

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Social Casework in The Fifties, Selected Articles, 1951-1960**, Cora Kasius, Editor. Family Service Association of America, New York, 1962. 407 pp. \$6.00.

THIS collection of articles, selected as "outstanding" from *Social Casework*, is a companion volume to *Principles and Techniques in Social Casework*, which reflected the content of this leading professional journal during the forties. As in the previous book, articles are grouped under three headings: two—"Casework Practice" and "Teaching and Supervision"—have remained the same, while "Philosophy" has been replaced by "Concepts". This change indicates a more modest and a more appropriate estimate of attempts to strengthen the field's theoretical basis. In itself, and in comparison with the earlier volume, this book is a valuable source of review, reference and stimulation for practitioners and educators. Although its practice material chiefly serves the caseworker, many of the contributions can be useful to practitioners of group work and community organization. The articles are thought-provoking and pertinent. Individual articles cannot be reviewed in this brief report. Attention can be called to new emphases and trends, which emerge clearly from this selection and which mirror developments during the fifties. In both theory and practice, an increasing use of socio-cultural concepts and

material, incorporating findings from sociology and anthropology is notable. This is evidenced by several discussions of family dynamics and treatment, based on psycho-social diagnosis of the total family, contrasting with the previous preoccupation with single individuals. This change in focus led to greater and more differentiated use of joint family interviews and of counseling and therapy groups in casework agencies. Papers on social authority, values and control, as well as on the profession's responsibility in the area of social policy, document the heightened awareness of broader social contexts as well as a return to concerns which had stimulated social work in its beginnings. However, this new emphasis does not indicate neglect of the psychological aspects of human problems. All the papers show a securing and further deepening of psychological knowledge and individualized and differentiated methods based on such insights. The regained social science perspective is integrated into a richer and more balanced conception of the total human configuration.

In the papers discussing supervision, attempts are made to identify and to clarify its educational and administrative aspects, leading to differing conclusions and practical proposals. There is striking consensus in questioning the overprotective and controlling features of traditional supervision. The student's and beginning worker's own responsibility for professional growth and development as well as the supervisor's obligation for fostering greater self-direction and initiative in his supervisees is stressed.

In her introduction, which offers an excellent summary of developments during the decade, Miss Kasius mentions that many agencies experimented during the fifties with new approaches in work with serious social pathology such

as multi-problem families, delinquency and alcoholism. One wishes, however, that more reports of actual work on these problems could have been included. Likewise, to include only one article dealing with problems of the aged does not sufficiently represent the great advances in serving this group during the period covered.

While the previous collection referred to the diagnostic-functional controversy, this dispute does not reappear. Gradually, and quietly, positions have lost their dogmatic rigidity and a synthesis is developing. This change and the tolerance for differences in theory and practice implicit throughout this collection constitute evidence of greater maturity in social work. The general picture is one of continuing development, erection of a conceptual framework, serious self-examination and responsible, flexible experimentation. Several of the most stimulating papers assert that much still has to be explored and learned. The sobering feeling remains that many of our best efforts are more effective in analyzing problems than in finding solutions.

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**The Bible, Religion and the Public Schools**, 2nd edition, by Donald E. Boles. Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa, 1963. 341 pp. \$4.95.

**BIBLE** reading in the public schools is now a controversial issue, though it has not always been one. The issue is part of the larger dynamism that permeates Western culture. A distinctive mark of this culture since the Middle Ages has been the tension between church and state with which the development of religious liberty and related themes is

connected. As such, the subject of this book has special importance to members of religious minorities.

The author of this book, a political scientist, has given a comprehensive but uninspired review of constitutional provisions, legislation, judicial decisions and public opinion on the federal and on the state levels bearing on the question. It appears to be the first book-length treatment of the subject. Federal judicial decisions have only in recent years undertaken to apply the provisions of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which is merely a limitation on the power of the federal government, to the several states. This has been done through the medium of the 14th Amendment which presumably extends these limitations to the sphere of state action. The federal courts have consequently dealt in recent years with a number of related questions: the use of public school buildings and school time for religious instruction, the transportation of parochial school pupils at public expense, and the recitation of prayers in public schools.

