DISCUSSION OF DR. COHEN'S PAPER

mand for counselling services has been maintained. With the volume of service to New Americans, who over the past 2 or 3 years have constituted a substantial proportion of agency case loads, now on the decline, many Jewish family agencies are able to put more staff, effort, and sometimes money into the development of their counselling programs and their extension to all segments of the community.

Another aspect of the current situation noted by Dr. Cohen was inflation. This has its effect not only on people but also on agencies, some of whom are finding themselves in a position of having not just a fixed but actually a decreasing income. With community chests raising less rather than more each year, and with Jewish welfare funds having passed their fund raising peak, the outlook for the development of case work services in a period of rising costs is often discouraging. The problem is accentuated, curiously, by the increasing proportion of men in the field who, in the light of decreasing opportunities for the better paid executive and community organization jobs, face the choice of remaining in case work practice or supervision and

supplementing their income by outside work, or leaving the field completely. There is not one of us here tonight who cannot think of a half-dozen former colleagues who are now in business, many of them representing real losses to the field.

I think we can all be grateful to Dr. Cohen for his emphasis on the intent behind the current defense effort and for his insistence that social work, and particularly Jewish social work, must never lose sight of its fundamental concern for people and their welfare. He is right, also, in stressing the intimate relation between social work and the democratic process. Case work as we know it could hardly be carried on in a setting which did not recognize the right of each individual to make his own decisions. We owe Dr. Cohen a debt for pointing out that those who attack democracy and civil rights and equal opportunity, also attack the roots of what we professionally believe and practice. His challenge to Jewish social work and Jewish social workers to align themselves with the forces of democracy and progressivism is one to which I think we should all rise.

CRITERIA FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

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▼RITERIA are not static; they evolve with the changes in the scope of the professional field and in the skills which the practitioner has to bring to the effective discharge of his professional responsibilities. The past years witnessed significant developments in the field of community organization. On the overall scene, we saw the expansion in the role of government in health and welfare programs, in the scope of community welfare councils, in the participation of organized community groups, whether of industry or labor, in the planning processes for health and welfare services as well as in their financing. In the Jewish field there is the continuing integration of community services, the expansion of the central community organization, the greater concern with the role of the organized community in the cultural areas; in Jewish education, community relations and with problems of national-local relationships.

The practitioner in community organization must match these developments in the field in professional preparation and skills, as well as in personal qualities. In other words, any consideration of criteria for professional practice in Jewish community organization must grow out of our definition of community organization as a field of social work as well as

a distinct discipline and out of the unique needs and problems of the Jewish field.

Though much has been written recently on the objectives, functions and directions of Jewish community organization, a brief review is in order to serve as a framework for our consideration of criteria for professional skills.

The Field of Jewish Community Organization

Recognition of community organization as a basic process in social work is of recent vintage and, as practitioners of community organization, we are still grappling with definitions of community organization as a method and the application of these definitions into current practice. Pragmatically, however, the field has developed a body of experience both in content as well as in skills, which serves as a core for the continuing process of defining the nature of community organization as a separate discipline within social work.

There is general agreement that community organization is the process whereby community needs are determined and individuals and groups are enabled to work together toward meeting these needs. The process involves interpersonal and intergroup relationships. The professional worker plays a central role in this interrelationship through his

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ability to help individuals and groups to arrive at a determination and articulation of community needs and at a formulation and execution of joint action to meet them.*

The specific objectives of community organization include:

- a) Coordination of services
- b) Joint planning for new services
- c) Group action on community problems

To achieve these objectives, community organization utilizes the following tools:

- a) Fact finding-analysis-evaluation
- b) Development of community structures to facilitate smooth operation of the process
- c) Financing and budgeting
- d) Community education and interpretation
- e) Administration of central services

The field of community organization encompasses community planning and financing agencies on local, regional or national level, usually for health and welfare services (these terms are used in an increasingly broad sense). The Jewish community organization field relates itself primarily to central fund raising and planning agencies—Jewish Community Councils, Welfare Funds, Federations—and their regional or national coordinating bodies; secondarily, to national agencies concerned with broad educational and cultural programs of service to the total community.

ability to help individuals and groups to The Objectives of Jewish Community arrive at a determination and articu-

The objectives of Jewish community organization have kept pace with those of the general social welfare field, as well as with the historical developments within the Jewish group. When we speak of the objectives of Jewish community organization, we should bear two aspects in mind: those that have been accepted as the "traditional" functions of the organized Jewish community and those which represent new directions and indicate possibilities of changing objectives for the field.

