

# THE JEWISH SOCIAL WORK STUDENT: SOME RESEARCH DATA ABOUT HIM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SHORTAGE OF JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER WORKERS \*

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## Introduction

EVERYBODY knows that there is a critical shortage of professional personnel—especially social group workers—in the Jewish community center field. All agree that something must be done to recruit more staff, lest the personnel problem threaten the basic role of the Jewish community center and the effectiveness of its program. Much has been written and even more has been said about the factors responsible for the shortage of social workers generally,<sup>1</sup> the lack of group workers<sup>2</sup> and the consequences for the Jewish community center field.<sup>3</sup> Only limited time has been spent to gather and study the facts which influence people to select or reject the center field. Furthermore, not enough effort has been made to develop strategies and action programs based on

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see: Ernest F. Witte, "Manpower Shortages and Services for Children," *Child Welfare*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (February, 1961), pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> A brief but illuminating summary was prepared by Saul Bernstein. See: *Recruiting for Group Work*, National Association of Social Workers, New York, 1960. (Mimeo.)

<sup>3</sup> Emanuel Berlatsky, "The Effect of Staff Shortages on Quality of Agency Services and Worker Job Assignment," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2 (Winter, 1958), pp. 146-159.

the available data which can help recruit more group workers for Jewish community centers.

I hope that this paper can make a small contribution to this effort. The material which follows will (a) describe briefly, in statistical terms, the nature and scope of the shortage of professional staff—in social welfare generally, in group work, in the total field of Jewish social service and specifically in the Jewish community center field, and (b) present selected highlights of research data about Jewish social work students: their background, how they learn about social work, when they choose social work as their career and what influences their vocational choice. In conclusion I will attempt to draw some major implications and make a few general recommendations.

## Statistical Data on Social Work Staff Shortage

### *Shortage in Total Field of Social Welfare*

In the United States in 1960 there were 116,000 social work positions. Of these somewhat over 80 percent were filled by people who did not have graduate professional education.<sup>4</sup> Therefore,

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Salaries and Working Conditions of Social Welfare Manpower in 1960*, National Social Welfare Assembly, New York, 1961.

if we attempted to do nothing more than adequately prepare the people who are already providing social work services, a large proportion of those in the field who are not now fully qualified ought to go on and obtain graduate social work education.

It has been estimated that in the United States we need 10,000 to 15,000 new social workers each year merely to replace the people leaving the field because of marriage, motherhood, retirement, or other reasons.<sup>5</sup> In recent years schools of social work in the United States even with increasing enrollments have been graduating only about 2,500 students annually. Therefore, as each year passes, the number of needed social workers grows by 8,000 to 13,000. It has been suggested that "the number of Master's degrees granted annually . . . probably fails to equal the number who die, retire, leave work to raise families or move to other fields."<sup>6</sup>

It has further been estimated that in the next decade we will need a 50 percent increase of social workers in the United States in order to maintain the present level of service,<sup>7</sup> inadequate as it is in many areas, because of the growing population. Furthermore, we need more social workers because society is getting more complex and people are recognizing more what social workers can do. Social workers today are wanted not only to *treat* people who can no longer function but to *prevent* problems and to help people who can function become better citizens and happier

<sup>5</sup> Ernest F. Witte, "Education for Social Work," *Social Work Year Book, 1960*, National Association of Social Workers, New York, 1960, p. 233.

<sup>6</sup> Edgar E. Stern, "New and Expanding Services vs. Community Needs and The Manpower Shortage," *Personnel Information*, Vol. IV No. 4 (July 1961), National Association of Social Workers, New York. p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *In Pursuit of Excellence*, Council on Social Work Education, New York, 1959, p. 3.

people. Emanuel Berlatsky several years ago aptly referred to the constantly increasing need for social workers as a "three-way stretch."<sup>8</sup> He identified the growing population, the expanding array of problems and our concern about improving the quality of service.

