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A study of the group work method in industry as reflected in articles

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A STUDY OF THE USE OF THE GROUP WORK METHOD IN INDUSTRY

AS REFLECTED IN ARTICLES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF

SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance

The growth of mechanized industry has brought a variety of races and nationality groups together. In many incidents the techniques and methods of social work, particularly case work, have been employed.

With the increase in numbers of individuals to be handled it is felt that there should be a wider use of the group work method in industry. At the present time, little has been written on the subject. The writer has secured such information that has been made available and has compiled it in this study.

Purpose of Study

This study points out the value of the group work method to industrial management. This study through its analysis of the group work method, will show the practicality of the group method through its use of democratic thinking and principles.

This study will also serve as a means for providing comprehensive understanding of the individual in the group. Any group accomplishment is simply the concerted action of individuals. The group serves as a socializing organism and as a means of personal development.

This study was made for the following specific purposes:

1. To determine the effectiveness of guidance through the use of group work methods rather than the individual approach in industrial relations.

2. To investigate the nature of the programs, methods, and techniques used in industry.

3. To determine the extent to which group work can aid in preventing maladjustments among industrial workers through group
experience designed to perfect effective group and inter-
group relations in industry.

Scope and Limitations

The material contained in this study is limited to those data made available between the years of 1940 and 1945. This was done because it was felt that during the war years in which there had been such a rise in industrial output, more emphasis had been placed on the group work method and its techniques than formerly.

Method of Procedure

Data for this study have been taken from readings in the field related to the subject, such as books and periodicals. This literature has been carefully read and analyzed to demonstrate the points relative to the use of the group work method in industry.
CHAPTER II

THE GROUP WORK METHOD

As is true in all fields, many definitions have been given for group work and its methods. After careful pursuing of various definitions, it was decided by the writer that the one given by Gertrude Wilson is most conclusive and explains more fully just what is meant by group work. The definition is as follows: "We therefore see group work as a process through which group life is influenced by the worker who consciously directs the interacting process toward the accomplishment of a social goal concerned in a democratic society."\(^1\)

Group work and its methods is not new. In fact, it has been used in the field of social work for a long time. In the early years, however, group workers were not necessarily trained persons, and did not fall into the real brackets of professional workers. On hearing the words, group work or group workers, there was an almost automatic classification of recreational leaders, or play leaders. It was thought that the chief function of group workers was to provide different forms of recreation for children and adults, organize clubs, teach games, songs, dances and the like. Most people were unaware of the techniques involved in the performance of these duties, and the underlying democratic philosophies. They failed to recognize the values derived from group interaction and the human needs being met by group work services.

All human beings need to have opportunities to grow up free to make choices which will make it possible for them to secure a living, establish a home, rear children, enjoy leisure and feel at home in the universe. This yearning to be at one with the universe is expressed through overwhelming desires to belong to

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things, to men and to God. Possessions, organizations and re-
ligions are the established evidences of man's struggle to
meet his basic needs.

The problem of meeting individual and societal needs is most
complex and difficult. The approach to this problem must be two-
fold. On the one hand, it is necessary to realize that changing
values is a long process and one that is not usually accomplished
in the lifetime of any one generation; on the other hand it is
necessary to make all possible adjustments in the present system
to insure as good a life possible for the present generation.1

In order that one may understand fully the meaning and significance
of the group work method; one must also have a coherent understanding and
knowledge of a group itself, and how it functions, and its component parts.

"All good groups have a democratic basis, founded on democratic
principles, without such a basis there would be no real interaction and
the end results would not be desirable."2

Groups must have a basic and possessive belief in democratic
principles and just demonstrate this basic point of view in be-
havior; it must have a belief in the group as a means of individual
development, a respect for majority rule and a passionate protective-
ness of the minority opinion and its right to be heard. It must be-
lieve in the group process, and the emergence of group thinking,
planning and action as different from and of more value to the in-
dividual and to society than the separate, unaided acts of any one
single person in the group.3

The group work method then, is that method which employs as its chief
tool the use of the small group or problem-centered group. It is
categorized by its directness, its air of impersonality and informality.
The size of the group varies depending on conditions, However, it is be-
lieved that for most purposes, a group of ten or twelve is most efficient.