The "traditional" functions which have developed mainly during the past thirty years include:

- 1. Fund raising—campaign organization
- 2. Budgeting—financing of local as well as national and overseas services
- 3. Social planning and coordination in:
 - a) Case work
 - b) Group work
 - c) Health
 - d) Vocational guidance
 - e) Community relations
 - f) Jewish education
- 4. Community interpretation
 (in many of the smaller communities, the direct operation of these services is carried on by the central community organization)

New directions in Jewish community organization involve:

- 1. Inter-organizational activity under the aegis of the central planning body on problems affecting the Jewish and general community.
- 2. Community education on broad

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- local and national problems affecting the Jewish community.
- 3. Central community planning in the religious field, e.g.: a) coordination of building plans; b) financing of religious services.*

In considering the objectives of Jewish community organization, several factors should be borne in mind.

The development is uneven, both among communities of different size, as well as within each size category. In some communities, the central organization is still essentially a fund raising agency for primarily national and overseas causes. In other communities, especially the large ones, there are two or more central agencies, one concerned with fund raising and the others with the coordination of the "traditional" health and welfare services.

These variations within communities very often determine the variations in the skills required of the community organization practitioner in any given situation. This also explains the occasional gap between principles which the field has developed and the actual practice in specific situations.

Criteria for Practice in Jewish Community Organization

Within the framework of this brief outline of the field and objectives of Jewish community organization, what are the skills required to enable the community organization practitioner to help carry out these objectives? The following represent to us the basic requirements for effective community organization practice:

1. Professional orientation; understanding of the developments in the field; its broad objectives; relationship of the Jewish field to the problems of general welfare; a concern with human progress and ability to relate his area of responsibility to that of the total community.

2. Background in Jewish experience; understanding of currents of thought in Jewish life, ideological movements, programs of national organizations.

The community organization worker is a member of the community, a participant as a citizen in its development, in addition to his relationship to it in his professional capacity. While as a citizen and as a member of the Jewish community he has his personal ideologies, he must have the skill to refrain from injecting his personal partisanship into consideration of community problems and to use himself in a disciplined professional manner.

- 3. Ability to carry out the community organization process; ability to work with individuals and groups; stimulate an inquiring, positive attitude towards community problems; harmonize conflicting interests for constructive purposes; understand individual and group motivations; help articulate group thinking and focus a course of action.
- 4. Ability to handle research material; analyze, evaluate and interpret.
- Possess thorough skill in the functional areas for which he has direct, administrative or operational responsibility;

^{*} For a concise discussion of the community organization process see "An Approach to the Better Understanding of Community Organization Process" by Mildred C. Barry, paper presented to the AASSW, ASCO and CCC, Atlantic City, April 27, 1950.

^{*} c.f. H. L. Lurie, "New Directions for Jewish Community Organization" CJFWF, General Assembly Papers, 1951.

- relations, etc.
- 6. Possess understanding of the functional areas which are within the scope of his responsibility for planning and coordination;

case work, group work, Jewish education, etc.

- It is obvious that as the scope of community organization increases, the need for broader knowledge and skills becomes imperative.
- 7. Possess administrative skills to match the administrative responsibilities in given situations.
- 8. Personal qualities—basic sympathy and liking for people—outgoing personality—a measure of imaginativeness.

Training Related to Criteria

The question of criteria of community organization skills is crucially related to that of training. How is the community organization worker to acquire these skills? What role is played by formal training, related experience, apprenticeship opportunities, job sequence. These questions add up to the most important problem which the community organization field faces internally today.

These questions have been reflected in the work of the Personnel Committee of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. This committee, consisting of lay and professional personnel, is at present engaged in an effort to formulate criteria for professional practice in Jewish community organization. As one phase of its effort, the committee has conducted an inquiry based upon the experience and judgment of the practitioners in the field. A questionnaire was developed by a subcommittee of pro-

fund raising, budgeting, public fessional and lay persons, directed to a number of executives as well as lay people, in a variety of communities and a variety of professional background and experience.

