

THE REQUEST FOR CHILD PLACEMENT IN ISRAEL

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THIS paper is a description of my experience as area supervisor in the field of child welfare in a public agency. This area of work included amongst others an old township, well established agricultural settlements, new collective agricultural settlements and maabaroth. In general, the paper* concerns itself with the oriental population of this area.

I shall try to describe the problems involved in requests for placement of children, especially young ones, in terms of the following factors: (a) the interplay between the cultural and personal motivation of the parents in their request for placement of their children as influenced by the Israeli scene, (b) the cultural as well as emotional motivation of the social worker in dealing with the request, (c) the motivations of parents and workers with regard to placement which seem to be universal. Recommendations are made for dealing with these problems.

Israel is a pioneer country whose early settlers had been people coming mainly

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from Europe in the early years of the twentieth century. These settlers broke their ties with their parents, left their homes and country to establish a new society. They wished to establish a different and better world from the one in which they had grown up. Thus the eternal conflict between parents and sons was a participating factor in helping the Zionist movement. Zionism used political parties and youth movements to recruit members who would be willing to join its ranks. Through these parties, youth movements and agricultural training centers they tried to educate young people to a new set of values, strongly influenced by socialistic ideals.

Youth Aliyah,** which was created in the thirties for the purpose of rescuing children from Europe and to a lesser extent also from other countries, adopted the method of group care. Its first wards were parentless children or children whose parents stayed behind. An important factor in sending children away from home to Israel was of course the persecution of the Jews. Parents who still hoped they could manage in Europe wanted to make sure that their children, at least, would be safe. Others knew that they themselves could not save their

** Dr. C. Frankenstein, Youth Aliyah and the Education of Immigrants.

lives but that the child could be saved. From the British Mandate to the present time parents have sent their children to Israel in the hope that this would help them to get into the country on a priority basis. Some parents, both among Oriental Jews and Jews from European countries and Latin America sent their children to Israel because they could not manage them at home. Oriental Jews sometimes send their children due to economic difficulties and under the influence of "Shlichim" (emissaries). The method of group care was selected because Youth Aliyah's aim was not only to help the children adjust to a certain social reality, but also to further the social ideal of joining a collective settlement and living in a collective framework. In other words, Youth Aliyah was a movement which had an educational ideal wherein national needs take precedence over the needs of the individual. Through its education Youth Aliyah tried to utilize the conflict between the generations to bring the pupil to identify with the ideal of collective life rather than the individualistic life of their parents.

Parents in Israel send their children to institutions not only because of broken marriages and other social conditions, but because they too believe in the ideal of the collective environment. At least for German youth a children's village in Israel like Ben-Shemen had a certain romanticism and was influenced by the "Landschulheim." They pressed their elders to go to Israel just as children in Israel pressed their elders to let them join the kibbutz. Here again we see how the adolescent finds an outlet through Zionism in his struggle with his parents. So we see that even though the founders were small in numbers and got smaller because of the big immigration which did not bring the same idealistic elements, their influence was very strong. A positive element inherent in the competition of the various parties to gain

future members is that the newcomer has the same chance as the old-timer in belonging to one of the groups and admittance to the established society is open to him.

With Israel's view to the future, children became important since they were the hope of the future, the ones to realize the dreams of their elders. It is therefore understandable that this society became to a large extent a child-centered one, and child care in Israel developed much earlier and to a greater extent than care for the aged.

One of the most outstanding trends in child care has been the setting up of closed institutions for all ages by all political parties and women organizations. These institutions provide care for infants, toddlers, school children and adolescents. Nearly all of them are set up to care for the "average, normal" child. The kibbutzim have also started to accept the "average, normal" child on an individual basis in order to be able to have enough children to provide teaching for their own. All of them have a special boarding rate for children who are referred by the social agency and the rate is much lower than the actual cost. This agreement between the organizations and the social agency thus works two ways, since the former want to accept a child and ask the social agency to participate in the cost. Society sees the child's place at home, but society also sees the child's place away from home when it thinks that the parent does not fulfill his obligations. Every social worker is familiar with the request of schools, neighbors, rabbis and volunteer organizations to place a child away from home as his parents do not bring him up properly. So the public agency is asked to pay for a child who has been placed in an institution by one of the volunteer organizations or political parties.

