

## BOOK REVIEWS

WILLIAM POSNER, *Editor*

SOCIAL WORK YEARBOOK—1947, edited by Russell H. Kurtz. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1947. 714 pp. \$3.50.

With each new edition of the Social Work Yearbook one is impressed anew by the vast scope of social work and its expanding horizons. As usual, this edition covers almost every phase of social work, provides an important reference source for the facts about the field and furnishes an extensive general bibliography on current social work literature. In comparison to the 1945 edition, this edition is more comprehensive, including among others, topics on Canadian Social Work, Adoption, Alcoholism, Employment Planning, Foster Care, Foundations, and Guidance and Counseling. Reflecting the shifting trends, this first post-war edition has dropped or incorporated in other topics such items as Japanese-Americans, Postwar Employment, Seamen's Services, Travelers' Aid. A very useful innovation in this edition is a listing of information about the major publications in this field, a list which is itself indicative of the growth of the field in the last generation.

While the articles in this volume give evidence of the tremendous scope of activities and services in social work, it also demonstrates how much is still to be accomplished in almost every area under consideration. Repeatedly mention is made of the inadequacy of present allotments for social security, aid to dependent children, services for migrants, financial assistance, services for the handicapped, day care services, camp care, services for the aged, mental hygiene facilities, and many basic needs for which services and facilities are unavailable or inadequate. In the provision of some services, such as day care for children, there has been actual retrogression since the 1945 volume was published. Social work is developing its services and broadening its scope, but the need for pressure for expansion of social services grows greater rather than less.

The 1947 edition also reflects the new trends in the field as a whole. Among these trends are the continuing development of centralized fund raising, the expanding scope of community organization and planning for social services,

the increasing responsibilities of governmental organizations, the trend towards the professionalization of almost all the services, the growing concern for the aged and the development of new services to meet their needs, rising salaries and increased organization of workers in the field, the growing emphasis on counseling and therapy in private agencies, increasing costs of social services and the expanding contributors' base for meeting those costs. The emphasis in previous volumes on war services has now shifted to services geared to meeting the aftermath of war, services to veterans, to displaced persons and to new groups of clients, people striving to live in a post-war setting. This volume reflects the further expansion of the clients served by social work to comprise members of all socioeconomic groups.

Jewish social work, receiving the same emphasis in this volume as in the 1945 edition, reflects trends similar to that of the field as a whole. Mr. Philip Bernstein provides an excellent panoramic view of Jewish social work, including its historical perspective, its current activities and present trends. One of the most striking developments in Jewish social work is the increase in the amount collected for Jewish philanthropies, an increase of over 140% since 1945. In connection with that increase, two developments are notable; the increasing consolidation of fund raising efforts with a concomitant professionalization of fund raising personnel and the broadened base of contributors. A growing percentage of the total funds collected for Jewish philanthropy is being directed to overseas assistance for the relief of the victims of Fascist persecution, the rebuilding of Jewish institutions of Europe, the revitalization of Jewish cultural forms, and the continued development of Palestine.

Another important development in Jewish social work has been the extension of its clientele through expanding use of fees and the changing nature of the services of Jewish agencies. Increasingly, the Jewish social agency, rather than limit itself to underprivileged and handicapped groups, serves the entire Jewish community.

The trends towards consolidation of case work agencies into multiple function agencies has been continuing at an accelerated pace. In child care, the trend continues towards increased use of foster homes and diminishing use of institutions. Services for the aged, until recently limited to homes for the aged, have been undergoing considerable development and expansion. Partly as a result of the impact of world anti-Semitism, American Jews have been becoming more aware of their relation to the Jewish community and communities have been taking increasing responsibility for providing Jewish educational facilities for all Jewish children. Reading Mr. Bernstein's article, one is impressed with the achievement and vitality of Jewish social work as well as the tremendous tasks it must yet face.

A review of a Yearbook of such scope can only touch upon a few highlights. It is a book which cannot be read at one sitting but which can be invaluable to anyone concerned with a broader picture of social work in America. As a survey of the field, as a source book on specific phases of social work and as a reference volume, the 1947 Yearbook is an essential for anyone connected with or interested in social work.

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### BRIEF COMMENTS ON BOOKS RECEIVED

WILLIAM POSNER, *Editor*

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, by Solomon Grayzel. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1947. 835 pp. \$3.50.

This one volume history covers the period from the Babylonian Exile (586 BCE) to the end of World War II. In its later chapters emphasis is placed upon the history of the Jews in the United States as well as upon the emergence of Palestine as a major influence in modern Jewish experience.

ADMINISTRATION OF GROUP WORK, by Louis H. Blumenthal. Association Press, New York, 1948. 220 pp. \$3.50.