> The questionnaire was submitted in full cognizance of the limitations of this method, even though the answers, in some instances, were obtained through personal interviews. It was recognized that in most instances the answers had to be based essentially on impressions colored by personal experience, by the "tradition" of the field, rather than on the basis of critical analysis. They are primarily significant in that they do reflect current thinking in the field and can serve as the starting point for further study and analysis toward a more clearcut formulation of criteria for preparation in the field of Jewish community organization.

The questionnaire dealt with:

- a) The kind of undergraduate education which provides the best background for ultimate work in community organization.
- b) The values of graduate training in a school of social work.
- c) Values of specialization in graduate social work training as preparation for community organization.
- d) Merit of advanced post-graduate training in community organization.
- e) Type of work experience most helpful for Jewish community organization.
- f) What Jewish education and background is required.
- g) Questions of personal identification with a partisan or sectarian group in Jewish life.

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- h) Personality traits and adjustment.
- i) Age and sex qualifications.

Graduate Training for Community Organization

There was unanimous agreement on the need for graduate training in a school of social work as a prerequisite for professional practice in community organization, and eight out of ten felt that advanced post-graduate training in community organization was necessary. In the face of this unanimity of thinking, it is significant to note the gap between principle and practice—both in the Jewish and general community organization fields. The prerequisite for graduate training in social work for community organization has not as yet been fully accepted in practice, especially in the upper echelon positions. In some of them, fund raising, administrative and public relations skills and personal qualities are still the major determinants, regardless of the type of previous training. This points to the gap between the acceptance of certain criteria by the profession on the one hand, and by community leadership which makes the ultimate choice, on the other.

While the field has evidently recognized the need for graduate training, further exploration of this criterion is in order. Is graduate training in a school of social work a sine qua non or should we explore other combinations of training opportunities as adequate substitutes?

Similarly, the content of graduate training needs further analysis. The questionnaire asked the executives to rank case work, group work, and community organization training in order of their importance for the potential

there was divided opinion on this, most executives felt that case work and/or group work training were essential prerequisites for training in community organization. This question will also require further study and is one of major concern to schools planning intensive training courses for community organization.

If community organization is derivative from case work and group work, then a training sequence involving the latter two is understandable. (We believe that case work and group work skills are essential in the practice of community organization. But how intensive shall the training be in these disciplines?) If, on the other hand, the importance of case work and group work training is related to the fact that the community organization worker has dealt, to a large extent, in the area of coordination of case work and group work programs, then the expanding scope of community organization must have a profound impact on the content of training programs for the field. The implications are clear for Jewish community organization which, to an ever greater degree, is concerned with national problems, Jewish education and community relations.

Jewish Background

On the question of Jewish background and educational equipment, there was a consensus of agreement that knowledge, obtained through formal or informal means, of Jewish history, culture and religious observance was desirable and necessary. But the elusive question of the nature of Jewish identification has not been really defined. Eight out of ten thought that volunteer association with community organization worker. While a Jewish communal organization in pri-

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vate life was not necessary for preparation for professional work in community organization, although some felt this to be desirable. On the other hand, there was unanimous agreement that it was undesirable for the community organization worker to have any strong public identification with a partisan or sectarian group in Jewish life (as well as in the general community).

Job Sequence

One of the major questions on which there was no agreement, and this reflects graphically the situation in the field, was on the sequence of desirable job experience. The majority preferred as a beginning position in Jewish community organization and executive position in a large, functional agency. Several thought that a staff position in a large city community organization was desirable, while only one or two felt that an executive position in a small city central organization was the preferred starting place. This is especially significant in that it brings into sharp relief the question of the place of the small city executive in the total pattern of the field. Interestingly enough, many more felt that the small city executive position was a desirable second and even third step in a community organization career, indicating a recognition of the complexity of a small city job. The actual experience of the Jewish field over the past few years supports this point of view. Executives (by choice or force of circumstance) stay longer in small cities; executive positions in large and intermediate cities are filled through assistantships, from national agencies and from the non-sectarian field.