Here is a case in point: Mr. B came to the agency asking them to pay for RB,

a ten-year-old girl who had been placed by him in one of the institutions which belonged to his political party. He had found the girl strolling around near the mission school playing truant. She had been brought to his attention by the neighbor who also complained about her stealing. He had convinced her parents that they were unable to educate their child. As the parents were unable to participate in the payment for the girl, he wanted the public agency to help his institution in the upkeep of the child.

The social worker was very much surprised since he knew the family. Some of the problems the girl presented had been discussed with her mother, but the question of placement had never arisen. In the interview with the parents he discovered that they too had been confronted with a "fait accompli." This case illustrates that we have to take into consideration not only the emotional conflict and make up of the parent, but also the cultural climate, namely that institutions are good for children either because the parents or the children are "bad."

Foster-home care and group care in families is developed to a negligible degree. In 1954 we had 0.42 per cent of all the children who are not in their own homes in foster homes and 1.06 per cent in family group homes. The reason for this small percentage is not only caused by low and late payment of board by those responsible and by the crowded living conditions which make it difficult to accept children for board, but also because of the philosophy which sees the institution as a better place for the child who has to be reared outside his own home. It is also worth mentioning that quite a large percentage of the children who are boarded in foster families are the exceptional ones, the defective ones for whom no institutional care could be found and who very often might have been better off if a suitable institution had been available for them. There were

3.74 per cent of the child population in the age group 0-18 reared outside their own homes in 1949.

When we turn our attention to the Oriental Jews, the new immigrants, we have of course to realize that the differences between the different groups are great and manifold. There is not only a difference between the Yemenite Jew from South Arabia, and the Moroccan Jew from Casablanca, but there are also great variations within each group, depending on the area from which they come—from the city or from isolated villages. We also have to realize that we know very little about their way of life. The little which we have observed about their mores and patterns of culture has not been observed in their country of origin, but already in Israel. Therefore very often the patterns of behavior observed have already undergone change and disruption because of contact with Israel and the necessity to adapt to a changing world. In spite of these differences there are certain generalizations which we can make. We must realize that some of the patterns of behavior are reactions to the new surroundings, not necessarily particular to the Oriental Jew in Israel, but which can be found also among the European Jews. The problem of adaptation and the difficulties involved are common to all groups of immigrants wherever they may find themselves.

The old-timers and their leaders came for the most part with a positive outlook toward Israel, a wish to establish a new society, and to achieve a total transformation of their way of life. They began to prepare themselves in their countries of origin for their new life. The Oriental Jew came mainly without preparation and without the wish to establish a new society. Many came because they had nothing to lose and dreamt unrealistic dreams about what would await them in the new country, which they

often described as Gan Eden (Paradise). Others came because of their strong bonds with the Jewish tradition and their belief in the Messiah. All of them were quick to discover that the time of the Messiah had not yet come and that life in Israel was difficult and different from what they had expected. Whatever their motivations were, they were unprepared for the new conditions. "Shlichim" (emissaries) from Israel had very often stimulated these unrealistic and false expectations of what was going to await them in the new country. In contrast to the average European, the average Oriental is more passive. This tends to make the task of adjustment more difficult. Sitting in huts, tents or barracks under primitive and crowded conditions, getting the basic necessities without payment, unpleasant experiences in human relationships through dealing with officials or contacts in work, buses, or in the street, are among the negative factors in their absorption. Even where a positive attitude existed towards change and where absorption conditions were positive in material things as well as in the experience of human relationships, the breakdown of old patterns and its negative consequences for the families and its members could of course not be avoided.