1 Ibid., p. 382.
2 Bernice Baxter and Rosalind Cassidy, Group Experience-The Democratic
Way (New York, 1943), p. 3.
3 Ibid.
In smaller groups the individual is not lost. He counts for something. He gives and takes and participates in a genuinely creative process. More significant things can be accomplished by a team of ten or twelve persons than by the individual members separately. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

The structure of the group is democratic, "it leads to the preservation of the integrity of the individual, nourishes his productive powers, and encourages participation. This structure is flexible, informal, stimulating and creative with participant leadership."  

The group usually meets around a round table. "Human beings express resentment against a regimental arrangement by taking a back seat. The symbolic and psychological importance of meeting around a circular table is enormous."  

The group creates fusion of thought and puts the problem in the center. "Problem centers are stimulating and challenging. They call forth latent energies, releasing suppressed powers of the individual."  

These characteristics as mentioned provide the basis for the group work method.

Before launching into a discussion of the wider implications for group work methods, it may be well to distinguish, at this point between social group work and group work in education.

Social group work is concerned with the direct inter-action of individual with individual. Such interaction is characteristic of face to face groups. These groups are usually clubs or similar organizations.

3 Ibid., p. 27.  
Group Work in Education

Group work in education is concerned with the lecture discussion method usually employed in schools and worker's educational programs. In this form of the group the leader is predominant and the audience is more or less passive. Graham Walls calls them, "thought groups." ¹ This educational group method may be used for the imparting of information or the transfer of emotion in which the flow is largely from speaker to audience and very little in the other direction. It may also be used either to acquire information which is needed for collective action or to unite the group about a set of ideas.

It should be borne in mind, however, that although the methods used by social group work and group work in education may differ, they are both means of working with individuals and both are working toward a social goal which will benefit each member of the group.

There are wide implications for the use of the group work method in all phases of life whenever individuals and what they think are concerned. In an article on Group Work and Civil Liberties by Clara Kaiser, the following observation is made:

Group work is a means rather than an end but it implies as a method of furthering the social education of individuals and the development of sound group relationships a commitment to the basic tenets of democratic life.

Agencies utilizing group work are peculiarly subject to the fluctuations of public opinion and as such must seek to develop a broad and representative basis for the determination of policies and the making of decisions.²

Still another implication for the use of the group work method is in the housing program.

In an article on Group Work and Housing, Jean Coman advances the idea that, "a housing development should be an ideal setting for the growth of cooperative living and the community spirit."¹

The group process can be used to encourage the growth of the spirit of community cooperation in a housing development.

A variety of activities centered around the family as a unit and around the individuals and groups develops naturally within a period of time in every development. This list is not always the same; the programs are dissimilar; and the interests of tenants differ from place to place. This is as it should be, because a successful program must reflect the interests and needs of the participants.²

One of the principles which the United States Housing Authorities urges local housing authorities to observe is: "Only competent personnel trained and experienced in community organization and group work should be employed by the local housing authority to supervise the community on tenant relation programs."³

Still another implication of the group work method is its use in work with older children. In an article by Grace Coyle, verification is found that group experience aids in four areas in working with older children.

I have selected four areas of need which are served by such experience and which can be more fruitfully served if we know how to take advantage of the opportunities offered us; the need to develop mutuality; the need to come to terms with authority; the need to re-evaluate values; the need to

² Ibid., p. 545.
³ Ibid., p. 542.
relate oneself to larger wholes.\footnote{Grace Coyle, "Group Experience and Older Children," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, (New York, 1941), p. 552.}

The final implication for the group work method which must be mentioned here is its use in a therapeutic process in working with so-called "problem children." A discussion of Group Therapy is found in the book, An Introduction to Group Therapy by S. R. Slavson, Director of Group Therapy Jewish Board of Guardians in New York.