### *Group Workers—Supply and Demand*

No data are available at the present time to determine the exact or even approximate number of all vacant group work positions in the United States, nor the number of group workers needed in the decade ahead. It is known that of the approximately 116,000 workers employed in social welfare positions in 1960, about 9 percent (slightly over 10,000) were in group work programs. However, of this group only 8 percent had completed graduate social work education.<sup>9</sup> The "three-way stretch" facing all of social work, as described earlier, also threatens group work, only more so.<sup>10</sup> The "automation revolution" already under way presents a serious challenge to group workers. More people will need intensified services and help to use their increased leisure hours in a way satisfying to them and constructive for society. The demonstrated effectiveness of the group work method in treatment settings will increase the requests for group workers.

<sup>8</sup> Emanuel Berlatsky, "How Can We Attract the Students Needed to Meet Tomorrow's Demands," a paper presented at 1961 Alumni Conference, New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, p. 2. (Mimeo.)

<sup>9</sup> *Salaries and Working Conditions of Social Welfare Manpower, in 1960, op. cit.*, pp. 7, 18, and 37.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed analysis see: Arnulf M. Pins, *What Do We Know About the Shortage of Group Workers and the Recruitment of Group Work Students and How Can We Use This Knowledge To Increase Their Number*, National Association of Social Workers, New York, 1962.

Furthermore, other settings and services, which previously had not been too concerned with group methods, have begun to employ social group workers in increasing numbers. There is ample evidence that this trend will continue at an accelerated pace.

In 1950 there were 8,757 workers employed in agencies and services identified as group work, representing 12 percent of the estimated total of 75,000 social workers.<sup>11</sup> Ten years later, the number of employed group workers had grown to 10,857. However, this represented only 9 percent of the total social welfare manpower. Furthermore, during this time there has been little change, except in state and local agencies, in the proportion of workers in group work positions who had two years or more of graduate professional education, even though there was an increase in workers with professional education in the field as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

Enrollment in schools of social work has grown since its low point in 1954. The profession's accelerated national recruitment program, which was launched in 1955, has probably contributed to this. In the academic year 1963-64 there were 7,074 full-time students enrolled in the Master's program in all the accredited schools of social work in the United States and Canada. This represents an all-time high and a 9 percent increase over the previous year. In the same 1963-64 academic year, there were 622 full-time group work students, representing 10 percent more than in 1962-63. This is the first time in over a decade that the percentage annual increase in group work enrollment was equal to or larger than the

total student body. For example, between the academic year 1960-61 and 1961-62 total enrollment in schools of social work increased by 7 percent and the number of group work students grew by only 2.6 percent.<sup>13</sup>

In general, then, despite its recent gain, group work has fallen behind in the past decade when compared to the progress of the social work profession as a whole. Group work, obviously, cannot rely solely on the recruitment efforts and results of the total social work profession to solve its growing shortages. Special efforts must be made to recruit more group workers.

#### *Shortage of Personnel in Jewish Social Service*<sup>14</sup>

In 1962 there were over 2,200 full-time professional workers employed in the various fields of Jewish social service. This is a substantial number when one considers that full-time paid workers probably were not employed until the 1880s, and even by 1906 their number was less than 100. (Biographical sketches in the 1905-06 *American Jewish Year Book* of leading men and women who devoted themselves to Jewish communal work included only 68 who "made it their vocation to serve the interests of the Jewish community.")

Eighty percent of all professional personnel in Jewish social service have professional social work education. It is interesting to note that 80 percent of the personnel in the total field of social welfare lack graduate work education, while 80 percent in the Jewish field have

<sup>13</sup> See: *Statistics on Social Work Education* published annually by the Council on Social Work Education, New York.

<sup>14</sup> For more detailed analysis see: Arnulf M. Pins, *Professional Personnel in the Social Services of the Jewish Community*, *American Jewish Year Book*, 1963, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1963, pp. 203-35.

<sup>11</sup> *Social Workers in 1950*, American Association of Social Workers, New York, 1952, pp. 5 and 40.