The Oriental Jew whose family was a patriarchal one, the father being the head and unquestioned authority of the family, found himself suddenly in a democratic society. Not knowing the language, the father had to depend on his child who was much quicker to learn and to find his way about in the new surroundings. The child, seeing the comradeship of the Israeli parents with their children, mistook this pattern as freedom from all authority and defied his father whose word he had never dared to question before. He found that he was the one to teach and help his elders. He sensed his parents' inability

to help him in adjusting to the new society. Their inability to read or write or to give him anything of the new values were important factors in the breakdown of the family structure and changing roles within the family. The parent who had seen childhood as a necessary state of evil which had to be overcome as quickly as possible, who had been asked to marry off his children at the age of twelve or thirteen, suddenly found himself in a society which prolonged childhood. Not only does this society prohibit child marriage, it also values childhood and affords children special privileges. He was helpless against society whose demands were so foreign to him. Here he must send his daughters to school instead of marrying them off, and his daughters defy his commands to marry the men he selects for them. Whereas before he could punish his daughters, now he is the one to get punished when he tries to carry out what he considers his right as well as his duty.

His wife, who had obeyed him silently, was now the one who very often could adapt herself more easily and had less difficulties in finding work. Instead of turning her salary over to her husband, she kept it for herself. This factor, along with her ability to earn, enabled her to take over the house and to push him aside. In the old society the prevailing pattern had been "women should not be heard in the presence of men," whilst in the new society, Israel, women suddenly had the right to vote and to take an equal place beside the men.

The woman who had married a fifty-year-old husband when she was only thirteen, suddenly realized when coming to Israel that her husband was old. She also discovered that while she had married him so that he should provide for her, she now had to provide for him. He could not find a job, whereas she had no difficulties in getting work as a domestic

helper. Very often therefore, it was inevitable that this change of role brought also a change in the woman's attitude towards her husband. She expressed it not only by defiance of his wishes, but also by demands for divorce, by desertions and by complaints to the social worker, police or rabbinical court. Her own disrespect towards her husband had of course its repercussions in the behavior of the children towards him and their disobedience towards her was not only an outcome of her outspoken disregard of her husband, but also of her inner attitude which the children were quick to sense and pick up.

But her difficulties in raising the children were to a large extent conditioned by the patterns of child care which were suddenly imposed on her. Whereas before she gave birth to her children in her own home, she was now expected to go to the hospital. She suddenly found herself in strange surroundings, being examined by a male physician. This whole experience is a shameful and anxiety provoking one to her. She is unable to communicate to those around her who do not understand her language. Her needs and anxieties therefore are not taken care of as were those of her mother by women who helped her while giving birth at home. Visiting hours in the hospital are short and sometimes she lives a long way from the hospital so that none of her family come to see her. It seems reasonable to assume that this early separation of the mother from her child in the hospital may induce a change in attitude towards the newborn. Very often women, who seem to have adapted themselves very well in the new country, express their satisfaction at how lucky they were not to give birth in the new country. Others, not so lucky, try to avoid going to the hospital, preferring the help of their own relatives and midwives, even though this means losing the

government grant paid upon birth of a child.

This anxiety and insecurity are increased as her traditional and familiar child rearing patterns bring her into conflict with government agencies and health centers who help and teach mothers how to care for their children. The conflicts very often arise in the areas of nursing, weaning and toilet training. Other conflicts arise when the child starts going to the kindergarten and to school, since standards of cleanliness and dress very often differ. The child that has been shamed by the teacher takes it out on the mother and thus gives rise to a new set of conflicts—conflicts to which the child as well as his parents are inevitably exposed and to which they must adjust in some manner.

This acculturation process is of course not unique to the Israeli scene, nor does it have only its negative consequences as we have described them. Many newcomers have taken with considerable ease and comfort to the new surroundings and have adjusted without evidencing harm. Many have been in a position to pick up the new without leaving the old which seems essential and good to them. We stress, however, the negative aspects since here the problems arise and here we want to make changes. The index of the negative aspects of acculturation which we have chose to deal with is the great number of requests for child placement on behalf of the Oriental Jews. While this is not a problem in all families, its occurrence is frequent enough to be considered a typical one.