In the fore-going paragraphs some of the implications of the group method have been given. Its principles as discussed will serve as a basis for further understanding of the group method as applied to industrial problems and relationships.
CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF INDUSTRY

Too often the human aspects of industry are conceived of as essentially economic. "An industrial organization is assumed to be composed of a number of individuals entering into relations of contract for the promotion of their own individual economic interests,"¹ but an industrial organization, however, is more than a large number of individuals acting only with regard to their own economic interests. The individuals have feelings and sentiments toward each other and in their daily association together, tend to build up patterns of interaction.

Modern Organization of Industry

In looking at this matter of the social structure of industry, it may be found that in the field of modern business and in many modern industrial organizations, there are many personnel organizations which give their time to the problem of human collaboration in industry. Nevertheless, it has been observed that such personnel organizations tend to separate the technical problems of production from the human problems connected with work associations.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the activities of most personnel organizations are largely based upon this very sharp separation of technical or economic matter from matters of human concern. From the economic point of view, most personnel people are considered super-numeraries. Most of their duties are concerned with the routine carrying out of policies that have been settled by other groups or with settling as best they can human problems that have already been created.²

¹ F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale, (Massachusetts, 1945), p. 46.
² Ibid., p. 53.
Developing Cohesive Uncertainty Between Labor and Management

A striking example of the failure of management to recognize the human element in the social structure of industry is presented to illustrate:

In one factory, during the process of reorganization, it was found necessary to transfer some 200 people whose jobs had been absorbed or had been so highly simplified that their particular skills were no longer necessary.

Now, according to the thinking of management, wages are uppermost in the minds of all workers. Therefore, it was only necessary to take the workers and transfer them to a different job, but with the same wages, and they would be satisfied.

This assumption on the part of the management turned out, however, to be entirely wrong. The workers involved, considered their jobs that they had had as being of a superior caliber and a transference would mean a lowering of their status. These workers were stock assemblers and store-room keepers, and on being transferred would become ordinary machine operators or would be placed on assembly work. The result was that many of the workers, to keep from losing what to them was prestige, preferred to keep their own jobs and take the risk of diminished earnings.

In a factory or in any industrial organization, a series of clearly defined groups is found. The ordinary workers form one group; the foreman, another; operators another; inspectors, another and so on until one reaches the top of the prestige scale. Individuals conscious of their membership in these groups react in certain accepted ways to individuals representing another group. Behavior varies according to these conceptions of relationship.
There are other groups also present in a factory. Groups performing a certain task have a particular rank in the prestige scale. There are groups based on sex, age and nationality. Social distance measures difference of sentiment and interest which separate individuals or groups from one another.

In most factories, however, the individual may pass from one occupation to another which either lowers or brings him higher up in the scale. But these scales of value are not always accepted by the individuals of the various groups. The common laborer cannot understand why an office worker would make a better salary than he is making or have shorter hours. The management group does not understand why the other groups express dissatisfaction.

Therefore, if there is to be successful communication between the top and bottom of an industrial organization, and such communication is necessary, these differences in the mode of thought must be clearly defined and recognized.

The failure on the part of management to understand explicit its social structure means that it often mistakes logical coordination for social integration. This confusion interfered with successful communication up and down the line as well as between different groups within the industry.¹

Top management must understand and appreciate the behavior of the people at the bottom level and in turn the bottom group must understand the logical and economic objectives of the top.

There should be present in every large industrial organization a group whose responsibility it is to see that those people who are at the top are provided with an accurate picture of behavior at all the work levels.

Failure to recognize this fact often results in misunderstandings, at both levels and makes for unpleasantness and confusion.