<sup>12</sup> *Salaries and Working Conditions of Social Welfare Manpower in 1960*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 35 and 38.

completed professional education. The personnel department of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds estimates that the proportion of professionally educated social workers in the major casework and community organization fields is as follows: child and family welfare, 80 percent; care for the aged, 50 percent, and community planning, 75 percent.

Of the approximately 2,200 full-time professional workers employed in Jewish Social Service, Jewish federations and welfare funds employed 195 full-time workers in 1962 and had over 30 unfilled positions. CJFWF estimated in 1962 that the 640 workers in child and family welfare agencies and the 100 professionals in agencies for the aged in 1962 needed to be supplemented by 75 and 10 more workers respectively to meet current requirements.

#### *Jewish Community Center Field*

Over 50 percent of all professional workers employed in Jewish social service agencies are Jewish community center workers. In 1963 the Personnel and Training Service of the National Jewish Welfare Board reported over 1,300 full-time professional workers in the center field. While not all Jewish community center workers are social workers, the majority are. A study recently completed by Arthur Brodtkin<sup>15</sup> on the background of all full-time workers employed in Jewish community centers showed that 72 percent of all executives, sub-executives, and group work staff had graduate social work degrees. The proportion of group workers with two years of social work education was highest for assistant directors and program

directors, 87 percent of whom had this professional education.

While it is true that over 50 percent of professional personnel in Jewish social service are employed by Jewish community centers, it is also true that over 60 percent of the existing vacancies in Jewish social service are in Jewish community centers.

At the present time there are about 315 unfilled positions in Jewish social service as a whole. About two hundred of these are in the Jewish community center field. Most of the 200 vacancies in the Jewish community center field are for social work personnel. There also is a growing need for professionals in health and physical education, cultural arts, adult education, and pre-school education. The figure of 200 vacancies, which has existed and has been reported by JWB for close to a decade, is really not completely accurate. In reality, there probably are more than 200 openings not filled by qualified full-time professionals. However, many local centers, knowing the problem of staff shortage and correctly assessing their chances of getting staff, probably have decided not to list their openings with JWB and to fill their staff vacancies with part-time workers or non-fully qualified staff. The staff shortage in the center field is already serious, but the need for staff will probably continue to grow. In 1960, JWB's personnel and training services estimated that the Jewish community centers would require 1,000 additional workers by 1970.

Special efforts will need to be made to recruit group workers for employment in Jewish community centers. The size, persistency and consequences of the personnel shortage make it a very critical problem for the Jewish community center field. Compared to the staff shortage in all of social welfare, the personnel problems of the Jewish

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<sup>15</sup> Arthur Brodtkin, "Educational and Experience Background of Full-Time Professional Workers in Jewish Community Centers—1962," *JWB Year Book*, Vol. 13, 1962-63, National Jewish Welfare Board, New York, 1964.

community center field are not as serious; or better put, they can be overcome. But are centers doing enough to overcome them?

All knowledgeable center lay and professional leaders agree that the personnel shortage is critical and that it is vital and urgent that something be done; yet, this concern, it seems to me, is not reflected in local Jewish community center programs, staff time allocations, or budget expenditures, nor can the urgency of the problem be seen in the priority of the program of the National Association of Jewish Center Workers or the commitment and efforts of individual center workers.

In the past decade we have seen a tremendous growth in the center field. Many new, large and impressive facilities have come upon the horizon. The growth in buildings, membership, program and services, was not coupled with an increased availability of professional staff. The staff problems facing the Jewish community center field are many, but fortunately, so are the opportunities for their solution. Recent research data provide information on both the obstacles and advantages.