The subject of Bible reading is a more recent addition to the list. Professor Boles reports that the courts of fourteen states have, on the whole, upheld the legality of the practice, while those of seven states and the federal district court in Pennsylvania have ruled against it. The federal case is the Schempp Case which was appealed to the Supreme Court. Professor Boles concludes that at the present time it is impossible to anticipate the decisions of the Supreme Court on the Bible reading cases headed its way.

It is regrettable that Professor Boles generalizes the Jewish position on the basis of what this reviewer considers inadequate grounds. Though Jews may be expected to oppose reading from the New Testament, it is an exaggeration to declare that as a group they are op-

posed to Bible reading or necessarily to the use of the Authorized Version. The material assembled, if anything, shows a spectrum rather than a position, though spokesmen for the secular point of view have been particularly vociferous of recent years, and have given a perhaps distorted view of Jewish opinion.

A useful Table of Cases, a short bibliography, and a full index complete the volume. Since the subject is specialized, the reader who would profit from the book would do well to read it with access to a few basic works such as Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*; Greene, *Religion and the State*; and Howe, *Cases on Church and State*. The volume is stronger on contemporary than on historical matters. It does not relate the subject to developments in other countries, with the result that it lacks adequate perspective—at least from a historical and philosophical point of view. It certainly does not convey a sufficient sense of the dynamic character of the issue in Western civilization. This may be owing to the fact that Bible reading is only a part of the larger theme. Nevertheless, Jewish communal workers will find here a useful compendium designed to orient them in a controversial subject that has had and will have an impact on the members of the groups they serve.

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**The Family Budget Standard**,  
Budget Standard Service, Re-  
search Department, Community  
Council of Greater New York,  
1963. 76 pp. \$3.00.

THE *Family Budget Standard* of the  
Community Council of Greater New

York should be very helpful to social workers interested in furthering their understanding of family finances, income inadequacy, family use of money, budgets and changes in the American standard of living since World War II.

This edition of *A Family Budget Standard* (revision of 1955 publication) "provides a measure of the cost of living requirements in New York City for self-supporting families of any size and composition," but it can also be used as a guide for average needs and average costs in any community. A large working committee of experts and consultants worked three years in preparation of the Guide. Recognizing the need for this kind of information, the Community Council plans to up-date the cost data annually. The report is well-written and readable, and it should become a handbook for social workers, especially as few have had any special training in home economics or nutrition. The individual social worker will find much that will be helpful to him in budget counselling with a family. The report can also be used by agencies to assess the ability or inability of their clients to pay a fee for service. For this, the Committee assumes (or hopes) that "such adaptations as are required for specific purposes of individual agencies will be made by professionally trained persons with competence in the application of budget standards." Inasmuch as there are communities where this service is not available, the report states that technical assistance may be obtained from the Budget Standard Service of the Community Council.

The material of the report is presented in three sections. Part I provides the background information; Part II contains the detailed methods used to develop the standard for each category of expenditures; and Part III comprises five tables of conventional cost summaries. As background, we find that

the Committee was aware that "most of us think of our cost of living as the cost of what we *need*," and "our standard of living also reflects our personal ideas about what these needs are and, in addition, what we *enjoy* and strive to obtain," and that in turn, the prevailing standard of living effects the individual's judgment. It seems to me that it is equally as important for social workers to be aware of this as it is to have current data regarding the cost of food or clothing in relation to the variables of age and sex as found in sections II and III.

Agencies planning to assess or revise fee scales will find that the budget standard has taken into account current prices and the cost of living as it affects the low and moderate income families. The Committee also compared the cost of the budget standard (example, cost of budget for a family of four is \$6,268. per year) with income data available from the 1960 census and found that "the income received by about two-thirds of all families of two or more persons in 1959 was above the 1962 cost of the budget standard for families of corresponding size." However, they warn us that this is general information and that additional material should be consulted before it is used.