Again, according to the general logic of management, "suggestion plans" are supposed to be good methods to promote constructive thinking and cooperation of employees. In one company, the workers were encouraged to make suggestions which they considered helpful to the working of the factory. These suggestions were passed in at specified times and the management appointed a committee to select the best suggestions and awards went to those persons giving the best suggestions. These awards were posted on the factory bulletin board in an effort to stimulate the submission of suggestions and to give to those individuals who made the suggestions, full recognition. But it was discovered that upon making the name of the individual whose suggestion was accepted, public, and if the suggestion in any way proved to be unfavorable to another person; the individual whose suggestion was accepted was subjected to a great deal of social pressure by his fellow workers. Finally, the management had to publish the awards by a code number. Management method had failed to take in account other important aspects of this human organization.¹

Each industrial concern has a social as well as a physical structure, each employee not only has a physical place but he also has a social place in the factory. Any technical change on the part of the management may therefore affect not only the physical but also the social location of an individual or group of employees. This fear of social dislocation is likely to be a constant threat to the social security or different individuals and groups of individuals within the industry.²

¹ Ibid., p. 69.
² Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

HUMAN RELATIONS IN INDUSTRY

Industry is made up of human beings as well as machines. Improved industrial efficiency is partly a result of satisfying human relationships within industrial and business firms.

For some time there has been a growing interest in the field of personnel resulting in the establishment of personnel departments and the training of men and women to head them.

In discussing absenteeism in the war industries, Katz says, "Personnel practices and labor-management relations, do the workers and management get along well? Is there a personnel program to help the worker in his individual adjustment?"1

With the advancement of this interest in the field of personnel, it has been generally recognized that labor relations are to a great extent problems of dealing understandingly with human beings. At first, there was a great concern for physical fatigue and how to combat it. In the later years, the term social concept came into use. This means there was stress placed on human relations between workers and managers.

Human Relations Defined

In line with this discussion in human relations in industry, Chase says:

A wise manufacturer recently remarked, 'the most critical shortage today is not oil, rubber, steel or ships, it is not even manpower. It is the intelligent management of men.'

American industry has always suffered from this shortage. Only the most progressive companies realized that the way to get

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maximum cooperation and output from a group of workers was not to drive them but to understand them as human beings, to make them feel that they 'belonged.'

Foremen are being taught human relations through lecture-discussion groups as carried on under the Training Within Industry Program of the War Manpower Commission. Twelve foremen or supervisors sitting around a big table, each with pad pencils and a blue card. The individuals' problems of the different foremen are discussed.

The program is divided into three courses, Job Relations, Job Instruction and Job Methods. These courses are being given in factories all over the country.

The human approach is also the approach which results in maximum production.

Need For Adequate Personnel Management

There should be present, therefore, in every business a personnel program that addresses itself to the concrete human situations in a particular plant.

Every firm has a vast number of problems. These problems are usually those of employment and placement; problems of training; problems relating to working conditions; problems relating to wages; problems relating to promotion; problems relating to the welfare of the workers; and problems of collective bargaining. It is the responsibility of the management to get these problems solved. There is a great need, however, for further participation of the employees.

"By discussing a problem with the workers, the management has a chance to utilize the vast amount of information and experience that exists among the employees."  

The first step in trying to encourage more cooperation and participation by workers was to find the precise nature of the problems.

1 Stuart Chasem, "Teaching Foremen that Workers Are People," Reader's Digest, (September, 1943), p. 17.
Questionnaires were used, but this was not good as there was no real participation for most of the questions were answered with a "yes" or "no".