#### Research Data about Jewish Social Work Students

##### *Source and Nature of Data*

Most of the information which follows was obtained in connection with a larger research study published last year under the title *Who Chooses Social Work, When and Why*.<sup>16</sup> The data for this study were obtained through a questionnaire administered to all first-year full-time students who entered graduate schools of social work in the United States and Canada in the Fall of 1960. Some data will also be drawn

<sup>16</sup> Arnulf M. Pins, *Who Chooses Social Work, When and Why*, Council on Social Work Education, New York, 1963.

from a comparison and follow-up study with the same group of students on financial aid which will be published this summer.<sup>17</sup>

The population of the study was 2,771 students which represented a 98 percent sample. The 2,771 students included 2,047 casework students, 272 group work students and 41 students who were concentrating their studies in community organization. 392 of all the students were Jewish, representing slightly more than 14 percent of the total student body. A separate analysis was made of the returns of the Jewish students. Selected highlights of these findings follow.

##### *Number of Jewish Students*

As indicated above, over 14 percent of all the students in schools of social work were Jewish. This proportion is much larger than the percentage of Jews in the U.S. population (about 4 percent), but somewhat smaller than their representation in all of higher education (over 18 percent). The percentage of Catholic students in social work education is about equal to their proportion in the total population (about 25 percent), while the proportion of Protestant students in schools of social work is less than their representation in the country (56 percent as compared to 66 percent).

The religious distribution of students concentrating their studies in the casework, community organization and group work methods is very irregular. Thirty percent of all group work students were Jewish. Fourteen percent of the casework students were Jewish, and only 5 percent of the community organization students were Jews. There

<sup>17</sup> Arnulf M. Pins, *Financial Aid to Social Work Students, 1960 and 1961, Including a Comparison with Findings of 1953 and 1957*, (To be published by Council on Social Work Education in Fall, 1964).

is practically no difference in the proportion of Protestant students concentrating in each of the three methods of social work. On the other hand the percentage of Catholic students is much less in group work than in casework and community organization, where it is similar to their representation in the total student body.

### *Characteristics of Jewish Students*

**Sex and Marital Status:** Almost two-thirds of all Jewish social work students were female. The proportion of Jewish male students was less than the student body. Thirty-two percent of the Jewish students were men while 41 percent of all students were male.

Forty-one percent of all Jewish students were married. A greater proportion of the men than the women were married. Almost half of those married had children. The marital status of Jewish students did not differ from that of all students.

**Geographic Origin:** The vast majority of Jewish students come from large metropolitan communities with populations over 500,000. The proportion of Jewish students from these large cities was about twice as high as that of all social work students. Seventy-two percent of the Jewish students and only 37 percent of all social work students came from communities with populations of one-half million or greater.

**Educational Preparation:** Forty-five percent of all Jewish students received their undergraduate education in a privately sponsored institution of higher learning and 52 percent went to a public college or university. For all students, unlike the Jewish students, the proportion of students in private colleges and universities was greater than in public-sponsored institutions.

Over 60 percent of the Jewish students majored in the social sciences in their undergraduate education. Next

in order of frequency were English, social welfare, business, and education, each pursued by about 7 percent of the students. In their undergraduate majors Jewish students were almost identical to other students.

About 70 percent of the Jewish students reported a "B" average during their last two years in college. Sixteen percent had a "C" average and 14 percent reported an "A" average. A slightly larger proportion of Jewish students had "A" undergraduate grade averages and a slightly lower percentage had "C" averages, when compared to all students in schools of social work.

**Socio-Economic Background:** Most of the Jewish students came from lower middle-class homes. The income of their families was greater than that of other students. Twenty-three percent came from families whose annual income was less than \$5,000; 40 percent came from homes with an income between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a year. The families of 22 percent had incomes ranging between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a year and 14 percent came from homes with annual incomes of over \$20,000. A smaller proportion of the Jewish students, when compared to all students, came from homes with annual incomes under \$5,000 (23 percent as compared to 33 percent) and almost twice as large a percentage came from families whose income was over \$20,000 (14 percent compared to 7 percent).

The occupations of the fathers of the Jewish students also reflected their higher socio-economic group. The fathers of 35 percent of the Jewish students were below the professional and proprietor, manager or official occupation group. Over 50 percent of all other students were in this lower occupation grouping. Forty-two percent of the fathers of Jewish students and only 27 percent of the fathers of all students were in the proprietor, manager

or official category. The proportion of fathers in the professional group was similar for Jewish students and the other students.