The problem of child placement expresses itself in this example of a father's demand to have his child placed in a baby home. He himself lives in a hut in a maabarah, there is no running water, the open garbage cans are just outside the house and everything is full of flies. The child is undernourished as

the father lives on relief. He sees other children playing shashbeck and hanging around instead of learning a trade. If he pushes the child he might achieve through the child what he himself could not achieve. It expresses itself in the words of Mrs. Cohen from maabarah L. She and her sick husband and ten children live in a barrack. After her four year old child was returned to her from the toddlers' institution where he was sent for three years because of malnutrition and doctor's evaluation of mother's "primitiveness in caring for him," she brought him back to the social worker: "Take him, he demands clean sheets and slippers and I cannot provide this."

The problem expresses itself in the parents' inability to provide for the child who wants the same as the Ashkenazi child. "Here he wants the black the whole day (meaning chocolate ice cream cone), in Yemen there was no such thing." The father's fear of losing his place as the head of the family because his wife has become the wage earner, his wish to run away from the hard reality together with a certain apathy he feels since he cannot cope with his problems, very often drive him to look for the solution by placing his child. He thus falls in with the existing social climate. He receives without the obligation to give in return and this increases the demands he makes upon society. "I want my child placed and cared for by the State. It is the State's responsibility." This feeling of dependency brings with it a feeling of hostility which finds its expression in statements like: "When he grows up Ben-Gurion will take him away to the army anyhow." Behind this approach he hides his frustration in being unable to cope with the new situation, his loss of identity and the sense of belonging, his self-respect. These so often are part of the immigrants' lot. In other words he feels "you have taken away everything I had,

my house, my place as head of the family. My children do not respect me any longer, take them, they do not belong to me any more anyhow. Before they listened to me, now they listen to the street, the teacher, the youth leader."

We might ask whether the new immigrant's request to place his child means that he is influenced by the social climate in the country, that he has identified with the values of the old-timer or on the other hand does the request represent and reflect the breakdown of his family life, of the bond between parents and child and therefore represent a negative identification with the values of the absorbing community? Most probably it is a mixture of both motivations.

Not only was the community as such unprepared to accept and to understand the newcomers, not only were the newcomers unprepared for what they were going to find in reality in the country of their fathers and the country of their hopes, but those professionals who were to deal with them and help them to bridge the old with the new were on the whole entirely unprepared for the problems which they had to face.

The professional workers (social workers) were too small in number to give individual care. They lacked funds and means to provide basic necessities, such as better and healthier housing or sufficient nutrition. Many had come to work out of an ideal and saw their task as changing the newcomer as quickly as possible. Some of them were members of political parties who believed in certain ideals and saw their task as not only helping the new immigrant to adjust to the new country, but also to make converts to their own parties. As these workers themselves had done manual labor they could not understand the Oriental who preferred to starve rather than do manual work because of the stigma attached to it. Having gone to school herself, the worker fought the father

who did not allow his daughter to attend. In retrospect it seems that the worker who had to help the newcomer had perhaps more difficulty understanding the immigrant who had stepped out of another world into the twentieth century than vice versa. The worker himself was unable to step out of his frame of reference. Very often he took over completely. He, the helper, had to know better and had to have the answer. Bad hygienic conditions, undernourishment, unfamiliarity with the patriarchal family life frightened him. He felt that the burden of responsibility was too great, sometimes leading him to use force where persuasion would not help in dealing with the problems with which he was faced.

The workers, being the givers, very often did not make allowances for individual differences. Together with the giving came the demand or expectation that the receiver would act in accordance with their, the helpers', judgment.

An example of this problem is the following verbatim recording of a Yemenite father trying to explain why his six-year-old girl does not develop properly.

