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sponsored by them with the group work program. Supervisory conferences have been regularized; at more frequent periods, at least once a month, the executive director, assistant director, the group worker and the director of the ICC program get together; and a start has been made on defining the limitations of the responsibility of the group worker for various administrative activities in the institutions. While it has been agreed that individual contacts with residents would be limited—and the development of the case work program also tends to limit the need for this-it was nevertheless accepted that individual contact between the group worker and various residents would be required and would continue. The coordination of these contacts with the case work and psychiatric programs would result from discussions of the Study Committee and the participation of the worker in the staff conferences at the Homes. We also envision the need to have closer relations between occupational therapist and group worker in the development of the program and the first step toward this was the inclusion of the occupational therapist worker in the study group.

This report tells of an effort to make specialized group work skills available in the setting of an institution for the aged, and to build on the experience of a group work agency. The institutions have been able to build on the accumulated experience in the field rather than initiate a new program on their own. The Study Committee represents an effort to organize consciously the testing and analysis of the experience so as to lay the foundation for a contribution to the field. The emphasis in this report is on the administrative and community organization aspects of the program. The Committee plans to present further reports, arising out of further experience which will deal with the content of the program and the adaptation of group work techniques to the institutional setting.

Another advantage of professional group work services in a Home setting is the stimulation provided through dynamic group work techniques which permeates into the everyday practices of the institution. It is the writer's feeling that the group work program in the Homes has developed remarkably well in a short period of time. Undoubtedly, the careful planning between the agencies with the help of the Federation is responsible for the success of the program. A very important factor, however, is that Mr. Ben Grossman and Mr. Jack Gold, the executive directors of the Homes, and their assistants, Ferdi Rosenthal and Louis Novick, are extremely interested in the professional aspects of the group work program and they have done everything in their power to facilitate the development of the program and see the development in this program as a community project rather than an isolated program to be established in their own institutions.

BOOK REVIEWS

William Posner, Editor

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN OLD AGE; A Research Planning Report, by Otto Pollak. Social Science Research Council, New York, 1948. 199 pp. \$1.75.

Social Adjustment in Old Age is a scientific, definitive and objective presentation which has lost none of the human warmth needed in an approach to the study of human needs. It is filled with many examples of true analytical research which may well be of immense help to workers in the field. It clarifies many existent misconceptions at the same time that it warns against future errors of the same type. It is eminently successful in its endeavor to establish a frame of reference for the analysis of the problem of social adjustment among the aged and gives an amazing number of perfectly documented problems urgently calling for research and study. Social Adjustment in Old Age scientifically fulfills the premise of its subtitle: A Research Planning Report, and at the same time it evaluates old material and presents new facts in the field of gerontology.

In reading this book one has to bear in mind that the author intends to present the problems and to stimulate studies for their possible solutions. He points to so many aspects with which the worker in the field of the aged is confronted. Its organization is excellent and it seems most feasible to follow it through in its exposition. There are two factors, the author indicates, which must be considered as underlying principles in the evaluation of every phase of the total problem of gerontology:

- (1) "How well the individual can live up to his various role and status assignments is a problem of individual adaptation.
- (2) "To what extent society can change its role and status assignments and improve their relationship to existing needs, capacities, and predispositions of individuals, is a problem of social reform."

Another important point underlying Pollak's report, of which researchers must be aware and which well determines the validity of a study, is that—

"unless the observer is with the subject almost continuously, there is a great danger that adjustment level will be judged from an inadequate and perhaps atypical sample of his behavior." (3)

On the basis of these principles, concerted scientific attention to gerontology and the general utilization of the findings are well apt to raise the standards of the field of the aged to the level of other fields of social service. Dr. Pollak justly deplores the lack of integration of experiences in the various phases of the field of the aged. While this is true, there are, however, efforts being made to integrate the knowledge gained in all phases of gerontology and to put them into practice with the client. This, of course, is largely possible only in settings where the aged receive many services (medical and social), and where the researcher has the opportunity to observe and work with the total personality as well as the total environment: the worker and the associates, as well as the families of the clients.