**Organizational Activity:** Slightly over 80 percent of the Jewish students were active in college and community organizations. About 30 percent of the Jewish students indicated that they frequently held leadership roles. The degree of involvement of Jewish social work students in organizational activity was similar to that of all students in social work.

### *Influences on Career Choice*

**Sources of Information:** Both Jewish students and all social work students listed the following as the three major sources from which they learned most about social work: direct work experience, college courses and instructors, and relatives and friends who were social workers. Despite the selection of the same three sources of information by all students and Jewish students, there were differences among them in the importance ascribed to each source. Eighty-five percent of the Jewish students, and only 76 percent of all students, learned about social work from direct work experience. On the other hand 58 percent of all students but only 44 percent of the Jewish students reported college courses and instructors as an important source of information. Other social workers were a source of information for 55 percent of the Jewish students and only 50 percent of all students. Other major sources of information were mass media, people active in community and welfare activities, fellow students and recruitment. A greater proportion of Jewish students learned from the mass media than did other students, but fewer Jewish students learned about social work from recruitment programs than was the case for all social work students. Only 10

percent of the Jewish students, as compared to 17 percent of all students, listed recruitment as one of the three major sources of information about social work.

**Factors Influencing Choice:** Major differences were found between the total student body and Jewish students in factors which influenced their career choice. For example: 87 percent of the Jewish students and only 74 percent of all students reported work experiences as one of the three major factors influencing their career choice. It is noteworthy that 48 percent of the Jewish students and only 14 percent of all students indicated that people active in community work were a major influence; on the other hand only 16 percent of the Jewish students compared to 40 percent of all students suggested that relatives, friends or acquaintances who were social workers influenced them to select social work as their career. College courses and instructors were of greater influence to all students (43 percent) than to Jewish students (31 percent). The three major influences for Jewish students, in order of frequency, were: direct work experience, people active in community work, and college courses and instructors. For all students the list read: direct work experience, college courses and instructors and people who were social workers. Jewish students differed from the total student body in a few other respects. All students were influenced more by undergraduate courses in social welfare (24 percent compared to 16 percent) and by their clergy (10 percent compared to 2 percent) than were Jewish students. The Jewish social work students ascribed greater importance to parents, husbands and wives (19 percent compared to 13 percent) and service received from social workers (10 percent compared to 6 percent) than did all social work students.

**Reasons for Social Work Choice:** About 30 percent of the Jewish students reported that they chose social work because they felt that it "makes an important contribution to individuals and society" and a similar percentage gave as a reason that they "enjoy working with people." Almost 20 percent indicated that they selected social work because it is "an interesting and exciting profession." Less than 2 percent listed either working conditions or the prestige of the field as a reason for their career choice. The reasons given by Jewish students and their relative importance were almost identical to those reported by the total student body.

**Attitudes of Others to Choice:** Forty-six percent of the fathers and 50 percent of the mothers of the Jewish students approved of their choice. However, while the proportion of paternal approval of Jewish students was similar to that of the total student body, the percentage of maternal approval received by Jewish students of their choice of social work was substantially less than was that for all students (55 percent compared to 64 percent). Similarly a smaller percentage of the relatives of Jewish students (46 percent compared to 55 percent) and of their teachers (53 percent compared to 61 percent) approved of their choice than did these groups favor the selection of social work for the total student body. There were no major differences in the percentage of approvals received by all students and Jewish students from husbands, wives and fiancés (about 40 percent), personal friends (about 60 percent), and guidance personnel (about 40 per cent).

#### *Timing of Career Choice of Jewish Students*

Sixty-eight percent of all Jewish students were not even aware of social work until after their graduation from

high school. Twenty-two percent only learned about the existence of social work after graduation from college. All social work students reported a similar lack of knowledge in the early years of their education.