Suggestion systems according to a New York Times article of August 23, 1942, have been a failure; "Records show that nearly 95 per cent of the merit awards that have been installed here decayed gradually, generally after auspicious starts."¹

Roethlisberger says, "therefore, the first real human problem of any business organization is how to secure the cooperation of people in attaining its collective purpose."²

Since participation of workers is necessary and desirable and is one of the real human problems, Roethlisberger divides the problem of employee cooperation into three groups:

1. Problems relating to the channels of communication within the organization through which employees can learn about their duties and obligations in relation to the economic purpose, as well as express their feelings and sentiments about their methods and conditions of work.
2. Problems of maintaining a condition of balance within the internal organization such that employees, by contributing their services are able to satisfy their desires and hence are willing to cooperate.
3. Problem of affecting individual adjustments, whereby particular employees who are having difficulties can be assisted to become better oriented to their situations.³

Taking all of these problems into consideration, a personnel management of a business organization is adequate when:

1. it introduces in its own organization a skill of diagnosing human situations.
2. by means of this skill it commits itself to the continuous process of studying the human situation, both individual and group within its own organization.

¹ Ibid., p. 87.
² Ibid., p. 110.
³ Ibid., p. 111.
(3) it tries to secure the collaboration of its employees by running its human affairs in terms of what it learns and discovers about its own organization.
(4) it learns that what is important to particular employees exists in its own back yard.¹

The device which is suggested for real participation of employees is that of the group interview. The principles of group interviewing are the following:

Group interviewing is useful to explore a problem area, breaking vague general problems into specific parts.
Group interviewing is useful to crystallize the thinking of a large number of people.
Group interviews should be informal, relaxed and unhurried. They must not be held at a time and place where participants will be worrying about how their work is piling up while they are sitting and talking.
It is best to meet around a round table. In this way each participant's position is equal to that of the other.
Five or six employees are about right for one group in addition to the person who conducts the meeting.
It is well for the person conducting group interviews to ask questions that bring out and clarify specific parts of a big problem in specific problems.
Care is needed to stimulate the timid to talk. Only the timid can express the ideas of the timid.
The effectiveness of the method of group interviewing as against individual consultation or large group voting, lies in the interaction of the minds of individuals within groups of small size.
The more persons who participate in forming a judgment, the more there will be who will accept the judgment tolerantly when it is put into effect.
Even when a satisfactory consensus has been reached, from a series of group interviews, it may be well to continue the meetings until everyone in a given department has taken part.
Group interviewing has to be approached open-mindedly expecting that employees will have ideas of values to offer.
Group interviewing should be coordinated with individual interviewing.²

To illustrate the effectiveness of the group interview method, a case showing its use in dealing with the problem of rest periods is presented.

¹ Ibid., p. 134.
² George de Huszar, op. cit., p. 92.
In a certain plant there was a ten minute rest period in the afternoon. Sometimes, however, the work in some departments simply did not fit in with this standardized rest period. Through the use of group interview in one department in which there were seventy-five girls, the group decided to have one twenty minute period in the morning. By the group interview method everyone was happy and the employees had had full participation in the decision made. In fact, the decision was their decision. Here, the group interview technique enabled the management to obtain the real attitude of the workers, and by integrating the employers' and employees' attitudes, a more satisfactory conclusion was reached.¹

The group interview method is also useful in breaking big problems down into smaller specific ones.

In one factory there was an established policy in one of its departments to give gifts on various occasions such as birthdays, marriages, anniversaries, departures, flowers for funerals and the like. There was always much confusion when time came for the employees to take up collections for these purposes. For three weeks the girls were interviewed in groups of five trying to see if they could solve once for all the problem. For a week or more, while the first fifteen or twenty groups of girls were interviewed, a great deal of floundering occurred. Finally, the truth came to light. What was labeled as the "gift problem" was not a problem at all, but several. Birthday gifts were one thing; flowers for funerals and sickness another; gifts for special occasions such as marriages were still another. What was called one big gift problem was not one big problem at all, but a series of smaller problems. So through the interviews with the groups of girls, it was decided that different arrangements should be made to handle

¹Ibid., p. 92.
different sorts of gift-fund problems. As the problem was broken down, the solution became simple.

The Problem Centered Group

The problem centered group is not a standing committee. The nature of the problem determines the time, place, personnel, activities, and longevity of the group. One of the most important things about these groups is that they are temporary. Each group has a job to do and keeps at it until it is done.