Public and voluntary agencies serving the older person will be interested in knowing that in order to meet basic minimum needs the older, retired couple requires \$3,141 per year and that the older woman living alone requires \$1,996 per year. Social workers and community lay leaders know that many older persons have much less with which to manage. The report gives us tested information regarding the needs of older persons which can be presented to a community, to those in responsible positions as we work to establish adequate standards for assistance. Similarly,

agencies providing homemaker service will find the budget guides helpful in establishing what a family can pay for this service.

The many uses which this guide can have for individual social workers and agencies will make the *Family Budget Standard* necessary equipment for good practice.

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**More Loves Than One**, by Stuart Rosenberg. Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, 1963. 187 pp. \$3.95.

**RABBI STUART ROSENBERG** seeks in this book to increase respect for the Bible as a resource of value both to laymen and members of the helping professions. He endeavors to establish the contemporary validity of the ancient insights of the Old Testament. The fundamental key to modern psychology and the pervasive motif of the Old Testament are love—a special kind of love that "builds bridges between men, bridges built upon the deep foundations of our profoundest spiritual urges—our need to be part of something greater than ourselves; our need to be needed by something greater than ourselves; our need to feel that we are not alone but profoundly related to God, a community, a world greater than ourselves." Dr. Rosenberg systematically describes this phenomenon of love in vital areas of individual and collective life and shows how it was advanced through biographies of major personalities in the Old Testament.

However, the Old Testament and modern psychology are not twin surfaces of the same coin. To create congruity and affinity, the author adroitly uses two devices. He views our life in terms of polarities and then portrays the Old

Testament ethic as the mediating Golden Mean. For example, today "either we think of isolated 'persons' and trumpet the divine rights of the individuals in wild and exaggerated claims or we overstate the supreme values of 'society' and virtually deify the group. Biblical man was different; he was 'person-in-community.'" Dr. Rosenberg's other strategy is to reinterpret, often ingeniously and imaginatively, and at times synthetically and unconvincingly, the episodes of the Old Testament in order to demonstrate the psychological truths contained in them. His expositions of the relationship between Adam and Eve, husband and wife; Abraham and Isaac, father and son; and Joseph and his Brethren, among others, are perceptive, penetrating and persuasive. His commentary on Hosea's exhortations, however, seems forced and contrived.

This reviewer was at times perplexed by intimations of the author's ambivalence towards the Bible. He vigorously defends the Old Testament against harsh criticism by the Christian Church. Yet he resorts to such irreverences as: "Abraham was a liar; Jacob, a manipulator; Moses, a murderer; David, an adulterer." These are church-created stereotypes rejected by classical Jewish sources. The constant references to the "Old Testament," instead of the traditional Jewish title "The Jewish Bible" or simply "The Bible" is either a concession to the Christian preference or to his anticipated Christian readers. He contradictorily speaks of the "myths" of the Old Testament while ascribing to it universal and enduring value.

The foregoing strictures are not meant to denigrate the substantial merit of this excellent study. Its few vulnerable aspects should not discourage the reader from exploring and enjoying its many delights and rewards.

The author's familiarity with concepts of psychotherapy, his use of

scintillating prose, his felicitous interpretations of Biblical episodes, his profound understanding of current personal, family and social problems and his sophisticated approach to their possible solutions, are very intriguing and provocative. This book will be warmly greeted by Bible students, ministers of religion and it should be of special interest to readers of this Journal. I found "More Loves Than One" enjoyable, profitable and stimulating.

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**Journey Out of Darkness**, by Marie Bell McCoy. David McKay Company, Inc., New York, 1963. 205 pp. \$3.95.

**JOURNEY OUT OF DARKNESS** is the author's description of her struggle to meet the overwhelming challenge presented by the handicap of blindness. Mrs. McCoy's purpose, however, was not to be merely autobiographical, but to be, also, inspirational. She writes, "My province, and the province of this book, is to hearten the spirit, lift the morale of persons seeking 'a way out' after some personal disaster—whether that disaster be physical or emotional."

