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A study of the philosophy and practices of group work as seen through articles in the national conference proceedings between the years 1935 and 1946

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A THESIS
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BY
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of This Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Limitations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. GROUP WORK IN THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. APPLICATION OF CASE WORK SKILLS TO GROUP WORK</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Case Workers' Interest</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work in Institutions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work and Psychiatry</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. METHODOLOGY AND GROUP WORK</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work Training for Leadership</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record Keeping and Group Work</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques of Leadership</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Coordination Efforts</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Forms Used</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SOCIAL ACTION AND GROUP WORK</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Planning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work in Community Organization</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of Social Research</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. GENERAL TRENDS IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social work experience during the past fifty years in America has shown that services provided with case work skills have proved effective in strengthening individual and family life. The case worker has been looked to for help by individuals and families who were having difficulties in some area of their living.¹

But those services provided by agencies staffed by professional persons skilled in case work are not the whole of social work. People, after all, do not live unto themselves alone. We are all members of a group, whether they be families, clubs, associations, or communities. In those groups we seek certain satisfactions no matter how much we may be unconscious of what we are doing. Those groups provide outlets for us.²

Prior to 1935 the National Conference of Social Work had given little or no attention to group work as a separate and specific method of social work. Isolated papers and discussions on services for youth and recreational activities occurred, and a few papers were presented on the group approach to social work.

The National Conference of Social Work developed a special

²Ibid.
section on social group work in 1935. This was one of group work's first professional attainments in recognition in the field of social work. Group work has become recognized now as a basic social function and it is common to and characteristic of a great variety of agencies and programs.¹

One important element in the process of consolidation and advancement that had been observed in recent group work interest and activity may be seen in the reported need for the study and appraisal of group work. These needs are reflections in the growing demands for standards, that is, agreement upon the conditions and practices requisite for effective work.²

Group workers have been trying to employ the bodies of knowledge concerning the definition of subject matter, standards of work, quality of personnel, techniques of performance, and evaluation of results in a joint attack upon the group work needs and problems of our communities.³

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the articles pertaining to social group work found in the Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work⁴ between the years 1935 and

²Ibid.
⁴"Proceedings" shall be used to identify the Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work throughout this study.
1946; to discover emphases in the philosophy of group work; to
determine trends in the practice of group work; and to ascer-
tain problem areas in social group work.

Scope and Limitations

This study is limited to the philosophy, practices and
problems of group work as presented in articles in the Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work between the years 1935 and 1946. The articles selected are those considered per-
tinent to the development of the philosophy, practices and
problems of group work.

Method of Procedure

The method of procedure included, first, a careful study
of the articles published in the Proceedings of the National
Conference of Social Work on group work. Secondly, these arti-
cles were summarized and grouped under headings to form the main
chapters of the study. In addition to the papers published in
the Proceedings, other references were used as an aid in clari-
fying, in expanding, and in interpretation of the materials.
CHAPTEB II

GROUP WORK IN THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

The main chapters of this study have been based upon material found in the Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work published between the years 1935 and 1946 inclusive.

The purpose of the National Conference of Social Work has remained unchanged, for the most part, since the beginning of the Conference. The purpose of this Conference is clearly stated in the 1945 Social Work Year Book as follows:

To facilitate discussion of problems and methods of human improvement, to increase the efficiency of agencies and institutions devoted to this cause, and to disseminate information. Platforms are not formulated.1

The following excerpt clarifies the connection of the Proceedings to the Conference.

The Proceedings of the National Conference, published annually since 1874 and edited by the Conference's general secretary, include papers carefully selected, by an editorial committee, from those presented at the general, sectional, and committee sessions.2

The papers are selected for publication in view of their timeliness, universality, and usefulness within the total field.

In describing the connection of group work to the National Conference of Social Work, Gertrude Wilson made the follow-

2Ibid., p. 100.