The material presented in this book is based on the author's experience of over twenty-five years in the fields of group work and administration. Mr. Blumenthal traces the development of administration from its earliest beginnings to its present phase. He discusses also the basic elements of administration and then in greater

detail considers the subject in relation to boards of directors, staff, membership, community, etc.

What the author seeks to convey is a dynamic concept of democratic administration without being defensive about the so-called limitations of democracy as applied to administration. Mr. Blumenthal makes a good case for the democratic concept and stresses particularly the relationship of this concept to that which emphasizes the high worth and potentialities of human personality.

This volume will have value not only for workers in the field of Group Work but in other fields as well.

AMERICAN OVERTURE, by Abram Vossen Goodman.

The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1947. 265 pp. \$3.00.

This book has as its sub-title "Jewish Rights in Colonial Times," and is a review of the colonial period in American History in relation to the development of religious liberty. Although many minority groups are considered, emphasis is placed upon the experience of the Jewish group in the early American scene.

BLESSED IS THE MATCH, by Marie Syrkin. The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1947. 361 pp. \$3.50.

Taking as her title a quotation from a poem by the martyr Hanna Senesch, Miss Syrkin records very vividly the story of Jewish resistance in Palestine. Read in light of present events in Israel this book gives one a thrilling picture of the self-sacrifice and supreme devotion of the simple people of Israel to the promised land and to the eternal righteousness of their cause.

CAREERS IN JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE, by Seymour M. Blumenthal and Robert Shosteck. B'nai B'rith Vocational Service Bureau, Washington, 1947. 162 pp. \$1.00.

This very interesting booklet has been prepared for those individuals seeking their life work in the various fields of Jewish communal service. Fourteen fields of service are listed and with the exception of the Rabbinate, Cantorial Work, Jewish Education, and Journalism, all of them are within the various functional fields of social work.

The material presented is brief and concise and is on the whole designed to arouse beginning interest rather than to convey complete detailed information to the reader. A brief

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bibliography is listed at the end of each chapter for further details.

Of real interest to this reviewer is the following statement made in the Introduction: "Most of the agencies require that you also have a positive outlook toward Jewish life. . . . There is also a growing demand for individuals with an adequate background of Jewish training." If this is true of "Family Case Work," "Medical Social Work," and others of the so-called non-sectarian fields, it points to a real development in Jewish social work.

DECADE OF GROUP WORK, edited by Charles E. Hendry. Association Press, New York, 1948. 189 pp. \$2.50.

This book is sponsored by the American Association of Group Workers which was organized in 1946. This organization which emerged from the American Association for the Study of Group Work, founded in 1936, decided to symbolize the end of a period of exploration by setting down a record of thought and achievement in the field of group work practice. The result is this small volume packed with interesting and provocative material. The contributors and consultants are a veritable "Who's Who" in the field of group work. It should be of real value not only to group workers but to those interested in the development of professional practice as well.

HALF A CENTURY IN COMMUNITY SERVICE, by Charles S. Bernheimer. Association Press, New York, 1948. 146 pp. \$2.50.

Dr. Bernheimer hardly needs an introduction to Jewish social workers and communal leaders. As one of the pioneers in Jewish communal service his influence and personality have made indelible impressions upon the social work profession for more than fifty years.

In this book, written in the form of a personal narrative, Dr. Bernheimer records his early background, his entrance into the field of social service and his numerous activities in the field. The reader will find here not only an impressive record of Dr. Bernheimer's own accomplishments but an intimate picture of the Jewish "giants" of former days who have contributed so much to the growth and development of the American Jewish community. Of real interest is Dr. Bernheimer's account of the development of social work as a profession.

The reader should find this book very rewarding.

*A more extensive review and evaluation of this book will appear in a later issue of the Quarterly.*

JEWISH COMMUNITY DIRECTORY OF GREATER NEW YORK, edited by Reuben Fink and Bernard G. Richards. The Jewish Information Bureau, New York, 1947. 80 pp.

This little volume contains a classified list (according to function) as well as an alphabetical list of the numerous welfare, religious, cultural and educational agencies found in New York City. This compendium of information will fill a long felt need for those seeking information of this character. Over 1,100 organizations are listed.

In the brief preface of the book the editors make a number of observations which will be of interest to Jewish communal workers: Among the 1,100 agencies listed (including duplications, similar activities, etc.), 28% refer to the needs of the destitute and underprivileged (presumably social work agencies); 19% (not including synagogues) respond to religious needs of the community; and 11% to Zionism and Palestine.

SO YOU WANT TO HELP PEOPLE, by Rudolph M. Wittenberg. Association Press, New York, 1947. 174 pp. \$3.00.