Each of the ten chapters of Pollak's book presents so much thorough and pertinent material that it is hoped it will be used for studies in these various areas. I would just like to touch upon some of the most outstanding statements. Pollak points to a situation in our cultural concept which obviously produces conflicts. A thorough all-comprising research project should clarify this and thus bring about a better understanding of how to cope with this problem. To quote Dr. Pollak:

"Our legal system and moral philosophy consider the care of the aged largely a family responsibility. Children are supposed to assist their parents if they are not self-supporting and to furnish them with the living arrangements, contacts, and

⁽¹⁾ Page 37

⁽²⁾ Page 37

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medical care which they need. But the transition of our culture from a rural to an urban way of life, the reduction in living space per family unit, the resulting shift from a three-generation to a twogeneration family system, and the increase in standards of living and care which are considered appropriate make the fulfillment of these traditional obligations increasingly difficult. A cultural lag seems to exist between our primarily urban way of life and our predominantly rural ethics; and this lag leads either to assumption by the young of duties which often become increasingly arduous, or to refusal to assume them which results in social censure, feelings of guilt and resentment." (4)

Does the present trend in our culture indicate an evolving change in this concept? Would such a study prove that the moral obligation of the child to care for his parent may vary with economic conditions, or is it an intrinsic or natural law? Would a change relieve the child of his feelings of guilt and could the aged parent accept such a change? Would it result in a more rational understanding of the responsibility for the care of the aged person and would it prevent the parent's feeling of rejection; and would it avoid reciprocal hostilities and estrangement?

These are some of the questions and consequences which Dr. Pollak's statements provoke, and it should be highly interesting and valuable to learn what the findings of such a study would be.

Dr. Pollak refers to another far-reaching observation which merits special discussion. He cites exploratory biographical studies and interviews which show that the majority of people who have a positive attitude toward their own aging,

"regard it as a period of self-integration, of fulfillment in the sense that a task is brought to a close, a meaningful existence is being completed, and what they lived for and tried to be is being accomplished. If they think they have achieved their objectives and approve of them, they feel happiness in recollection, in the wisdom of their growing insight, and in seeing good results from their efforts in public or private life". (5)

(4) Pages 3, 4 (5) Page 64 (6) Page 4 (7) Page 117

This is another most interesting statement to which, however, we feel Pollak's caution, referred to at the outset, should be applied, namely, that the observer should be with the subject almost continuously. It is true that there are some old people who feel this way. Our experience, however, indicates that the percentage is not very high. This does not mean, however, that the old person cannot be helped to see this way if the proper environment can be created.

Dr. Pollak states that: "work, independence and freedom are among the highest social values in our culture" (6) and wherever the environment of the aged provides for work possibilities suitable to the aged, and where a spirit permeates this environment it is apt to promote independence and freedom. One may well find that a good percentage of intelligent old people regard their own aging as fulfillment of a meaningful existence.

This problem leads us into Pollak's thoughts on "Old Age and Making a Living." The work experience of the aged during the war years has well demonstrated its beneficial effects on the attitudes of older persons so that society should feel its obligation to provide work possibilities in conformity with their capacities. Anyone who has observed an aged person being re-introduced to either his former trade, or to work previously performed, or to the acquisition of new skills that give him the opportunity of making a living, would agree that work represents a central factor in the emotional well being of the aged. The suggested studies of performance of older worker, frictions due to age differentials in the work force, job stability of older workers, accidents risk of older workers, retention of skills in advanced age, and physical decline and acceptance of reduced wages, would be most interesting, and the findings very helpful in providing work possibilities either in industry or in Sheltered Workshops. It is obvious that this would call for community efforts and community planning to insure the cooperation of industry and all concerned. It also would mean a more flexible administration of public assistance.

In a discussion of "Attitudes Toward Retirement," Pollak mentions several types of older persons having either positive or negative feelings toward retirement: (7)

- "Group I: Workers who have been separated from full-time work in their usual occupations (retired) and who either sought separation or have become reconciled to it;
- Group II: Workers who have been retired but who have not accepted the situation:
- Group III: Workers who are still employed full-time in their usual occupations but who would retire if financial and other circumstances permitted;
- Group IV: Workers who are still employed and who wish to remain so (i.e. have a negative attitude toward retirement). Obviously the lower age limit employed in classifying workers according to this scheme may be arbitrarily determined."

