

conflict with the humanitarians who insisted that the individual in distress came before impersonal planning and hence had to be accorded immediate help no matter what priorities had been established in accordance with the dictates of social planning.³¹

The shift in focus from overall Jewish support for the indigent Jews of Palestine to organized selective emigration to the U.S.A.,

as well as the shift from an emphasis on charity to the individual in distress, to methodical social planning to avert such a predicament, were the essential features of the struggle within Jewish philanthropy between the 'forties and the 'eighties of the nineteenth century.

³¹ J. Kellner, "Contrasting Models to Community Welfare," this *Journal*, 51:1 (Fall 1974), pp. 67-72.

Social Work in Kibbutzim*

HAROLD SILVER **

Kibbutz Urim, Israel

There is a need for professional social workers in kibbutzim for the many cases in which the existing structure of the kibbutz is unable to cope with the problems of members who find themselves poorly equipped to participate properly in kibbutz life and do not find opportunities for self-expression and the satisfaction of their social and emotional needs.

This article will deal with the educational program for social workers conducted at the Midreshet Ruppim (labor college near Netanya) for the past six years.

The beginnings of social work under kibbutz auspices go back some 22 years, with the organization of the Station for the Care of Mother and Child. Today there are eight such stations, a residential center for children with emotional problems (56 beds), courses for special education, and treatment for brain-damaged children. Some sixteen years ago, the Union of Kibbutz Movements organized a service for vocational guidance and rehabilitation. It employs 15 social workers, plus a physician, a psychiatrist, psychologists and occupational rehabilitation workers.

The training program, which is the subject of this article, is the latest addition to the network of social services set up by the kibbutz

* There are only 3 published documents on the subject, all in Hebrew: 1) "Social Worker in the Kibbutz Community", multilith, 30 pp., undated, by the Education and Research Authority of the Kibbutz Movements, 2) "Social Work and the Kibbutz", Report of the Meeting at Efal, November 2-3, 1975, published by the Circle for Kibbutz Thought, of the Ihud Federation, 52 pp. multilith, and 3) Kaufman, Gad and Tova Adiv, "Proposed Model of a Social Worker in the Kibbutz", Tel Aviv University School of Social Work, Stenciled, 1972. Most of the information was secured in interviews with Gad Kaufman, member, and Helga Karo, director of the program, to whom the author expresses his thanks. The writer also interviewed a former and a current student (since graduated) of the course, both of whom work in kibbutzim, though not the same as the one in which they are members.

movement. Like other aspects of kibbutz life it arose out of a felt need and adapted itself to existing conditions.

When the School of Social Work at Tel Aviv University was opened, there were about a dozen students, kibbutz members, who planned to return to their kibbutzim. The director of the School, Shimon Spiro, wished to organize a course built around the kibbutz as the central subject, instead of the traditional subjects of casework, group work and community organization. To this end, a committee was appointed, on whose behalf Gad Kaufman and Tova Adiv (both graduates of the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem) undertook a review of the social work problems arising in kibbutzim, and the existing machinery for handling them, and proposed their scheme of a model for social work in kibbutzim.

Committee Report

A brief summary of the Committee's report is given below.

It was found that there is a need for professional social workers in kibbutzim for the many cases in which the existing structure of the kibbutz is unable to cope with the problems of members who find themselves poorly equipped to participate properly in

** Harold Silver, former director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Detroit, has been living in Israel since 1963. After working first as a consultant in the Ministry of Social Welfare, and later at the Hebrew University's Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, he now lives in Kibbutz Urim where he looks after the Kibbutz archives.

kibbutz life, and do not find opportunities for self-expression and the satisfaction of their social and emotional needs. Generally, the kibbutz framework functions positively, but at times the individual's ability to profit is hampered, for whatever reasons, such as illness, accidents, old age, etc., and in these situations existing resources are unable to help adequately. The larger the kibbutz and the greater the variety of its membership, the greater the number of foci of distress, such as at the point of entry into membership, loneliness, bereavement, old age, work satisfactions.

Kibbutz "adjustment committees" (*va'adot chevra*) are hampered by lack of knowledge and of treatment tools, particularly in handling of personal problems. Examples of such problems are: physically or mentally handicapped applicants for membership, bereaved, invalidated, elderly, members leaving the kibbutz, the lonely, the "disadvantaged", the marginal, returning veterans needing re-absorption, the poorly educated. There are also problems of relationship: alienation, avoidance of job responsibility, faulty human relations (in work branches, with kibbutz institutions, with other members), problematic relations between parents and educators and between children and parents.