Problem centered groups are circles within a line organization, they stimulate circulation. "They create more than efficiency. They create satisfaction in employers as well as a more democratic social structure." 1

With the understanding of the group interview and how it works, It can be safely said that a business with one man giving orders is not necessarily more efficient than when many persons decide what to do. "For in reality, no business can be run by one man, for no human being knows everything there is to know, and no human being is always right." 2

To achieve the highest possible efficiency, the solution of problems has to be made by a small group of persons directly concerned; in other words, those who have a real knowledge of the problem. This group includes managers and employees. The conference should be informal and all the main interests should be represented in the group.

1 Ibid., p. 98.
2 Ibid., p. 101.
CHAPTER V

EXPERIMENTS EMPLOYING THE GROUP WORK METHOD IN INDUSTRY

With the coming of the realization of the importance of the group work method in industry, many plants have tried it. Two specific experiments will be discussed here: The Carrier Class Study, and the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric.

The Carrier Class Study

The Carrier Corporation of Syracuse, New York, manufacturers of air conditioning equipment has inaugurated a lecture-discussion course which explains to employers how the company was born, how it has grown and what it needs for a healthy future, where it fits into the over-all business pattern, and why the welfare of the individual carrier worker is linked to the program of the Carrier Corporation.

The title of the course offered is the Carrier Institute of Business. The course consists of fourteen lectures on consecutive Monday nights. The grand climax is at the end with graduation exercises and presentation of diplomas.

In order to brighten the worker's interest, no executives were allowed on the institute's Board of Managers. No one earning over $5,000.00 was accepted and only wage earners under supervisory rank were eligible. All of the expenses were borne by the company.

The lecture itself was forty-five minutes long and was always conducted in the workers' language. After the lecture, the class was divided into ten discussion groups under discussion leaders who were young executives. Before comment began, each "student" is handed a quiz sheet with statements bearing on the lecture just delivered.
The discussion leaders start a debate and keep it going. If interest lags, the leader spurs it along with provocative queries.

The results of this lecture-discussion group method were:

a. Facts have been employed in the company's favor in the locker room.

b. Course uncovered talent for future promotions and responsibilities.

c. Better relationships were established not only between management and labor, but between the workers themselves.

Before concluding this discussion of the Carrier Class Study, it would be well to point out its correlation to the definition of group work as given by Gertrude Wilson in Chapter One.

Miss Wilson's definition stated that group work was a process of directing the interacting process toward the accomplishment of a social goal. In the Carrier Study, the goals which management was seeking were to effect a closer relationship between management and workers and to help each worker to understand that he was an integral part of the program of the organization.

By inviting all workers to attend and by removing the threat of authority in having high-salaried employees barred from membership, Carrier officials presented a good opening wedge toward better understanding.

Then through the lecture-discussion method, which is a form of group work in education, the workers listened for a while to a representative from the company, and then were given an equal chance for discussion among themselves.

Through the interacting process, the goal (mutual understanding) was accomplished.

The Western Electric Experiment
One of the most interesting studies carried on in management-employee relations in an industrial concern was made at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company.

The story of this twelve year program of industrial research which started as engineering and ended up as sociology has been written by F. J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson, with the assistance and collaboration of Harold A. Wright. The study was published by the Harvard University Press in 1959 under the title Management and the Worker.¹

This project did not start out as a means of studying management-employee relations, but rather as an industrial engineering study to find out what degree of lighting would enable workers to do the most and the best work. It would be assumed naturally that given the willingness to try different lighting intensities consecutively, the best would be found. This is what the Western Electric Management thought too, it failed. What management found was, that compared to the many variables which combine to make up the total situations of the worker and his job, intensity of illumination is of little or no importance. A worker who grumbles about a light, may not really be affected by the light at all, but may have some resentment against his supervisor and is merely using the light as a means of expressing his hostile feelings.