As is in keeping with such a blatantly noble purpose, Mrs. McCoy employs a melodramatic style of writing that is laden with overdone and inept metaphors. This is evidence by such statements as, "Merciful Lord, I cried in dismay, how can I live in this monotony forever? I lashed out at the darkness but it did not lash back at me. It did not need to—it just sat quietly there, like so many black cats encircling me." She compares each of her accomplishments in overcoming blindness to a "plateau" which was at first "bare and dry" but

with each successful endeavor would put forth "buds and blossoms" enabling her "to resume my (her) journey."

And how did the author transform these barren plateaus into vineyards of achievement? Not, I am sorry to say, through the efforts of any professional rehabilitation agency. Mrs. McCoy's only experience with an agency of this kind was with the representative of the local State Council for the Blind. Whether or not he was a professionally qualified worker is not clear, but from the author's description, the situation was badly handled. For example, when Mrs. McCoy inquired about joining a housekeeping class, the worker "exploded with impatience." "No!" he stated emphatically. "You are too old—we won't fool with anybody over forty." No further reference is made to contacts with social agencies, and the reader is left with the impression that she thinks they are to be avoided.

Clearly, her adjustment was achieved in another manner. Her own "buds" blossom because she nurtures them in the rich soil of her own background. She has constant recourse to the literature, philosophy, and music she loves, and from which she derives solace, inspiration, and the strength to face the hardships of her handicap. Mrs. McCoy writes, "I was intrigued by its variety. . . . All this represented what I had inherited from the past—from the writers, composers, philosophers, artists and artisans . . . from everybody . . . who had planted wisdom, some perception, within me."

While one should not undervalue the process of self-evaluation and self-help, professional experience indicates that there are many individuals who are incapable of relying solely upon themselves, and that it is only through participation in a "therapeutic milieu" of a social service agency that the inner reserve and treasures Mrs. McCoy

speaks about can be explored and built upon for constructive rehabilitation.

The professional social worker can derive from this book an appreciation of the emotions that most blind people experience but might find difficult to express. These emotions are clearly verbalized by Mrs. McCoy. Other than this, however, the book cannot be recommended as a source of additional knowledge or fresh insights in working with blind people.

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**The Field of Social Work**, fourth edition by Arthur E. Fink, Everett E. Wilson and Merrill B. Conover. Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1963, 560 pp. \$5.75.

THIS volume has been used extensively as a standard text book by undergraduate colleges in their pre-professional sequences and by many schools of social work. It has been translated into several foreign languages for use overseas. The new edition succeeds in making current this survey of the field of social work. This is achieved by incorporating new developments, new issues and new bibliographies—all of which make the book a more valuable tool to students and teachers.

The authors endeavor to place social work in historic context by describing the problems with which the field of social work has tried to cope and by describing the guiding philosophy of the field, as it has changed over a period of time. On this basis, the reader is helped to see the organization of the field of social work and the methodologies which it has developed.

After an historical review of social work's background in Europe and America, we come to the "meat" of the

book which deals primarily with social casework. About 80% of the total volume surveys the fields of social work in which social casework is the basic helping method—and it is indeed an excellent overview of these fields. A general chapter on social casework takes us from a discussion of the helping process to a succinct statement of current issues in social casework. There follow eight chapters, each dealing with one of the major settings in which social casework is practiced. Each setting is introduced historically and there is a delineation of the chief problems confronted. We are given a picture of the many-sidedness of the problems and the social work answers to them. Each chapter has an up-to-date bibliography and a generous section devoted to case material.

The elaboration of various special emphases in social casework is valuable but the book does not give sufficient attention to recent trends towards generic social work and generic social casework. There is little indication of the great stir which is reflected in substantial organizational changes in the National Association of Social Workers. Nor is there enough attention given to the increased tendency among social caseworkers towards the use of group techniques with all of the new problems which this poses.