4
Professional social work might be described as a development of the twentieth century, and group work as one of its recent specializations. The 1935 meeting of the National Conference of Social Work may be said to have marked the "coming out" of group work while the 1942 meeting marked its "coming of age". In 1935 the social group work section of the Conference was established and the group work process received general recognition for the first time as one of the basic methods of social work. The section's program in 1935 concerned itself with definition, function, and relationships with other specializations in social work. In 1942 its program was a series of integrated meetings, all devoted to discussions of the practice of a recognized method of work with individuals and groups.¹

The material found in chapters three, four, and five is based mainly upon sixty-eight articles published in the Proceedings between the years 1935 and 1946. Many of these articles contain material that is applicable to two or more chapters.

Chapter three is based on fourteen articles. There were five articles written on case work and group work integration, and four articles on group work in institutions, and five articles written concerning group work and psychiatry.

Chapter four is based on twenty-nine articles. There were twelve articles written on training for leadership in group work, and six articles written on record keeping. Eight articles were written on the leadership of groups in group work, and three articles were written concerning the types of groups found in group work.

Twenty-five papers were used to write chapter five. Nine articles were written on social action, and sixteen on the community organization aspect of group work.
CHAPTER III

APPLICATION OF CASE WORK SKILLS
TO GROUP WORK

Development of Case Workers' Interest

There have been two important reasons during the past few years causing the developments in the respective functioning of group work and case work which brought the workers of both case work and group work into the province of the other. The first reason may be traced to the lack of ready resources in the case work agencies in view of the unprecedented demands being made upon the case work agencies. This has caused considerable expansion of case work services on the part of the larger group work agencies. The second reason is a result of the first. During the depression period, considerable enforced leisure helped to change and bring into deeper thinking, on the part of the case worker, the realization that recreation is a part of an individual's life and that it has its values.¹

The cooperation between case workers and group workers had not been developed to its most useful phases, but, both case workers and group workers were beginning to realize that integration of these two types of services was essential to the community welfare programs.²

Community and individual needs are more conspicuous and

²Ibid.
varied than ever before. Then too, many studies have been made concerning these needs, and these studies show that in all cases, case work-group work integration helps supply these needs more effectively. Many agencies have been in the process of re-defining their functions and re-examining their services in terms of which services and functions the agency is best prepared to meet. In this manner some agencies have determined that an integration of services for effective services or just for purposes of adequate referral is necessary.¹

New developments in the field of social work have produced experts in performing various social and educational services and the need for a person with another skill easily available and close enough to the person involved to continue with a minimum of violent shift has become an organizational factor. Often the referral of persons from agency to agency is hazardous and ineffective. The shift is often too much for the client, and whatever treatment has been given already might be lost.²

Due to the fact that case work and group work agencies were beginning to share practically the same clientele, it became practical for many agencies to cooperate since the results of the cooperation quicken and more effectively help solve the clients' problem.³

²Ibid., p. 312.
³Ibid., p. 314.
Last of all, new developments in the planning and coordination in communities through federations and councils of social agencies, community chests, neighborhood councils, area projects, committees and commissions require that each agency work cooperatively as a part of larger forces and that services be developed, not in isolation, but in addition to other planning.¹

All of these developments in the programs of integration of case work and group work would call, first, for some changes in the working practices of both case work and group work to help insure success in the projects. These changes would include a shift from the promotive to a planned basis of recruiting by group work agencies, and a more adequate way of getting such insight about persons in group activity as will make supervision more intelligent. The most important changes involve the use of each others expertise at such points where special skills can function best. In other words, it is necessary to recognize the problems and where they belong for competent treatment.²

A second index for success in this program lies in the direction of neighborhood decentralization and coordination.³

In actual practices concerning case work-group work integration, one writer noticed that there were three things to determine. They were: how the needs of the individual can be

¹Ibid., p. 316.
²Ibid., p. 318.
³Ibid., p. 320.
met in the group work process, what limitations the group process presents to meeting the needs, and how these limitations can be overcome. In these projects, both workers agreed that case work was desirable for individuals whose needs were greater than the interacting group could meet. However, the case worker found it difficult to separate the individual from the group for individual treatment.¹

These workers also stressed the importance of learning and understanding each other's vocabularies, concepts and philosophies in working to help individuals function in cooperation with his associates for socially desirable ends for himself and for society.²