The Training Bureau Experience

A significant development in the conscious effort of the field to develop criteria and implement them through training has been the Training Bureau experience, both in its genesis as well as its brief existence. The origins of the Training Bureau date back to 1941, when the Committee on Training for Jewish Social Work was established. Under its auspices, the study on "Training for Jewish Social Work" by Philip Bernstein was produced in 1942. The study was based essentially on information obtained from some 234 social agencies in the United States and Canada and from 970 workers in all types of agencies. The study brought forth several findings of special significance for preparation in the field of Jewish community organization:

- 1. On the question of Jewish background requirements for practice in Jewish social agencies, one-third of the agencies gave no information, one-sixth stated that they had no specific requirements of Jewish training or background for professionals. On the other hand, Jewish background was preferred in the services for refugees, aged, community organization and family welfare fields.
- 2. There was general agreement on the usefulness of Jewish background in Jewish community organization in the civic protective field and group work.
- 3. Among the workers themselves, thirty per cent felt that additional Jewish training and knowledge would be helpful to the effective discharge of their responsibilities.

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- 4. The study showed only very few of the workers affiliated with Jewish organizations and a very large per cent read no Jewish publications.
- 5. Recruiting for Jewish social work was done mostly through chance discovery of the field and the various possibilities in the field. There was little, if any, systematic recruitment through the Jewish field itself.
- 6. The study also showed that the fields of community organization, administration, overseas service and community and public relations were the most neglected in the preparation of trained personnel.
- 7. The study showed that there was general agreement on the need for continuous stimulus towards recruiting, in-training services, as well as training in community organization and related fields.

This study led ultimately to the establishment of the Training Bureau for Jewish Communal Service in 1947. The Training Bureau, through its Institute for Advanced Study in Jewish community organization, established a three-point program for the training of professional personnel in Jewish community organization and administration:

(As formulated by Maurice Bernstein in a paper on this subject at the 1948 Conference of Jewish Social Work.)

- A. Orientation to the Jewish community.
 - 1. The history of the American Jewish community.
 - 2. Current religious and ideological beliefs in American Jewry, their institutionalized expression, their relationship to Jewish communal services.

- B. The programs, organization, structure and administration of American Jewish communal services.
- C. Community organization and administrative processes.

These subjects were not to be viewed as separate and distinct. Each part of a course of study for community organization was to be integrated with the other so that knowledge of Jewish cultural patterns, programs of agencies and technical helping processes became interwoven with discussion of community organization and administrative processes.

Training for community organization, furthermore, was to include an initial learning period, a period of field work for testing concepts under supervised practice, and a final period of looking at concepts and processes against the content of the field work experience.*

As we know, the Training Bureau closed its doors this year. Perhaps it is too early to assess the lessons learned by the field from this experience.

The formulation of the Training Bureau's objectives, its organization and its experience, has unquestionably profound meaning for the development of criteria in our field. At this time, several specific questions can be raised which have direct bearing on our subject:

A. What was the major reason for the lack of a student body, especially for its full time course, the Institute for Advanced Study. Practically, this meant that in the entire field there were not enough

^{*} c.f. Maurice Bernstein, "Professional Preparation for Community Organization in Jewish Communal Service," Jewish Social Service Quarterly, Sept. 1948.

- B. One of the basic concepts of the Training Bureau's advanced curriculum was the opportunity for field work under supervision. The field has accepted, as a basic principle, the need for field work under supervised practice as an essential component of training for all branches of social work and yet this aspect of the Training Bureau's program bogged down completely in the first year of operation. Much of the problem was due to the inability of the field itself to provide field work training opportunities.
- C. The Training Bureau experience pointed up the problem of finding adequate apprenticeship opportunities in the field. The general field of community organization has not as yet resolved the question of what constitutes the most productive training experience for community organization. This problem is tied in with the un-

resolved questions of the relationship of community organization to case work, group work and the other functional fields, as well as to the essentiality of case work and group work skills in the practice of community organization.

Several schools are planning to experiment with a third year curriculum for advanced training in community organization and administration. But even with a third year, a basic problem will require further study. This problem is related to the personal maturity and experience component in the criteria for community organization practice. Realistically, a person out of graduate school without substantial previous experience in one of the functional fields or in a related field, is not ready for the field of community organization and we are faced again with the problem of providing apprenticeship opportunities for such a person. The general field may provide a few opportunities in the sub-secretaryships of Councils, Community Chests, etc. This is an especially unique problem in the Jewish field which offers very few sub-executive positions and practically none for the novice in community organization. This situation has been mainly responsible for the movement of social workers from several functional fields, directly in one jump, into advanced community organization positions, often with painful results both to the community and the workers.