Dr. Pollak refers to the European custom of "Ausgedings or Altenteil" (equivalent to "lebtag or lebtig" which may be even more expressive in its meaning). It is an old tradition that the aging farmer turns his farm over to his oldest son in return for which this son is legally obligated to provide adequate care for his parents during their remaining years. As concomitants to these problems Dr. Pollak points to the vital factors of health and educational needs. While in general great efforts towards meeting health needs are being made, the provision for educational and cultural aspects deserve greater attention

If we analyse all questions which Dr. Pollak poses for examination and research we come to the conclusion that it is not altogether the older person but society that determines the type of life he may lead. The "Adjustment in Retirement" depends on how society will create the conditions under which the older person can retire. Dr. Pollak refers to the philosophical essay of Perry according to whom "the studies of old people have reached an all time low in that youth has no respect for their authority and wisdom." We may do well to seek the reasons for that in a rather general cultural trend in our society. We are inclined to think that these trends are the results of difficulties in carrying out the responsibility to care for parents. How well the older person can accept his retirement will depend on the extent to which society can change these condi-JULIUS WEIL tions and attitudes.

Montefiore Home, Cleveland.

OLD AGE IN NEW YORK CITY, by Helen Hardy Brunot. Welfare Council, New York, 1947. 128 pp. \$1.00.

Mrs. Brunot documents this study, done originally in 1943, with interesting and pertinent case histories and tables which prove her objectivity and accuracy. One feels the deep sympathy with which Mrs. Brunot presents the serious plight of the aged dependent upon public or private facilities, as she expresses it:

"It seems possible that present day society often produces, or at least speeds up, mental decline in the aged. Many of the aged persons whom the Bureau saw or knew about were almost constantly being subjected to the attitude that they were too old to do useful work, too old to make their own decisions, too old to go out alone, too old to learn new ways. Thus the self-confidence of the middle aged and old is daily undermined. It takes no profound knowledge of human psychology to know that such experiences must eventually leave their mark."

Many serious lacks and misconceptions inherent in the policies and administration of public and private agencies in the field of the aged at that time are pointed out. While in the meantime one has become aware of these problems, and concepts and attitudes have changed to a major extent, many of these inadequacies still exist not only in New York but throughout the country. The need for long term care for the chronically ill-not only for the indigent but also for the partially and non-indigent -is even more pressing today because of this changed attitude towards the aged problem. One has become aware of the necessity of extending case work service to recipients of public assistance seeking help with personal problems, of studying budgetary basis, determining financial needs, of administering specialized types of assistance needed by the aged, thus far undifferentiated by public and private assistance, the validity of and need for psychiatric diagnosis and care of the aged. It is noteworthy to record Mrs. Brunot's vision:

"for developing a program for borderline cases" and ". . . the problem of care for the mildly senile is a fairly com-

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mon one, but is one upon which little community attention has yet been focused."

This problem is almost at the same stage as it was when Mrs. Brunot reported this in 1943 and thus far, to our knowledge, only one agency has made provisions for this type of patient where he can be properly supervised and treated wherever treatment is feasible. This arrangement was made as direct result of Mrs. Brunot's statement:

"As was true in connection with problems of the physically disabled, the matter of living arrangements which would provide some security and protection for the mentally disabled was often the issue among the cases known to the Bureau. Both in the group with mild deterioration and among those paroled from state hospitals there was evidence that the absence of such facilities often resulted in protracted neglect of these old people."

It is hoped that a better awareness of such possibilities will be followed up by provisions for similar arrangements. The existing apprehensions against such provisions in the institution for the aged are not borne out in our experience. As earlier indicated some of the findings by now have received clarification and are being approached in accordance with this better understanding. For instance, as Dr. Deardorff refers to: "old age" or "senility":

"Old age" or "senility" is no longer adequate as a diagnosis either of physical fills or of social maladjustments. More specific descriptions are necessary. A keener appreciation that advancing years do not create in all persons a similar state of mind or the same degree of modification of personal capacities is essential to a real understanding of the actual hardships of old people and must necessarily underlie any intelligent program in their behalf. Moreover, until these matters are cleared up, it would be both very difficult and even dangerous to attempt a far-flung measurement of need.

By "old age" we mean the normal process of growing old or senescence, while "senility" is a deviation from the process of senescence. Likewise it is known that dependency in old age is in no way different from dependency in any phase of life, and that the degree of adjust-

ment to old age depends upon previous phases of life. Mrs. Brunot's awareness that the aged's "question of where to live was usually associated with some other problem" (page 16) has been borne out by a later study of just this problem and is generally recognized. One of the points made abundantly clear by Mrs. Brunot is the desperate need for trained workers in the field of the aged. It is gratifying to note that New York and Cleveland have started programs which will contribute towards the solution of this problem.

