumed theory to be fact, have applied conceptualizations arrived at on the basis of work with one group to other populations for whom that theory has no demonstrated relevance, have tended to make generalizations of a breadth greater than the limited data available to us has warranted, and sometimes have tended to ignore facts and alternate explanations which are not consistent with our own preferred theory. Too often we have assumed that by substituting a scientific term for a particular event, we thereby explain it. Each period has its popular terminology. Constructs and symbols are helpful for representation, but when they have the effect of mechanizing, dehumanizing and oversimplifying individuals and social processes, the vital element gets lost. Hannah Arendt concludes:

. . .Failure to distinguish between a plausible hypothesis and the fact that must confirm it—this dealing with hypothesis and mere "theories" as though they were established facts, which became endemic in the psychological and social sciences—lacks all the rigor of the methods used by the game theorists and systems analysts. But the source of both—namely, the inability or unwillingness to consult experience and to learn from reality—is the same.[21]

To recognize the limits of theories about man and his behavior does not mean that we must abandon conceptualizations as tools or as guides to our actions. Rather it imposes on us the responsibility for dealing with each new event we encounter as an experiment. The theory affects our approach to the individual or social system, provides us with guidelines; but we must have the discipline to identify and deal with the divergence of that event from the generalizations we are applying to it. In

[20] Francis J. Turner, *op cit.*, p. 496.

[21] Hannah Arendt, *The Crises of the Republic.*

this sense diagnosis, treatment planning, goal-setting and interventions of all kinds must be seen as tentative, subject to change and limited by the unknown in each new individual or event with which we deal. Theory and knowledge supply the torch which dispels enough of the darkness to penetrate further towards understanding the complexity of events with which we deal. Even in the natural sciences, so-called "laws" have been found to have their limits as methods of observation and measurement have been refined. As Norman Hackerman, the President of Price University, has pointed out, ". . . all viable theories have led to other shadows or dark areas of understanding — in fact to an ignorance explosion".[22]

Relevance of General Theory to Jewish Practice

In all the presentations of these theories, there is little reference to the nature of the individuals or groups with whom they were tested out or developed. We tend often to forget that a theory is valid only for the universe from which its supporting facts were drawn. Theoretical conclusions are based on statistical averages and measures of significance. As Polansky points out, psychoanalysis (and I might add psychology as well) assume "an average expendable environment" and "sociology assumes an average expendable person".[23] Before concluding a particular theory is applicable to Jewish client, family, group or community, we must be certain that Jews were part of the universe from which it was derived. Since Jews constitute only about three percent of the general population in the United States and even a smaller percent of those on welfare or

served by social workers, it is very probable that they were not so included. Even if they were, Jews might readily be in that "expendable" group falling at the extreme from the average. For example, Joel Fischer, after reviewing a series of studies, concludes that "research strongly suggests that lack of evidence of the effectiveness of professional casework is the rule rather than the exception".[24] Do we conclude from this "fact" that Jewish agencies should abandon casework? Careful review of the studies covered in this analysis suggests that very few, if any, Jewish clients were included in any of the samplings on which the conclusions were based. Consequently the review tells us nothing about the effectiveness of casework with *Jewish* clients or members of any other ethnic group not included in the sampling.

It is indeed paradoxical that while social workers who are Jewish have played an important role in the development of social work theories, there has been no effort to define what in that theory may have special applicability to practice with Jews. We cannot be critical of social workers alone because the same observation might be made of psychoanalysts, psychologists and social scientists who, though they include a high percentage of Jews, have produced very few studies of the peculiarly Jewish experience and made few attempts to analyze the characteristics of Jews as a minority group. It is as though by agreement, this aspect of the development of knowledge has been excluded from the social sciences. With all of our involvement in learning, research and the professions, the Jewish group is among the least studied and understood. Despite the millions of dollars Jewish communities expend on providing service and fostering Jewish con-

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[22] Norman Hackerman, "The Ignorance Explosion", *Science*, Vol. 183, No. 128 (March 8, 1973).

[23] Norman Polansky, "Beyond Despair", in Alfred J. Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[24] Joel Fischer, "Is Casework Effective? A Review," *Social Work*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (January, 1973).