Summary of Questions to Be Studied

What are the major problem areas in the further study of criteria for professional practice in Jewish community organizations?

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- 1. The narrowing of the gap between principle and practice. This will involve a realistic analysis of the principles which have evolved through derivation from the other branches of social work, as well as the examination of the uniqueness of community organization practice, the principles which apply to community organization, sometimes perhaps in juxtaposition to those of case work or group work (i.e., the client relationship in case work and the mistaken analogy of the community or the Board member as the client in community organization; analogies which are often drawn between community organization and group work, without due recognition that group work is essentially an educational process concerned, to a large extent, with the process contributing to individual and group growth, rather than with immediate results; the sharpening up of the distinction between community organization process and administrative skills).
- 2. To narrow the gap between principle and practice there is a need for more intensive interpretation by the field of the nature of community organization, through a continuing program of education and involvement of volunteer leadership.
- 3. This leads to the recognition of the fundamental role which the volunteer worker plays in determination of criteria in community organization. This concept goes beyond that of the need to keep lay leadership abreast of developments and

- to interpret to them the nature of community organization, the role of the community organizer and, therefore, the necessary equipment which the community organizer needs for the effective discharge of his responsibilities. The very nature of community organization calls for the interaction of the professional and the community as represented by the leadership with whom he deals. The direction of community organization and the scope of the community organization structure are determined through this process of interaction. The lay leadership and the professional form the team in community organization, each with its particular role to play in the process. The community, through the volunteer workers and leaders, is the major determinant of the direction in community organization, and of the type of community organizer, his area of responsibility, his professional and personal equipment, which the community requires. Lay leadership, therefore, has to play a greater role in the conscious analysis and development of criteria for the field.
- 4. Problems of training impinge directly on the development of criteria:
 - a) Many of the problems which were faced in the development of the Training Bureau are identical with those which the schools of social work are coping with, e.g., the problem of advanced training, curriculum context, and provision of fellowship opportunities to students

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with family responsibilities. There has to be a greater interplay between the Jewish field and the general field (through contact with schools of social work, and greater degree of participation in the Association for the Study of Communty Organization, etc.).

- b) There has to be a re-examination of the Jewish background requirements and an analysis of the channels through which the Jewish training component can be made more effective in preparation for Jewish community organization.
- c) There should be a thorough review and analysis of the Training Bureau experience, so that this experience will become a stepping stone towards the ultimate resolution of the problem of training for community organization work.
- 5. The problem of apprenticeship in Jewish community organization needs further exploration. What combination of experiences add up to adequate preparation for advanced responsibilities in Jewish community organization? We recognize realistically that there is no set sequence for advancement in the field. Certainly experience does not support the impressions that some of us may have had of the progression from small communities to intermediate communities, to large communities. [This may call for reorientation of the field towards the nature of community organization responsibilities in the small community. The small

- community is not necessarily a stepping stone towards larger experiences but may represent in many instances a career opportunity in itself.] The possibilities of the nonsectarian field as training ground for advanced responsibility in Jewish community organization should be looked at.
- 6. A basic consideration is the need for long-range recruitment for the field. Does the field have a responsibility to seek out the top potentials for Jewish community organization from the public welfare, non-sectarian and functional fields and go beyond this to undertake a systematic program of guidance and recruitment for the field in the colleges and graduate schools? If so, how should this responsibility be channeled?

The field of community organization is expanding. Public welfare agencies, educational agencies, as well as health and welfare are utilizing more and more community organization methods and skills. The Community Welfare Council idea for broadening volunteer citizen participation has a great potential. In the Jewish field we see an expanding role for the central Jewish community organization and an increasing involvement of the organized Jewish community in a broadening sphere of responsibility. Experience has shown, again and again, the crucial role of the community organization workers in determining the direction which the community takes in meeting its responsibilities. The need to develop a highly competent core of community organization workers remains a top priority of the field and calls for

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resources and community funds. The Jewish community life.

conscious study, long-range experimenta- energies and resources thus expended tion and action in this field of Jewish will, if effectively channeled, be a concommunal work. Such study and action tinuing source of stimulus and nourishmust involve time of individuals, agency ment for a vigorous and purposeful