In evaluating Mrs. Brunot's report one has to recognize its historical background. Mrs. Brunot was one of the few pioneers who helped in "redeeming the aged from their shelves and in sweeping off the cobwebs." In other words it was to a great degree due to her efforts that sociologists, case workers, psychiatrists and physicians became aware that there is a problem of the aged. The resulting studies led to the new concept that the aged are individuals who happened to grow old and deserve the same treatment as the individuals of younger age groups. It is true that a number of her findings have become common knowledge and are scientifically deepened and executed in practice, but when this report was made available in 1943 it became a most valuable educational tool. It was one of the few studies that helped the practitioner in the setting up of progressive services in the care of the aged. The summary observations, conclusions, and recommendations formed a sound basis not only for community planning but also for institutional programs.

JULIUS WEIL

The Jewish Social

Montefiore Home, Cleveland.

Brief Comments on Books Received. William Posner, Editor

CHILD OFFENDERS, by Harriet Goldberg. Grune and Stratton, New York, 1948. 215 pp. \$4.00.

This book on Juvenile delinquency differs somewhat from others in that it endeavors to portray the behavior patterns of children whose first encounter with the law is through truancy or misconduct in school. The author states that inasmuch as most criminal careers begin with habitual truancy this factor offers a valuable field for investigation.

Dr. Goldberg presents case material, citing various types of children such as those who are

mentally retarded, emotionally unstable, neurotics, psychopathic personalities, physically ill, and socially handicapped.

Dr. Goldberg stresses the fact that help to delinquent children is the job of the total community, not the school alone. The court, police, recreation center, social agency—all must use their techniques to help children and families. To do a good and effective job, the author feels, agencies should be more flexible in their intake policies so that all types of people may get the help they need.

ESSAYS IN JEWISH BIOGRAPHY, by Alexander Marx. The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948. 298 pp. \$3.00.

To persons interested in Jewish history, Professor Marx is best known as the co-author with the late Professor Margolis of the popular volume A History of the Jewish People. As director of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, he has done much to make it one of the greatest institutions of its kind.

In the present volume, Dr. Marx presents twelve biographical essays of a like number of Jewish personalities who made their mark on Jewish scholarship and Jewish living. Beginning with Saadia Gaon, who lived in the tenth century, he discusses also the great Rashi and Maimonides. Among the giants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Dr. Marx writes about Moritz Steinschneider, the great bibliographer, Solomon Schechter, and Israel Friedlander.

We are indebted to Professor Marx for giving us this interesting volume and making available to lay readers the life and times of great personalities known formerly to scholars alone.

GROUP EXPERIFNCE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES, by Grace L. Coyle. The Woman's Press, New York, 1947. 185 pp. \$2.75.

Many social and group workers will be interested in this little volume by Dr. Coyle. Most of the papers in the book were previously published in various professional publications. Dr. Coyle has gathered them together for the purpose of presenting her philosophy, developed over a period of many years as a group worker and social agency executive.

Dr. Coyle stresses here the relationship between "tools and goals." Techniques are important but they have to be seen in relation to the democratic goals we set out to accomplish. Discussed also are the functions of the board member, the professional and the executive director on the job. There is particular emphasis on the professional person's need to be involved in social action both as a citizen and professional.

HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY, by Harry Elmer Barnes.
Philosophical Library, New York, 1948. 186
pp. \$3.00.

Dr. Barnes traces in this book the development of theories concerning social origins and social evolution from oriental times to the present. Historical sociology is defined as an effort "to account for the origins of associated life among human beings." It traces the origins and development of all forms of social organization and structure. It is not concerned merely with the concrete and descriptive accounts of human living but rather with the dynamics of change and development from early forms of organization to our own day.

Issues in Jewish Education, by Louis Katzoff.
Bloch Publishing Co., New York, 1949. 192 pp.
\$3.50.

This book has as its subtitle "A Study of the Philosophy of the Conservative Congregational School." To this reviewer, not a professional educator, this volume is one of the most enlightening that has come his way in a long time. For here is an attempt to determine the educational philosophy of the Conservative group in American Jewish life. A highly skilled research study, Dr. Katzoff has in this effort concentrated not only in arriving at likenesses and differences in the curricula of the various schools studied, but has also ascertained the attitudes and thinking of teachers, principals, and rabbis, to basic aspects of Jewish living as reflected in the various subjects taught as well as in the educational method used by the schools.