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tinuity, we have not been able to fund adequately a single research institute which would provide greater understanding of the true nature of the Jewish experience in America or provide the data necessary to understand more fully the Jewish clients with whom we work. Can Jewish communal service be held accountable if it is not provided with the resources necessary to develop the data on which such accountability must rest?

As one reviews the social work literature and its theoretical formulations, one is struck as well with the failure to take into account the particular Jewish contribution to social work. Jews have been concerned with helping the unfortunate almost from the beginning of their history. In discussing this question with my friend, Rabbi Isaac Trainin, Advisor on Religious Affairs, New York Federation, he recalled a passage in the Midrash, in which Joshua, when he was told by Moses that he was to lead the Jews into Israel, asked how he could lead the *people* in God's way considering all the struggle there had been in the desert. Moses is said to have replied: "You can't lead the *people*; you have to help them one by one". Judaism is built on this polarity — the importance of both the individual and of the people, *K'lal Isroel,* bound together by values and law. Each individual is valued as God's creature with responsibility within himself to choose whether or not to follow Judaism's ethics. Our concept of *Tsedaka,* central in our ethics, stresses amelioration of need as a right, not as a beneficence. Everyone, even the poor, shares the responsibility for helping the less fortunate. Even as they are helped, the receivers of charity give something in return, the opportunity to the giver to perform a mitzvah. Would it be far-fetched to relate this concept to the modern idea of the guilt implicit in taking help and the need somehow to ameliorate that guilt in the giving of help. Similarly, the concept of *Chesed*

which is paired with *Tsedaka,* emphasizes the need for compassion and understanding and the universality of those for whom one performs good deeds. Misfortune can befall anyone, regardless of class, and each so struck must be provided with help. In the *Mishna Torah,* written in the Twelfth Century, Maimonides presented the "Stepladder of Charity" which "operationalized" the practice of charity. Priorities were established based on the need to help individuals to self sufficiency and to maintain their dignity. Maimonides, in a sense, may be said to have been the first social work theoretician. How differently these principles sound from the Social-Darwinism, the English Poor Laws and the early charity organization attitudes about the poor from which most writers trace the origins of modern social work. Yet, one finds in the texts and reviews of social work no references to the Jewish historical contribution.

In developing the theories and principles of community organization, social work has similarly taken little account of the role played by the synagogue, the *kehilla* and the *shtetel* in Europe; and in America the mutual aid societies, the *fareinen, landsmanchaften,* the Workmen's Circle, fraternal organizations, the help groups associated with the synagogues and the many mutual aid societies developed by Jewish immigrants most of whom were poor themselves. What significance does that history have for our current processes? What insights can our history provide for the development and understanding of ways of meeting current problems?

Effect on Social Work of New Ideologies

Social work has been interrupted in the process of reformulation of its theory and improving the effectiveness of its

practice. Its very foundations are being threatened by certain currents of thought which, as Henry Specht suggests, may well bring the profession of social work to its "denouement".[25] Although some writers may refer to these currents as theories, they can be thought of as ideologies in view of their lack of a base in practice, their resort to sharp polarizations and their postulation of goals without concern for methodology. Specht divides these ideologies into four basic trends: activism, anti-individualism, communalism and environmentalism.[25]

In place of a polar relation between individual and society, proponents of these schools see the individual as totally the pawn of an evil society which has caused their problems. Given that premise individual help becomes meaningless and serves only to perpetuate the evil society. Social work theory, method and professional practice, therefore, need to be cast out because they have failed to achieve the goals of the ideologists. Mutual helping arrangements of individuals combined in a collective are all that one can trust. Woe to the individual who refuses to yield to the collective judgment! He is a "racist" or a perpetrator of the system to be destroyed. On the basis of the failure of the welfare system in which professional social work actually plays a minimum role, social work is condemned because it has not been able to achieve within that system the elimination of poverty, personality disturbance and the sense of alienation. Pathology, deviation and delinquency are rejected as concepts since the individual cannot be held responsible in any degree for his behavior in a social system which is itself at fault. As William Schwartz states:

> . . . In effect, what began as a necessary and overdue attack on the idea that if the *people* are

changed the system will take care of itself, has turned into its opposite: if the *system* is changed, the people will take care of themselves.[26]