"The girl was born when we reached H. She was then one month old. Sometimes the doctor came and she was in good health. Then he said I want to take the child and he took her by force. They said that she can grow up like in a health center. And we only give the babies the breast and a bit of food. In the hospital they gave her too much food. And the mother said to the nurse: 'don't give her too much food. My children don't eat much.' They said to her: 'This is not your concern.' She said: 'the girl is sick from the food.' They said: 'We will try and don't give her the breast.' For three weeks we tried. Afterwards the girl did not want to return to the breast. And from the time they took the girl until to-day there is no spark of life in her. And thanks to

the Almighty my other children did not go to the hospital until to-day, only this girl."

The state of health of the Oriental immigrants, their high infant mortality rate and unhygienic habits, low standards of living and unfamiliarity with the western ideas as well as their superstitions, gave the basis for the rationalization that they could not be trusted to bring up healthy children. This was stressed even more as many of the parents sent their children to work instead of to school. In addition, due to their own helplessness in the new country, the parents could not be of much help to their children in the difficult task of adjustment.

Although there is at present a reorientation and rethinking with regard to the placement problem and many social workers recognize the harm placement does, especially to the infant, the fact remains that the Ministry of Welfare has not yet found ways to use its money to keep children at home instead of placing them in institutions.

Every social worker and educator has to be careful and to look into himself to make sure that he does not carry over his own familial conflicts, whilst dealing with child placement. Everywhere he has to be careful that he will not take over for the parents, but help the parents to be better parents. It seems to us that because of the historical and ideological reasons and problems of absorption of new immigrants mentioned above, the social worker and educator has to be even more careful than his colleagues in countries where similar problems do not exist. The social worker and educator must be equipped to face the realistic task of helping the newcomers to adjust to and find his place in the new society. It is important therefore that the worker understands and properly appraises the situation a parent is in when he asks that his child be placed. The worker

must try to help him understand why he is making the request and help him find the best solution which may or may not be child placement. He therefore cannot be influenced too easily by the pressure which the parents bring to bear. While, on the one hand, the worker must be aware that the coming to the agency may mean that the parent is still willing to do something for his child and therefore has to be careful not to negate this readiness by taking too much time in exploring the situation, he must be careful not to take over the parent's responsibility for his child. There are parents who tend to exploit the readiness of the worker to help the child. Much understanding and courage are demanded on the part of the worker not to share society's prejudice against the parents. Neither should he get caught in the parents' wish and put the child's development on a material basis by providing him with the good and clean hygienic institution.

Only when the worker fully believes and understands that the best place for the child is in his family in most cases, and that everything else is only a substitute, only when he fully believes that the sense of belonging to a family helps to establish healthy ties with society, will he be able to help the child through his parents. Only then will the worker realize that he cannot take over for the parents but has to work with them and to help them to make the best possible plan. He has to help them to decide what kind of place is best, to prepare the child and leave at least some of the financial responsibility to them.

The following example will help to illustrate how and when placement can be avoided. Mrs. B, a thirty-two-year-old widow, mother of four children, came to the agency to apply for placement of the oldest child—a twelve-year-old boy. He played truant from school and did not want to listen to her. In the inter-

views with mother, boy and the teacher it became clear that the difficulties had started after her husband's death six months previously. Mrs. B was a newcomer from Yemen and as a woman who could neither read nor write, she was afraid that she could not bring up the boy according to the law. Because of her own upbringing she could not understand her son's wish to play like the Israeli children. She therefore saw her child's behavior as proof of her inability to cope with him. Being afraid of further failure she asked the worker to take over by placing the boy.

The worker recognized the cultural background of the woman, he saw her capacities to be a mother which she had proved in many ways. He recognized that by strengthening her and leaving the boy at home and through tutorial lessons, clubs and work with the mother she would be able to understand the boy and also her other children as they grew older. Otherwise, they in turn would have to be placed. If the worker had placed the boy, he would not only have deprived the boy of his mother after he had been deprived of his father, but he would also have confirmed the mother's feeling that she had failed. Thus placement in this situation could be avoided and should have been.