Over 75 percent of the Jewish students did not make a final career decision before the last year of college. Almost half the Jewish students (47 percent) did not select social work as their occupation until after completing their undergraduate education. Only 5 percent of the Jewish students had decided on social work as their professional goal before entering college. The timing of the final career decision by Jewish students was almost identical to that of the total student body in schools of social work.

#### *Financial Aid Received by Jewish Students*

**Methods of Financing:** Sixty-one percent of all Jewish social work students received financial aid to help them meet the cost of professional education. The proportion of Jewish students receiving financial aid was somewhat less than the percentage of the total student body (71 percent) receiving such assistance.

About 50 percent of the Jewish students used savings, 40 percent received support from parents, 30 percent held part-time jobs, and about 25 percent had income from husband or wife, to help finance their education. In general the ways the Jewish students met their cost of professional education was no different from all the students; except a greater proportion of Jewish students received financial help from parents (34 percent compared to 24 percent) and a smaller percentage borrowed funds (8 percent compared to 14 percent).

**Source of Aid:** Twenty-five percent of the Jewish students received grants from the federal government and



another 25 percent received grants from local voluntary social welfare agencies. Twenty percent of the Jewish students received aid through schools of social work and another 20 percent were given aid by state and local governments. About 10 percent of the Jewish student body were awarded scholarships or fellowships by national social welfare agencies. A greater proportion of Jewish students compared to all students received grants from local agencies (25 percent compared to 15 percent) and from schools of social work (20 percent compared to 12 percent); however, the percentage of Jewish students receiving aid from local and state governments was substantially lower than that of the total student body (20 percent compared to 42 percent).

**Conditions of Grants:** Fifty percent of the grants received by the Jewish students limited their studies to a particular method or area of practice. A slightly lower proportion of the general student body (45 percent) was similarly limited. Forty-six percent of the Jewish students were limited by their grants to employment in a particular agency, group of agencies or community. A greater percentage of the grants (57 percent) received by all students carried similar limitations.

**Importance of Financial Aid:** When asked what they would have done if they had not received financial aid, 29 percent of the Jewish students reported that they could have managed only with extreme hardship; another 22 percent reported they would have experienced some difficulty, and only 4 percent said they could have managed without difficulty. Forty-four percent of the Jewish students indicated that they would have been unable to enter graduate social work education. A comparison of the responses of the Jewish students to the total student body suggests that a

greater proportion of the Jewish students would have managed with extreme hardship (29 percent compared to 22 percent) as a smaller proportion would have been unable to undertake professional education (44 percent compared to 54 percent) than was the case for all students.

The highlights of the findings presented, and other facts generally known and accepted, suggest that there are several major obstacles as well as unique opportunities faced by the Jewish community center field as it seeks to increase the supply of professionally educated social group workers.

**Unique Obstacles and Opportunities for the Recruitment of Jewish Community Center Workers**

*Key Obstacles*

Most group workers in the Jewish community center field are and will continue to be men. However, the proportion of men among the Jewish social work students is comparatively low.

American Jews, as is well known, have become increasingly a middle-class and upper middle-class group. Most students in social work, including the Jewish students, are not from middle- or upper middle-class homes. This means that many sons and daughters of Jewish families do not see the social work profession as a step up the economic ladder which it represented several decades ago. This probably affects their interest in entering the field and their parents' attitude toward their consideration of center work as a career. The relatively negative attitude of the mothers and relatives of Jewish students found in the research seems to support this hypothesis.

All Jewish social service agencies, like the Jewish community center, increasingly service a middle-class group. Many Jewish students in schools of social work therefore do not want to work

in a Jewish community center, since they prefer to work with the underprivileged, which is an outdated but still prevalent concept of what the major function of social work is or ought to be. Furthermore, students in schools of social work often respond to the appeal of the new settings for social work practice. Today group workers are sought for experimental work in delinquency areas by hospitals and by the Peace Corps for overseas service. These trends present problems to all group service agencies, including the center field.