Activism, confrontation and condemnation are the means used by the ideologists of achieving their goals, thus making it difficult to challenge their positions. With the State seen as ultimately taking all responsibility for service, the voluntary agency becomes expendable. Any service or institution which does not fit into the framework of the ideologists is considered "irrelevant". Through these strategies, many local and national organizations and agencies and even schools of social work have yielded to such activist pressures. It has been argued that the only way the voluntary agency can have "relevancy" is to yield totally to the priorities of the collective, abandon its concern for the individual, disavow the "system" and join in the advocacy struggle to revamp society. These ideologies violate the values of social work, of Judaism and of democracy. A "democratic, humanistic perspective", as Alfred Kahn points out, "does not permit ruthless sacrifices of people today to goals of idealists, political leaders and governments which make promises about tomorrow".[27] It is apparent that the positions of the ideologists, leaves no room for the Jewish sectarian agency which does not serve the groups they favor and is not subject to their control. The pressures of these ideologies have been one of the factors making it necessary for Jewish agencies throughout the country to re-examine their own identity and reason for continued existence.

Jewish social work has been going through its own crisis following a period when many in Jewish communal service saw the Jewish agency as essentially like

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[25] Harry Specht, *op. cit.,* p. 3. See this article for detailed bibliographic references.

[26] William Schwartz, "Private Troubles and Public Issues: One Social Work Job or Two?" *The Social Welfare Forum,* 1969. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 29.

[27] Alfred Kahn, *op. cit.,* p. 23

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all other agencies except perhaps in their name and source of funding.[28] Child caring, medical and vocational services which depend today primarily on governmental funding face a particular impact with the emphasis by government to give up their distinctiveness and become like all other agencies. In New York, Jewish child-caring agencies, together with all other voluntary agencies caring for children, are confronted with a law suit — The Wilder-Sugarman suit — which in effect states that by having superior services for Jewish children they thereby discriminate against other minority children.[29] The suit has compelled the Jewish agencies to come to grips with their distinctiveness and to define what in their Jewishness is necessary for the growth of children in their care. In Montreal, confronted by the government's demand to give up its distinctiveness, the Jewish community chose to abandon its family agency.[30] We can hope that most of our communities will not take such a position. If the Jewish community is to support its agencies, they must demonstrate convincingly that they have something to contribute to the continuity of Judaism.

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[28] For a discussion of the implications of government funding for Jewish agencies, see: Martha Selig, "New Dimensions of Government Funding of Voluntary Agencies: Potentials and Risks", this *Journal,* Vol. 50, No. 2 (Winter 1973), pp 125-35.

[29] N. Levine & Lois Waldman "Child Care Services in New York Under Legal Challenge", *Congress bi-Weekly,* October 26, 1973; Hugh O'Neill "Wilder v. Sugarman, *"The* Crisis in Child Care", *New York Affairs,* May, 1974, pp 36-47.

[30] Solomon M. Brownstein, "La Reforme in Quebec Health and Social Services; Impact on Jewish Casework Services." This issue, this *Journal,* pp 162.

Summary

We have seen that social work, drawing deeply on current developments in the psychological and social sciences, has attempted to formulate new theoretical systems in relating itself to current problems. These theories, however, have many connections with earlier social work thinking albeit the debt is often unrecognized and unacknowledged. Missing from the experience on which this theory both old and new is based is the cumulative history of Jewish charity and communal welfare. While much of general social work theory is applicable to Jewish social work, its validity for us is limited by that gap and dependent on the degree to which it both encompasses the unique elements distinctive to Judaism and is consistent with our value base. In developing a theoretical base for Jewish communal service, we have to be selective in terms of our purpose and relatedness to Jewish continuity. We must add to what we derive from social work theory the component distinctive to Jewish experience. As we preserve and strengthen the best in general social work theory and enrich it from our own unique experience, we may contribute to the survival of social work practice beset as it has been by many contemporary forces. In doing that, we may accomplish for social work the goal Judaism has sustained over the ages, the preservation of ethical and moral values, the right to be different and the demonstration that each individual can have dignity, be responsible and concerned for his fellow man while building a society which can sustain him.