Family B was known for years to the agency. The oldest daughter was in an institution where she had been placed after Mr. B's second marriage four years previously because the child was so neglected that the whole neighborhood demanded placement. Since this placement had occurred Mrs. B had given birth to three children. The family was a source of despair to the pediatricians and nurses. The filth in the house was unbelievable. The father did not pay attention to anything in the house, he was harassed making an effort to keep body and soul together. When the fourth child was born, the doctor de-

manded placement of the newborn who was undernourished and premature. He insisted on placement because of the "primitiveness" of the mother. He was also against the installation of a stove which was needed for the baby if it were to remain at home.

The social worker saw the healthy tie of the mother to the baby. She realized that much of the neglect was due to the mother's inability to find her way in the country, her rather limited intelligence and the objective economic pressure. The worker knew that if the baby were placed, it would remain an orphan with two living parents, remaining in the institution for all her childhood like many other short-term placed children. She also recognized that if Mrs. B did not learn to handle this baby, subsequent children would have to be placed too, in due time. Therefore, a plan was worked out in which the doctor, the nurse and a homemaker participated. The allowance to the family was increased. (This was cheaper than placement.) After half a year the baby was the best looking and healthiest one in the community. The house was clean and the mother walked about in a clean housefrock.

But not always can the child remain at home. Death of his wife made Mr. L apply for the placement of his three- and seven-year-old children. It was quite obvious that he could not accept his wife's death. He left his house and moved into the over-crowded quarters of his in-laws who were old and sick and were having a difficult time looking after one retarded and another emotionally disturbed son. Only when he began to accept what had happened through the worker's help was he able to move back to his home, to talk with his son about what had happened and to spend time with his children. He was then able to consider and later on to agree to placement in a family group home rather than having his children placed in an

institution. He was no longer afraid that the family who kept the group home would take the children away. He could help to prepare the children for placement and participate in their upkeep. Thus we see that by strengthening the father to be a father again, the best possible plans for the children could be made under the given circumstances.

The same is illustrated in the following case. Mr. B could be helped to accept placement in a group home after he saw that the worker did not blame him for his wife's mental illness and did not regard him as a failure as the relatives of his wife did. The worker sensed the fear of the newcomer who was familiar with the idea of institutional placement, but not with the concept of families taking care of strange children. Only through the accepting behavior of the worker and by learning from the worker about his parental rights and obligations could the father agree to the placement with a family. He no longer feared that this type of placement meant selling his children. An additional decisive factor in helping him make the best plans for the toddlers were his two visits, one with and one without the children to the family before they were placed.

But not always are we as successful as above, as the following will illustrate. Mr. D agreed initially to placement of his five-year-old son in a group home, but then he came demanding placement in a nice institution. He projected his own failure to provide for the boy, his wife and the other children upon the group home. He criticized the food, clothing and everything else. In the initial interviews his part in the boy's deviant behavior had never been discussed, nor his tendency to blame everyone but himself for his failure to adjust in the new country. Nobody helped the father to see that part of his wish to have the boy in the institution was the fact that he had the feeling that he had been

cheated again. For this reason he felt that the boy had to be placed, because the child was in a small home rather than in a big institution, despite the fact that the child had made a good adjustment to the home.

In contrast to the two former cases we see that at least in part, the failure of successful placement in this case was due to the worker. He did not have the same sensitivity and understanding of the problem as the two others mentioned above.

In Israel, it is usually the parents who come to ask for placement and in most instances it is the mother who makes the actual request. The reasons for the mother's taking the initiative are inherent in existing cultural, economic and emotional conditions. The mother in most cases carries the main burden of education and therefore is more under the stress of bringing up the children than the father. Most of the social workers are females and dealing with the agency is mainly a woman's task. The father's going to the agency would mean loss of pay as in this country most of the agencies are open only during regular working hours. We very often find that where the husband is the one to deal exclusively with the agency, the reason is that the agency has become for him means of making his living and providing for his family. He can thus maintain his self-respect and ensure his place as head of the house without having to go out looking for work.*

The request for placement usually indicates that something has happened to the family life. It is a reflection of a situation which may mean marital conflict, economic pressure, illness or death of one of the members of the family. It may be inability to handle a particular

* A social phenomenon which deserves further study is the frequent requests for placement voiced by children and adolescents.

child because of unconscious or conscious rejection, or special problems a child presents because of mental retardation or physical handicap. Sometimes it indicates the parents' wish to run away from an unbearable situation and a wish to give up parental responsibility. Many of these parents are immature people who very often are difficult to reach and whose capacity for parenthood is very limited.