As a social group worker, I must confess to a sense of disappointment at the overly brief treatment of social group work. The Jewish community center field is mentioned twice—both references are historical. Less than two pages deal with the “traditional agencies”. The challenge of social group work does not come through.

Community organization is also disposed of in limited fashion, although the brief chapter on community organization does convey a reasonably adequate sense of this approach to helping.

The illustrative record material for community organization is a particularly interesting one.

A notable omission is social work research. Surely, we have reached the step in our development where a book called “The Field of Social Work” must include a chapter on social work research.

All in all, this is a valuable contribution with particular importance for its survey of social casework.

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**Seedtime of Reform. American Social Service and Social Action 1918–1933**, by Clarke A. Chambers. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1963. 326 pp. \$6.50.

[N the last chapter of this impressive book, Dr. Chambers writes: “Rooted in progressivism and on their way (unwittingly) to the New Deal, social reformers and social servants evidenced a remarkable vitality and imagination during the years that lay between the armistice and the inauguration of Franklin Roosevelt.”

Dr. Chambers absorbingly demonstrates the validity of this conclusion. He cannot be charged with poetic license in reading too much into the period with which his book is concerned, for everything he says is fortified with documentation. This is true to such an extent that much of the tone of the book is reportorial. Nevertheless, it is not merely good journalism—which it is—but exemplary scholarship and dynamic exposition.

A major contribution is his setting into perspective the relationship between social reform and social work practice. He graphically reminds us that the recent grumbling, in many

quarters, about the so-called neglect of the "social in social work" is not all that recent. The complaints were equally vigorous between 1918 and 1933, although the number and quality of "social reformers" among social workers were noteworthy.

Dr. Chambers avoids the illogical dichotomization between social reform and social work. What emerges is a distinction between professional and social responsibility, clarifying that which is done in one capacity as compared with another. This is not an invidious comparison, but a recognition of the differential obligations one incurs as a result of assumed, ascribed and achieved social roles.

It appears from a reading of this compelling text, that whereas a social reformer is not (and has not been) necessarily a social worker, a social worker is necessarily a social reformer. This is not simply a professional role, but a professional liability to which expression may even be given in relationships with clients. Dr. Chambers gives an excellent historical account of how such expression has existed.

He does not say that the expression of the social reform instinct after 1918 was identical to that in the decades before the Armistice. He notes the differences, and some are graphic. But by the same token, he does identify some of the conservative proclivities of some of the more reputed and aggressive social reformers.

Readers of the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* will be especially taken with some of the sectarian implications of this spirited account. The religious premises of the activities of many settlement leaders, who promoted some of the more fundamental social causes, are revealingly dealt with. These premises so colored the behavior of some social reformers that some of their good works proceeded in the spirit

more of moral judgment than of good life for all, including the poverty-stricken masses. The quest by some of the social reformers for prohibition is an illustration of one perverse effect of the religious zeal for social improvements. But never do they cease to be attractive and spirited people. Dr. Chambers offers a number of insights into the human qualities of some of the social reformers who illuminate the pages of social work history with their energy and vitality. Florence Kelley and others retain their glorious positions in this history, as a result of Dr. Chambers' narration, but heroic as they continue to be, they appear as flesh and blood people.

Readers of the *Journal* will no doubt relish the acknowledgment of the significant role played by Jewish social workers and Jewish social agencies in the ameliorative and preventive efforts which were climaxed during the period of the New Deal—the terminal phase of this book's concern. The essence of this observation is best characterized by Dr. Chambers' own discussion which, though long, is worthy of reproduction:

"... among the leading pioneer proponents of unemployment insurance and social security one must include not only Abraham Epstein and Isaac Rubinow, but also Solomon Lowenstein (director of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropy, New York City), Harry Greenstein (director, Associated Charities, Baltimore), Harry Lurie (of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research, New York), Jacob Billikopf (head of the Philadelphia Federation of Jewish Charities), Dorothy Kahn (long-time associate of the Jewish Welfare Society and from September, 1932, executive director, Philadelphia County Relief Board), and Frances Taussig (head of the Jewish Social Service Association of New York and onetime president of the American Association of Social Workers). The support of the Jewish community for welfare measures, and the dedicated and brilliant leadership which it provided, may have derived from the tradition of social justice so deeply rooted in the protests of the Old Testament prophets, as some students have suggested; or it may



have derived from the religious practice of *tsdakah*, provision for the human needs of the entire community, a tradition of giving that combined the concepts of both charity and justice; or it may have come out of the ancient ethnic instinct for survival that placed the value of the whole community above the value of particular classes or individuals. Used to caring for its own, the ethnic-cultural-religious Jewish community could easily and logically embrace a social security system that provided sustenance in time of need not out of the charitable impulse to assist the less fortunate but as of right in answer to the claims of all men for due justice. Through Jewish mutual aid and benevolent societies, through the order of B'nai B'rith, these principles had been implemented in action over several generations of Jewish experience in America. They had been worked out by Jewish family welfare agency programs, as well, which very early rejected institutional care for widows and orphans. Sensitive to all forms of discrimination, admiring the philanthropist and reformer, through their ties with an international intellectual community far less parochial than other ethnic groups, convinced of man's capacity to achieve a larger measure of justice through social action, leaders of the Jewish community (especially in New York City, of course) were in the advance guard of those who pioneered urban reform measures, particularly social insurance. That the Jewish community was heavily new immigrant in origin, that it had come over to the Democratic party with Al Smith in 1928, were factors helping to make it one of the most loyal segments of the New Deal coalition that Franklin Roosevelt assembled in the 1930's'.

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**Comparative Recreation Needs and Services in New York Neighborhoods**, by Research Department, Community Council of Greater New York, 1963. 244 pp. \$4.00.

THIS study of comparative group work needs which was made by the Community Council of Greater New York

will be of primary interest to social agencies and citizen groups who care most about assuring a fair distribution of constructive recreation opportunities to the neediest of New York's inhabitants. They will be interested because they have the responsibility of implementing the study's findings and recommendations. Briefly, the researchers found that population shifts have created many underprivileged neighborhoods in New York which are short-changed in community-subsidized recreation and group work programs. With information as to which neighborhoods have the greatest comparative needs, the assumption is that the individual group work agencies, public and private, together with their social planning bodies, will consider ways and means of closing the service gaps.

If the findings of this study are of primary interest to New Yorkers, its methodology and design should be of interest to a much wider group of practitioners in social group work, community organization and social research. A major objective of the study was to present an overall picture useful for city-wide planning and decision-making on allocation of resources while focussing on individual neighborhoods. For these purposes, it became necessary to develop a tool (the index) for analysis that would allow for comparisons among neighborhoods and facilitate identification of special local needs.

The index of comparative need was made up of three factors assumed to be associated with such need and selected as indicators: (1) income, as a criterion of need for community subsidy for services; (2) juvenile delinquency, as a measure of social disorganization reflecting special problems; (3) changes in ethnic composition of neighborhood population from 1950 to 1960, as an indication of need for serv-

ices to facilitate adjustment and integration of newcomers.

The researchers were not trying to establish measures of absolute need nor were they attempting to evaluate quality of group work services. They sought a rough quantified measure for each neighborhood according to the need for community-subsidized group work services and the degree to which existing services met that need, based on a comparison with city-wide averages. Even though one may differ with the researchers as to certain assumptions and hypotheses, they should be complimented on having generally achieved the goal of the study. It is now possible to discuss specific geographic areas of New York in terms of needs and also roughly in terms of a comparison between these needs and the average existing needs in the city as a whole. There are a number of questions suggested by this study: (1) in relating needs to available resources should allocation of community-financed group work services be made on the basis of the highest priority for depressed income areas? (2) Must we accept the thesis that there are really no more funds available for this service and that we must "make do" with what we have? We probably have to accept the choice of the "worthy poor" as meriting a higher priority. But although we can only assume in the absence of empirical proof that group work services have some hand in shaping the lives of some people, it must also be assumed that middle-class families can benefit from them as much, if not more, than low income families. This has implications for Jewish communities whose group work agencies are increasingly finding difficulty in obtaining adequate support from United Community Funds because of their largely middle-class clientele. In all our Jewish community services, the propor-