Conversations with officials and members disclosed dissatisfactions taking the form of: "The secretary is kept busy with everything that 'is not as it should be'."

"Members are leaving the kibbutz."

General feeling of "unease".

Weak work morale, "not as it had once been".

Difficulties in treatment because of lack of knowledge and lack of time required.

Preferences for personal convenience.

A reduction in social and cultural activities during leisure time.

Lack of appropriate manpower.

A feeling of "I have it coming to me".

Absence of "self-realization".

The Role of Social Worker

The Committee then proceeded to recommend a model of a kibbutz social worker, his area of operations, his relation to the kibbutz administrative machinery, and his relation to the social services, both those which are operated by the kibbutz movement and those serving the entire community.

According to this model, the social worker would take on 1) situations where the kibbutz attempted to solve problems by the usual methods, 2) cases where the kibbutz found no way to cope with them, and 3) cases that did not reach existing committees.

The social worker would be an enabler who will strive to have the kibbutz assume collective responsibility for coping with the problems which until now were regarded as problems of the individual.

The social worker would be a partner in the kibbutz committees, but retain his independence as a professional person. He would not be a part of the kibbutz establishment but would cooperate with its institutions toward the development of existing and new treatment tools.

His considerations in treatment would be professional ones. He would have the deciding voice in the utilization of kibbutz resources, in consultation with other professionals such as doctors.

He should have academic (university) training and be expected to have additional skills requiring special preparation. He needs to know the kibbutz and the values of the kibbutz movement and its social and economic structure. He should understand the social worker's administrative status in the kibbutz in addition to his knowledge of the social worker role generally in the country. He should work out his relationship to the kibbutz and to himself as a kibbutz member.

Training Program

Following the Committee's report the three kibbutz federations inaugurated the training program in 1970, with Helga Karo as the

director. The first class had 14 students, including 5 men. The differences between the students of the program and those receiving their (undergraduate) professional education at the universities were relatively minor, but they were:

Kibbutz students are all in residence (though they go home on weekends), which makes for a more intensive experience.

All these students are, of course, kibbutz members, and have had experience in active participation in kibbutz life.

Most of them are married with grown-up children.

Being older they have generally a deeper appreciation of the problems of distress.

The Program is affiliated with the Social Work Training Institute of the Ministry of Social Welfare, but is quite independent of it in management and content.

Applications are screened by an admissions committee consisting of representatives of the Training Institute, the Education and Research Authority of the Union of Kibbutz Movements, and the director of the Program. The Committee is fairly flexible about any requirements for prior formal training. It places more stress on sensitivity, maturity, personal and kibbutz life experience and common sense, as revealed in a curriculum vitae and in a group interview. Each applicant is also required to submit an analysis of a book.

The course lasts two years, with a month's vacation at the end of each year. There are 10 faculty members. The first year's subjects are: sociology, group work, growth and development, economics and statistics, English, casework, introduction to social welfare, social work in kibbutzim. The subjects taught in the second year are: group dynamics, casework, social work in kibbutzim, psychology, sociology with emphasis on kibbutz and

Israeli society, *Halacha* (marriage and divorce legislation).

Field work — 2 days a week out of five—is provided by 10 agencies: welfare bureaus, psychiatric hospitals, Mother and Child stations, two homes for aged, vocational guidance and rehabilitation, mental hygiene stations, family counseling, child development. Each agency provides personal supervision by supervisors who are either former or present kibbutz members. They meet once a month together with two consultants from the faculty and the director of the Program.

Students are required to submit two pieces of written work. The first is designed to teach them how to read and use literature and bibliography. The second represents a serious piece of research, more in line with the theses required by universities.

Graduates of the Program receive the title "Certified Social Worker" from the Social Work Training Institute.

About 20 students are graduated every two years. When last counted it was found that out of 38 graduates all but 7 were working in the profession.

Not all graduates work in kibbutzim. They also work in health, welfare and educational stations of the kibbutz movement. Those who work in kibbutzim do so in kibbutzim other than their own.

Conclusion

The Training Program is but 6 years old. The fourth class began its studies at the end of 1976. The flexibility which the kibbutz movement has displayed over the years promises that adjustments will be made in the program as the needs indicate them. But the necessity for professional social work within kibbutzim is firmly established, and we may look toward an expansion, slow but sure, of the use of social work manpower for a healthier and happier life.