Sub-titled as "A mental hygiene primer for group leaders," this book presents in simple language basic principles for the handling of groups by leaders and others interested in people. Emphasis is placed on the importance of understanding the personality of the individual and the group and the development of sound relationships. Case material is used throughout the book.

TEACHING PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC MEDICINE, edited by Helen Leland Witmer. The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1947. 464 pp. \$3.75.

This book is a record of a two-week course taken by twenty-five physicians in general practice from Minnesota and nearby states with seven psychiatrists and two internists. The subjects considered were the meaning and value of the patient-physician relationship, the history of personality, the significance of psychoneurotic behavior and the ways in which simple psychotherapy could be used helpfully in everyday practice. These methods were utilized with patients during the study course and together with free exchange of experience by all of these physicians they were able to set down a running

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account of their experiences. This book thus contains all of the teaching materials utilized and much of the discussion that took place.

The practitioners came to feel that with a better understanding of human emotions they were able to give not only better treatment but it led to greater personal satisfaction in their medical practice.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON THE JOB, by Margaret Logan Clark and Briseis Teall. The Woman's Press, New York, 1947. 128 pp. \$2.75.

The authors present in this small volume the combined thinking of numerous YWCA directors in an effort to arrive at concrete definitions of the nature and content of their jobs. Although the general content of the book applies to YWCA's, directors of other agencies can learn much here.

It is good to see people in the higher "echelons" sit down to evaluate their practice. It cannot but lead to more helpful and dynamic administrative practice.

THE PRACTICE OF GROUP THERAPY, edited by S. R. Slavson. International Universities Press, New York, 1948. 271 pp. \$5.00.

S. R. Slavson, the well known pioneer in the field of group therapy, has gathered together thirteen papers in this volume to present a rounded picture of the theory and practice of group therapy. Represented among the authors are psychologists, psychiatrists, case workers and group therapists. Of especial interest is the actual case material presented in a number of chapters which shows the cooperative handling of cases by a team of specialists.

TOWARD PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF CASE WORK, by Viola Paradise. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1948. 242 pp. \$2.00.

In her book, which is a study of case work interpretation in Cleveland, Viola Paradise reveals that among women who expressed opinions during a poll on the subject, social work was acclaimed by three to one. But even this unexpectedly favorable vote of confidence, encouraging as it is, shows that public interest, understanding and support are by no means firm and fixed.

All to the good is the fact that the 700 women polled on their idea of a social worker gave descriptions of which only three per cent were unfavorable, six per cent of mixed sentiments and 30 per cent unqualifiedly favorable. The

job that case work has cut out for itself toward gaining greater public understanding of its usefulness is to be gleaned from the returns which show that more than 60 per cent of those queried gave neutral answers, no answers or replied that they could not answer.

The existence of a large bloc of constituents with minds either neutral or not made up underlines the challenge and the call to action—not only to social case work, but to all branches of social work; and not only to Cleveland practitioners, but to workers the country over. One does not have to be an astute gauger of public opinion these days to forecast that the existence of a large segment of uncrystallized or unexpressed attitudes spells danger ahead for those desirous of gaining support and going on to new heights of public service.

Because the Cleveland agencies for a number of years have taken steps to strengthen public acceptance of their services through knowledge and awareness, that city was chosen as the locale for Miss Paradise's book. The directness and clarity with which she presents her assembled material give to the book an independent role as a noteworthy object lesson.

In her very readable style, Miss Paradise proves that it is possible to employ language as a means of providing an explanation about case work; that language need not be used to conduct a war of attrition against a friend, or relative, or reporter or board member guilty of asking what is all too often construed as a ticklish question. For this exhibition of candor, the author of TOWARD PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF CASE WORK must be winning a lusty round of applause from members of the profession, a growing number of whom regard complicated social work jargon as the old lack in public relations.

One can only hope that the Russell Sage Foundation will not let this volume be the last in its series on various aspects of public and community relations. Rather, one wishes that an equally readable book would be planned for distribution to the laity at large and not for the trade alone. Such a book would perform wonders in dispelling the notion in some hard-boiled minds that social workers are people who wear "Mother Hubbards" and who could step into the lead role in "Charlie's Aunt" at a moment's notice.

The book at hand encourages and stimulates action by social agencies to clear the barriers of fear and uncertainty that have kept social work from getting closer to the public which it serves directly and indirectly.

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The simplified statements about case work which were hammered out by a committee of case workers and writers offer black-and-white, tangible aids for the footstep follower. They are in the category of things that one pastes in his hat, or clips out and frames or commits to memory.