Then, too, for various psychological, economic, and historical reasons, there always has been heavy emphasis in social work education on preparing students to do "treatment," less emphasis on "prevention," and even less attention to preparing students to help people make the most of their capacities and make their maximum contribution to society. It is in the latter two areas that the Jewish community center's major purpose and function lie.

Let us also face the fact that a decade ago the standards and the salaries of the Jewish community center field were far ahead of the total social welfare field. Today, social welfare generally has not only caught up but in many areas, including salaries, has bypassed the standards of the Jewish community center field. This makes it more difficult to attract group work students to Jewish community center work.

There was a time when most scholarships, and the better scholarships, were available from the Jewish community center field. This, too, has changed. Today, there are more scholarships, of higher amounts, with less restrictions, from public agencies and other fields of practice. The research findings indicate that a relatively smaller proportion of the Jewish social work students, as compared to the other students, ac-

cept financial aid with employment commitments.

Most social work students do not learn about social work nor choose it as their career until a relatively late stage of their education. Some change in this has been brought about through recruitment activities. The fact, as shown by the research, that recruitment had less influence on Jewish social work students than on the total student body is unfortunate and impossible to explain from the available data.

### *Negatives and Positives*

Group work students are the primary and most exclusive source of professional social work staff for Jewish community centers. The fact that group work students are only a small percentage (10 percent) of all social work students is a serious handicap in the recruitment efforts of Jewish community centers. On the other hand, the fact that the percentage of Jews and male students among group work students is high increases the potential for recruitment of Jewish community center staff.

In recent years, the Jewish community center has become more clear and articulate about its Jewish purpose and its unique function in the Jewish community. I believe that this clarification and emphasis has been both a help and a handicap to the recruitment of Jewish community center workers. I believe that many students today are being and can be attracted to the Jewish community center field because they see Jewish community center work as a means of acting out their Jewish interest. Other people who are less comfortable in their Jewishness are, will be, and should be more reluctant to accept employment in an agency that is clearly working for Jewish survival and a Jewish cultural renaissance.

### Unique Opportunities

There are also unique opportunities open to the Jewish community center for recruitment. For example, research tells us that early tentative career decisions are made by young people in their adolescent years.<sup>18</sup> Most social work students did not choose social work until late in their college life or after graduation. Jewish community center staff through teen-age programs are in contact with adolescents and have the opportunity to inform them about social work, group work and center careers and can play a role in their career decision.

The research clearly demonstrated that work experience is the key factor in influencing people to choose social work as a career. Work experience is even more important to Jewish students than all other students. Many young people are employed in Jewish community centers throughout the country as part-time club leaders and camp counselors. This provides them with an important work experience to test their interest and skill in center work.

Research further tells us that contact with social workers, helps influence people to choose social work as a career. Jewish community centers, most of whose staff is professionally educated, can provide this contact with social workers. The research has also shown that for Jewish students, active lay leaders are an important influence in their choice of social work. As yet, the lay boards and committees are a relatively untapped but potentially significant resource for our recruitment efforts.

We also know that the final career

choice is made during college years. Most Jewish young people go to college and therefore have the necessary prerequisites for admission to graduate schools of social work. Furthermore, Jewish community center staff has contact with many college students who serve as part-time staff and/or are members of young adult groups.

### Recommendations and Conclusions

It was not the focus of this paper to discuss in detail the kind of programs which should be undertaken by the field as a whole to recruit more group workers for Jewish community centers.<sup>19</sup>

However, we can underscore a few major, although obvious, suggestions which can be implemented by individual Jewish community center workers.

1. Do whatever possible to increase the quality of our service and the competence and compensation of our present professional staff. This will help attract and keep professional staff.
2. Provide meaningful and well-supervised work experience for our summer and part-time staff.<sup>20</sup> This will do more than anything else to recruit people for our field.
3. Help teen-agers and their parents to learn about social work careers in the Jewish community center field.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps if more

<sup>19</sup> Recommendations for the field were made at the 1964 Biennial Convention of the National Jewish Welfare Board. See "Meeting the Personnel Crisis," *JWB Circle*, Vol. XIX No. 4 (May, 1964), pp. 5, 15 and 21.