When this point was realized by the management, the study gained more significance, in which problems of psychology and sociology were increasingly in evidence. About this time, Elton Mayo, the distinguished industrial psychologist and sociologist at Harvard became interested in the project and eventually became the inspiring genius of the project.

It may be interesting at this time to give some space to the discussion of some of the various experiments carried on in the project at the plant.

A series of tests or experiments were experiments in illumination.

¹ Ibid., p. 84.
Workers were divided into two groups. One group was called the "test group", this group was to work under different illumination intensities. The other group called the "controlled group" was to work under an intensity of illumination as nearly constant as possible.

In the first experiment, the test group was subject to different intensities of illumination of increasing magnitude. The other group's illumination remained constant. The results of this test were that production increased in both rooms. In another experiment, the illumination intensity was decreased with the rest of the group and again production went up at the same rate in both groups.

Finally, the illumination was decreased to illumination equal to that of moonlight, and it was only then that there was any appreciable decline in the output rate.

Therefore, the results in this whole illumination test were negative. There seemed to be no relation between illumination and industrial efficiency.

In the illumination experiments, therefore, we have a classic example of trying to deal with a human situation in non-human terms. The experimentors had obtained no human data; they had been handling electric light bulbs and plotting average output curves. Hence their results have no human significance.1

Another experiment was the Relay Assembly Test. This idea was quite simple; a group of five girls were placed in a separate room where their conditions of work could be carefully controlled, where their output could be measured, and where they could be closely observed. Numerous records were kept on things as, the temperature of the room, the number of hours each girl slept at night, the kind and amount of food she ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Output was carefully measured. This experiment went on

1 F. J. Roethlisberger, op. cit., p. 11.
for five years, tons of material were collected. The results of this experiment, however, left much to be desired.

The attempt to relate changes to physical circumstances to variations in output resulted in not a single correlation of enough statistical significance to be recognized by any competent statistician as having any meaning.1

After the experiment in the Relay Assembly Test Room, the investigators decided to change their ideas radically. All of their experiments demonstrated the importance of employee attitudes and sentiments. This was the "illumination" that came from the research. It was an illumination quite different, however, from what had been expected when the experiment was initiated.

Curiously enough, this discovery is nothing new or startling. It is something which anyone who has had some concrete experience in handling the people instinctively recognizes and practices. Whether or not a person is going to give his services wholeheartedly to a group depends, in good part on the way he feels about his job, his fellow workers, and supervisors. The meaning for him of what is happening about him.2

With the realization that the understanding of human relations and how men and women react to one another, is pertinent to good worker-management relationships; the Western Electric Plant went on in their experiments, but in a different manner. The company conducted a series of interviews with groups of employees, finding out their likes and dislikes, how they felt about conditions in the plant. This time management was more successful than with the "test" approach and both the employees and employers were greatly benefited. The contributions made by Western Electric researches were as follows:

Results of Experiments

1 Ibid., p. 12.
2 Ibid.
1. They offer a fruitful working hypothesis, a few simple and relatively clear ideas for the study and understanding of human situations in business.

2. They offer a simple method by which one can explore and deal with the complex human method it deals with things which are important to people.

5. They threw new light on the pre-condition effective collaboration as something which can be logically or legally contrived. The Western Electric Studies indicate that it is far more a matter of sentiment than a matter of logic.\textsuperscript{1}

This study indicates that informal organization among employees has great strength. It reveals widespread fear and repression among workers who are on authoritarian line supervision. This study points out a new line of defense and a method of working successfully with people.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid. p. 26.
CHAPTER VI

THE GROUP WORK METHOD AND DEMOCRACY

The group work method is a fair sample of democracy in action. The group work method and its techniques embodies all principles of a democracy. In fact, unless the group method was based on democratic principles and beliefs, it would not be a working process and its end results would not amount to very much.