tion of persons from middle- and upper-income groups being served has greatly increased. This may be one reason why Jewish communities do not readily accept the second major implication of this study to the effect that our affluent society cannot raise enough funds to provide group services for all who wish to use them. This is important in view of the study's finding that much less than ten percent of all New Yorkers use the varied public and privately financed group work facilities in their community.

One of the disconcerting findings in this study was that several neighborhoods which were classified as having "greatest" group work needs also showed "below-average" use of existing facilities. While this finding was extreme, many neighborhoods classified as "above average" and "average" in terms of needs did not come close to making full use of existing facilities. This suggests that each neighborhood must examine the kind and qualitative level of already existing services before considering expansion.

In many neighborhoods of greatest racial integration, it was found that non-whites made extensive use of voluntary facilities but tended to make greater use of part-time public facilities. Since only 121 of the 304 full-time group work facilities are completely tax-supported, it might be a good idea for expansion of facilities in areas of "greatest need" to come in greater measure from government agencies where non-whites apparently tend to be more comfortable.

The Community Council of Greater New York has made a useful contribution pointing up areas in which there are group work service gaps. It has clearly identified the need, but this is only one phase of the social planning

process. The question that remains is whether or not the Council and its affiliated bodies can mobilize enough strength in the community to do something about the comparative needs which it has brought to light.

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**Social Group Work—A Helping Process**, by Gisela Konopka. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. 307 pp. \$7.95.

SEVERAL years have passed since a full volume by one author has been devoted to the exposition of social group work. It is chastening to report that there are no new panaceas but rather a crystallizing of method as it has been developing over the last decade.

Dr. Konopka offers us a synthesizing statement on the origin and application of the group work method. She has summarized in the first third of her book most of the major components that underlie the development of the method. The brevity with which some of the areas are reviewed will be acceptable and understandable to current professional practitioners but those who come to the subject without some experience and training will have to accept the relevance of the material more on faith than by demonstration.

The core of the book is in the development of principles of practice and illustrations of their application to selected excerpts of group experience. The author's strength of conviction and democratic values permeate these practice principles.

Dr. Konopka defines principle "in a dual sense: as the 'essence' of the group work method . . . and as a rule of conduct, as 'guidelines' for social group

work." She defines skill as procedural, i.e. scientific, and interactional, i.e. art. The combination of the principles with the skills are meant to convey the nature of the helping process. Unfortunately, definitions that include two variables or characteristics which are not proved to be related to each other do not lend themselves to systematic application.

The difficulty becomes apparent in the section on assessment and treatment. There is little doubt which side of the definition Dr. Konopka favors and the helping process is vividly portrayed as an art dominated by a value system. The techniques of a craft can be identified and learned, but it is the creative spark or thrust of the artist that transforms the craft to its higher art form.

There are creative and artistic connections in analyzing the record excerpts and how the worker moved to help the process. The technique or methodological alternatives available are not sufficiently identified to enable the skill to be transmitted with any regularity. The data presented are too brief to draw the conclusions available to the author who has complete access to the group's experience. The intermediate steps of ordering the experience, placing it in context, identifying the alternative actions possible for intervention, anticipation of behavioral results, etc., are assumed to be available to the practitioner.

The author's intent seemed to be to ask where we came from, why we are here, and where we should go. These are all value questions and appropriate to an analysis of process. The level of knowledge in the helping professions about method is not well organized conceptually and guidelines seem more useful than prescriptions.

Social workers who have responsibility for working directly with groups will find this volume helpful in reaffirm-

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ing their values and identifying their roles. Beginners in social work will be treated to a sophisticated primer of practice and will probably find the book more valuable if they engage in a 'before-after' reading.

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