In most cases there is more than one reason behind the request for placement. Parents come after a period of strain, after having tried on their own and they come with a feeling that they cannot go on anymore. Even though coming to the agency means asking for help, they want the help on their own terms and right away. They resemble the patient who comes to the doctor, giving him the diagnosis of his illness and asking for the prescription of a certain medicine he has read or heard about from the newspaper or from a neighbor. In many instances parents come to ask for placement because they have failed their children and not because the children have failed them. We can see that they very often deny their failure, projecting it upon the children or upon society. They often place the least-loved child, the trouble-maker.

But we see also that in Israel voluntary placement does not carry any social stigma. On the contrary, the request for placement is made easier because of the ideological background. For many, placement itself has the implication of achieving status.

In conclusion, we might say that Israel's main task has been and will continue to for a long time that of making one people and one culture out of many people and many cultures. There can be no doubt that the newcomer has to adjust himself to the new country, a process which of course leaves room for the newcomer to help to form and shape the

the new country. In other words, he can be not only a passive participant in this change, but can have and must have an active part in shaping the new life. To a great extent it will depend on the Yishuv to channel the influence of the newcomers and to turn their drive into positive factors. This is all the more important as the situation here is different from the situation in the United States where the immigrants found a more stable culture which absorbed him and to which he could adjust. But even there he participated to a degree in shaping the society. In Israel the problem of absorption and adjustment of new immigrants becomes almost qualitatively different due to the proportions of immigrants relative to the absorbing group. Not only is there no stable and unified culture, but the number of immigrants is almost equal to that of the absorbing population. This of course makes the problem of acculturation a very complicated one, and one in which acculturation has to be a reciprocal process. With regard to the problems dealt with here, the request for placement and the avoidance of placement, we have first of all to try to understand the immigrant and his patterns of behavior so that we may be able to find the ways of helping him with a minimum of destruction and disintegration of his family life.

Our teachers, nurses, social workers, physicians and youth leaders have to get at least more basic knowledge of cultural variation and become more acquainted with the differences in customs and values. We have to put much more emphasis on adult education so that the gulf between parents and children will not be too great. Not only do we need many more day nurseries and clubs for children and youth so that they will not have to be placed in institutions, as the mothers are away at work, and more provision for vocational training than we

have so far, but we also need clubs and recreation centers and evening classes for the parents of our children.

We have looked too long at the parents of our children as the generation of the Desert. We have too long taken over for the parents and we have hidden behind the rationalization that mass immigration allows no time for consideration of their problems. We have been too quick to label the different attitudes and values of the newcomers as primitiveness.

The time has come for all those who are interested in child care to sit down and plan together. The professions have to understand more about each other and what each one is doing. The pediatrician and the nurse have to learn that hygiene is not enough and not an end in itself. Perhaps visits to closed institutions of toddlers and infants will help them to get over their disgust and concern with the poor family in the maa-barah. Social workers must find means to get the money available for placement in closed institutions and for helping parents to keep their children at home when this is indicated. Social workers have to find ways and means to channel the voluntary organizations in new directions and to take an active part in programs such as those we mentioned above. Above all we all have to learn to put more trust into the new immigrant parent and to strengthen him by helping him to help his child, rather than assuming that he is incapable, and taking away his child.

We know that we cannot avoid entirely the disintegration of the changing family and the growing distance between parents and children in a society such as the Israeli society. We also know that we have to do everything in order to help the child progress through education and training. But we have the obligation to use all our knowledge and

all our experience to make this progress as smooth as possible.

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