What is most interesting and perhaps disturbing is the lack of coordinated thinking in some instances even within the same school between rabbi, principal and teacher. Although there is evidence that the congregational school inculcates the value and primacy of the synagogue in Jewish life and hence the importance of religious values, there is also evidence of the lack of standardized curricula and incompetent personnel.

Dr. Katzoff's objectivity in presenting the results of this study are highly commendable.

One wishes, however, that the author had presented also recommendations for consideration by educators and lay leaders. On the other hand, the implications of the study can very well serve as a "word to the wise." This, by far, is the greatest value of this book and the author should be commended both for undertaking the project and bringing it to the attention of a wider public.

A more extensive review and evaluation of this book will appear in an early issue of the Quarterly.

MENTAL HEALTH IN MODERN SOCIETY, by Thomas A. C. Rennie and Luther E. Woodward. The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1948. 424 pp. \$4.00.

In this book Drs. Rennie and Woodward give a very interesting review of the development of psychiatry and the mental hygiene approach in the Armed Forces during World War II.

From this they go on to a discussion of the "Sources of Help in Treatment and Prevention." Considering in turn the contribution to mental and emotional health of the practicing physician, the social worker, the psychologist, the minister, industry, etc.

The volume is finally summarized by the authors in stressing the importance of emotional maturity, economic security, and interracial and international understanding as important factors in mental health.

This book should be of particular value to all persons professionally engaged in helping people.

Passover: Its History and Traditions, by Theodor H. Gaster. Henry Schuman, New York, 1949. 102 pp. \$2.50.

This small volume by Dr. Gaster is most interesting in that it interprets the holiday of Passover and its customs in the light of modern research as well as in its traditional aspects. He traces the origin of the holiday as a feast which was in existence long before the Israelites left Egypt. He points to the familiar customs and ceremonies of Passover as having been practiced by other peoples and societies in ancient times. Among the elements he deals with are: the Seder, the Haggadah, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, etc.

Although scholarly, the book is simply written and will be of interest to informed persons.

PEDIATRICS AND THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD, edited by Helen L. Witmer. The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1948. 180 pp. \$1.50.

This book is the report of a Conference held at Hershey, Pa., in March 1947, at which were present 44 pediatricians, psychiatrists and social workers. The purpose of the Conference, sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund, was to discuss both the theory and practice of approaches to comprehensive pediatrics, or what might be called psychiatrically oriented pediatrics.

The meeting discussed such subjects as "What have we learned about emotional growth and development?" "What can the pediatrician in practice do in the field of mental health?" "What are the next steps in pediatric teaching and training toward better understanding of the emotional life of the child?"

There seemed to be real recognition on the part of the pediatrician of the need for helping the whole child and the importance of emotions and feelings. There was also the corollary understanding that social workers can be helpful in a hospital setting in making the help take on meaning for the child and his family.

Problems of Child Delinquency, by Maud A. Merrill. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York, 1947. 403 pp. \$3.50.

The author of this book presents some of the problems of children who pass through the Juvenile Courts. The material is based on a study of the characteristics of both delinquent and non-delinquent children for purposes of comparison and contrast.

The underlying view expressed in this book is that delinquent behavior can be understood only in light of the needs of the individual child and the extent to which these needs have been met or satisfied. This view will, of course, meet with agreement from social workers whose approach to the delinquent as an individual has been characteristic of their thinking and practice for many years.

THE PURIM ANTHOLOGY, by Philip Goodman.
The Jewish Publication Society of America,
1949. 525 pp. \$4.00.

The Jewish Publication Society has been performing a great service in publishing, in recent years, various anthologies in its Holiday Series. The books on *Hanukkah* and *Sabbath* have had

wide appeal. Now comes *The Purum Anthology*, by Philip Goodman. There is a chapter on the origin of Purim by the noted historian, Solomon Grayzel. A second chapter, on "Special Purims," describes various historical episodes in later days, when special Purims were instituted to commemorate the escape from danger of the Jews of those times.

There are other chapters on "Purim, in Jewish Law," "Purim in the Short Story," "Purim in Poetry," "Purim in Music," etc. There is also in the book a music supplement which gives Purim songs in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew.

This is indeed a worthy and valuable volume.

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