<sup>20</sup> See: *Career Testing for Social Work Through Summer Work Experience—A Guide To Local Communities In Organizing A Program for Summer Experience in Social Work*, Council on Social Work Education, New York, 1961; and Arnulf M. Pins and Florence S. Schwartz, "Part-Time Club Leaders—Potential Full-Time Workers," *Jewish Community Center Program Aids*, Vol. XIX No. 1 (Winter, 1957-58), pp. 10-13.

<sup>21</sup> For interesting ideas see Earnest Siegel, "Vocational Guidance—A Need, A Program and A Challenge for the Jewish Community Center," and Jerry Witkovsky and Rose Cohen, "Teen Agers Learn About Social Work," both articles in *Jewish Community Centers Aids*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (Summer, 1959).

<sup>18</sup> See Eli Ginzberg, *et al*, *Occupational Choice*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1951 and Donald E. Super, *The Psychology of Careers*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1957, pp. 80-161.

young people knew about social work earlier, a greater number would consider it and the total choosing it as their vocation would increase.

4. Use ourselves in recruitment for the field.<sup>22</sup> The fact that fewer Jewish students are influenced in their selection of social workers than are all students, even though a greater proportion of them report receiving service from social agencies, is a surprising and troubling finding.
5. Involve lay people in recruitment programs<sup>23</sup> and find ways to inform and influence parents and other adults about social work as a profession.
6. Ask the Jewish community centers in large cities to take leadership. Since most Jews live in large urban communities and since an even higher proportion of Jewish social work students, as shown by the research, come from cities of over one-half million population, most can be achieved by pinpointing our recruitment efforts here.

The formulae suggested by the research findings and the observations in this paper are simple. They can be summarized in the slogans of "do it yourself," and "doing what comes naturally." The solution to the shortage of Jewish community center workers requires that more center workers do recruitment in areas natural and easy for them, that they do it more consciously, consistently, and effectively.

#### Outlook for Future

What are the prospects for recruiting more Jewish community center workers? I think they are encouraging; I think they are hopeful. The unique opportunities far outweigh the special problems faced by the Jewish community center field. Two recently published research studies bring additional good news.

<sup>22</sup> For a more detailed exposition of this role, see: Graenum Berger, "The Executive, Too, Must Recruit," *JWB Circle*, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (March, 1962), p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> For suggestions see column by Henry Sachs in *JWB Circle*, Vol. XIV, No. 9 (December, 1959), p. 2.

A study of the career aspirations of college graduates in 1961 conducted by the National Opinion Research Center<sup>24</sup> reports that more students were interested in the helping professions than in pure science, business and law. A study published this year by the B'nai B'rith Vocational Service on the career plans of Jewish adolescents<sup>25</sup> shows that 90 percent of the teenagers plan to go on to college, 70 percent plan to enter the professions, 19 percent are interested in careers in the Jewish community. Seventy percent of those interested in careers in Jewish communal service are interested in social work.

The personnel shortage can be overcome if we recruit. Recruitment efforts in the Jewish community center field should have a dual focus: One, to participate in general recruitment for the profession, because if there are more social work students, there will be more group work students, there will be more Jewish group work students and probably more Jewish community center workers. Second, special effort should be made in Jewish community centers to interest young people in Jewish community center work and then help them to go on to graduate social work education.

At the recent JWB Biennial I urged a three-year "crash" program to overcome the staff shortage for Jewish community centers. I firmly believe that if JWB, local Jewish community centers, and Jewish community center workers really put their will, mind and skill to the recruitment task, the shortage could be overcome!

<sup>24</sup> James A. Davis, et al., *Great Aspirations: Career Plans of America's June 1961 Graduates*, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1961, Appendix, Table 33, n.p.

<sup>25</sup> Sol Swerdloff and Howard Rosen, *The College and Career Plans of Jewish High School Youth*, B'nai B'rith Vocational Service, Washington, D. C., 1964, p. 27.