The reports of conversations that have proven effective in getting skeptics and the outspokenly hostile to come away with a more sympathetic view of the merits in case work are another high spot. The illustrations of what agencies have done in cooperative and in solo endeavors to advance the application of service to new fields are developed with an eye for interesting and informative detail.

It is to be hoped that the field will learn not only from the good but the sad experiences in Cleveland. The ill will engendered by one agency's fumbling a situation has a greater potential for general criticism than a topnotch performance has for producing a general round of pats on the back.

An incident is related which dates back to the 1920's, "when the charitable agencies were fair game for press attack." A story with heart-rending, sensational angles had an agency's offices bombarded by reporters in demand of information. The case workers, "disturbed at the misrepresentation and afraid of reporters, refused to give any information, insisting that their work was confidential. This only increased the reporters' indignation—a needless complication," the report of the incident states. "For as soon as the head of the agency presented the facts" the newspapers changed their tune and the pressure was removed.

This happened more than 25 years ago, but too many agencies all over the country still haven't learned how to avoid inflicting unnecessary punishment on themselves and the rest of the profession in handling a situation in which the cover of confidentiality is being shot full of holes. A recent episode along these lines has spurred a committee of public relations specialists, operating through the Welfare Council of New York City, toward possible preventive action.

When the chips are down, when the unforeseen and unnerving emergency arises, and when the press and wire services come clamoring for information, each agency is on its own. It has to be Johnny-on-the-spot with decisions and policies and ideas on how to proceed. When the news breaks, the presses don't stop for a committee meeting or a conference to provide guid-

ance and advice. The reputation an agency has labored years to attain can be placed in serious jeopardy in the short time it takes to teletype a story to newspapers circulated throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Viola Paradise's examination of ways in which good understanding of case work can be secured fall roughly into two classes: those that delve into the "how" and those that deal with the "what." The former entails an explanation of the case work process and the case work philosophy. The latter concentrates on the supplying of information and facts.

It is this reviewer's opinion that the latter method offers the greater opportunity for getting a social work message across to the general public, and even to a large degree to special interest groups, board members and community organizations from whom cooperation as well as understanding is sought.

Social work must be doing a better job of gaining an audience than it realizes. Witness the Cleveland poll which perhaps surprised social workers more than anyone else. Witness the number of guides to service that agencies are producing in response to popular requests. More and more people are asking to what agency they can turn when trouble troubles them. They want to know where they can refer others.

A few months ago, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York produced a handbook describing the services and facilities of its affiliated agencies entitled, "This is Your Federation." The members of Federation's Public Relations Department were complimented from all sides for a splendid job. It did not take long for the first press run to be exhausted and for a second edition to be necessary.

People also want as much proof as possible of the results of services rendered. Social workers have been mindful of the need for information of this nature. Only the other day, the New York Times had a story announcing that the Institute of Welfare Research of the Community Service Society "is working on several studies, including a follow-up survey to find out what has happened to a group of cases closed five years ago, and another that measures the effects of case work by standardizing the judgment of case workers."

The difficulty in measuring results seems to warrant more than the passing attention it receives from Miss Paradise, since it points up one of the big tasks that lie ahead.

In the spring of this year, the Jewish Child Care Association of New York set down some of

the basic principles by which it will guide itself as it works toward the future. These principles were presented by Louis H. Sobel, the Association's executive director, during the concluding session of a "Board Members' Workshop," and were offered as a restatement and reaffirmation of policies that have been in a state of constant development and re-examination by board, staff and administration through the years. Since the Workshop papers are not as yet available for distribution, a few quotations seem to be in order in line with the train of thoughts evoked by Miss Paradise's book.

Among the points underscored were the fact that as a voluntary agency the Jewish Child Care Association has "a basic responsibility for study and research, experimentation and demonstration. . . . I restate this at this time because in New York, as in many other cities, the legal responsibility for the actual custodial care and service to children is lodged with the voluntary agencies. Preoccupied as we necessarily are with the proper discharge of this basic responsibility, we may neglect if not ignore the more forward looking and highly appropriate job of experimentation and demonstration, which the more

flexible nature of voluntary agencies makes possible and even imperative, if we wish to provide the best within our power for the child requiring our service."

The "crying need for research and the measurement of what we are doing" was italicized. Expression was given to the fact that the continued translation of principles into effective practice and the search for the answers to specific questions will take "patience and perseverance, tolerance and tact, understanding and underwriting," and above all "maximum teamwork."

In the concluding words of Miss Paradise's book, as case work moves ahead toward greater and greater skill in applying and perfecting its special knowledge, "it will begin to make a contribution to the field of human relations analogous to that which medicine has made to the field of public health. It will have stepped over a threshold into its own new era."

That is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for those who work and strive toward public understanding of case work.

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