In speaking of democracy, George Huszar says:

Democracy is something you do; not something you talk about. It is more than a form of government, or even an attitude or opinion. It is participation.¹

Kinds of Democracy

There are several types of democracies. There is the talk democracy, such democracy is characterized by long speeches on the ideas of democracy and what a great thing it is. It consists of much detailed discussion of its benefits and often includes elaborate plans for enforcement of democratic principles. But unfortunately such democracy often begins and ends in verbalization. Nothing is ever really done.²

The second type of democracy is "consent democracy", it is a step ahead of the talk democracy in that it seeks to get the consent of the people. However, "consent democracy" often treats the individuals as an abstraction, or isolated, being one who merely votes. But consent democracy is not a good solution for lessening authority in hierarchical organizations, giving a person merely a chance to vote on an issue does not make such

¹ George Huszar, op. cit., p. 27.
² Ibid., p. 28.
person an active or effective participant.¹

Next is the third type of democracy and the one which is felt to be most effective. It is known as "do-democracy," do-democracy based on genuine participation, leads to a type of organization wherein there is a place for the creative ability of all.² It is the do-democracy that gets things done. It is this type of democracy which will make for better relations in all fields. Individuals are satisfied best when they have a definite part in making plans which concern them.

The group work method is an example of do-democracy or democracy in action. The group method brings problems down to earth, it makes for better understanding and one of its largest and best features is participation of all concerned.

The warm, personal, satisfying human relationships that develop when men join together in groups has the power to change the spirit and form of the artificial up-down-system that makes so many of our institutions so formal and verbal.³

By encouraging participation of all individuals, the group work method makes for a more complete integration of ideas and has an important psychological consequence for the participating individuals. There is present the feeling of fraternity and good-will, there is no one person present in such groups which is a demagogue or a person giving specific orders which must be carried out. Everyone is participating, all are heard and each has a contribution to make. When the group is kept small allowing general participation increased "we-ness" feeling is developed.

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid., p. 17.
³ Ibid.
Through the use of the group work method, then, the transition from talk-democracy to do-democracy can be achieved. The group method provides the approach to do-democracy when it has the opportunity to handle problems which may be pertinent to social and economic well-being.

By uniting individuals in action groups, we will stimulate them to work productively in many practical problems of importance to all individuals, real problems arising from real needs.¹

¹Ibid., p. 32.
This study was undertaken to ascertain the values and uses in the group work method in dealing with problems in industry. A study of literature describing experiments in industry which employed group approaches has revealed the following:

1. The structure of industry shows itself to be an hierarchy, consequently, the individual’s place in production has become extremely impersonal. The industrialist who desires the thinking, support, and cooperation of his workers must maintain some form of personal contact with them; the group work method offers such an opportunity.

2. There is increasing cognizance among industrial leaders of the need for adequate personnel organization which employs the skills of both management and labor in the accomplishment of satisfaction among the employees.

3. There is a growing appreciation of the human element in industry and its importance in the structure and production in industrial organization.

4. Experiments employing the group work method in industry demonstrate its values in encouraging the participation of workers in all phases of the organization and in the solution of problems.

5. The group work method is a means of dealing with individuals and their problems and is characterized by a small number, a democratic structure, fusion of thought, problem centered activities, and a desirable physical environment. Its principles are applicable to
many fields.

6. The group work method operates on democratic principles. To be entirely democratic, group work methods in industry must lead to action on the part of management and workers.

7. Modern organizations are not made up of a number of individuals who are concerned with their own individual economic interests, but are composed of groups of people whose thoughts and ideas are important to the entire organization.

8. Workers are human beings and should be treated as such, hence, the use of the Group Interview Method is a contribution to better relationships. Moreover, it aids in solving problems, simplifying and improving operations, spreading the acceptance of changed methods, and building genuine teamship.

9. Industries which have employed either the group interview or the problem-centered group have readily and effectively secured the cooperation of workers. Such workers have shown a keen interest in the progress of the organization. It is the opinion of the author that the use of the group work method by management needs further exploration.
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