This does not mean that case workers and group workers should be alike or learn these methods to use them in treatment personally, but, instead, it is a working relationship in which the services of the two fields complement each other. This calls for respect for both fields by the workers, a recognition of common goals and a desire to meet needs with the skills best suited to individual problems.³

Group Work in Institutions

A comparatively unexplored area in social work is the use of group work in institutions. One reason for the lack of development may be found, in part, in the fact that many insti-

²Ibid.
tutions are publicly controlled and are unduly influenced by political turnovers.¹

To successfully influence individuals in an institution demands an integration of the individual emphasis and group therapy. The institution is a complex group situation, and if it is to become a truly significant social instrument in human rehabilitation, the institution must establish itself as a laboratory within which it can draw upon and utilize all the experiences and findings of modern educators, nursery school experts and social scientists. All these techniques should be efficiently coordinated and integrated in an enriched and deepened group life.²

Neva L. Boyd described three group work projects developed in Illinois institutions. One concerned a recreational therapy experiment stated in Chicago State Hospital for the Insane. Simple gymnastic exercises were started and advanced into more complex patterns of activity, such as games and group dances.³

The most excited and apathetic types of patients were selected for this program. They were given some type of recreation every day except Sunday. The activities for each group were determined by the recreation staff after consultation

with the physician in charge. The behavior of each individual was assiduously observed by the workers and the activities were flexible with the group's needs. The results of these activities was that whole wards of violent patients were far more quiet than that type of patient had ever been before the treatment was introduced, and this type of activity was far more revealing in personality defects affecting treatment.¹

A second program took place in the Geneva School for Girls. A recreational program was started and the various interests displayed by the girls led to the formation of several group work clubs.²

The results of the formation of these clubs were noted in the decrease in inertia and gossiping among the girls. As group activity developed, the girls began to have more self-confidence and to show more self-control. Their feeling of group responsibility was evidenced in their desire to improve the personal appearance of the whole group, and this was true of even those rated as high-grade defectives. Under consistently democratic guidance of trained group workers a genuine system of self-government, begun in its simplest forms and worked out by the girls, could undoubtedly, the managing officer believed, be evolved.³

The last experiment took place in the Lincoln, Illinois

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 343. ³Ibid.
State School and Colony. A recreational program was introduced with the two-fold purpose of creating happier conditions for the children and carrying on a research project in the treatment of mental defectives.¹

It was discovered that recreation for mental defectives may do far more than merely occupy their time happily, that by selecting those activities which hold the greatest possibilities for growth and directing them in such a way that the potentialities of the individual, however limited, are called into action, a fuller utilization of the individual's powers may be accomplished and a more harmonious, constructive social life achieved.²

Although these experiments were not completed the results obtained did show the efficacy of recreational therapy in the group method to justify its permanent place in both correctional and custodial institutions.³

Other discussion of group work in an institution was given by Anne Smith, who described group play in a hospital. Her discussion of the benefits of group play in a hospital environment is as follows:

It is the consensus of opinion throughout the hospital staff after a period of four years of experimentation with play, that it has been a potent aid in creating greater understanding and better cooperation. It has proved to be a normalizing influence in the hospital experience for the staff as well as for the children, an effective aid in hastening the recovery

¹Ibid., p. 344.
²Ibid., p. 345.
of the sick, and one of the best methods in preventing the neurotic tendencies so likely to start in prolonged illnesses of children. It is also both a prevention and a cure of undesirable habits. Furthermore, it is evident that play can and does lessen the child's fears and homesickness and that it creates a sense of security and confidence in a hospital staff. The child has less time to feel sorry for himself, less reason to build up grudges against people and conditions, and is less likely to become habituated to invalidism.1

The staff and all the volunteers were required to take a training course concerning the play program. There was a definite pattern for the various play activities used by the staff and volunteers.2

Florence Switton presented a program designed to meet the recreational needs of the aged in a private institutional setting. She explained the values of recreational and cultural activities based on interests, talents and past experiences for the members of the institution.3

Briefly, it was necessary that voluntary activities, built around the desires, inclinations, talents, and past experiences of the individual, be developed in a group program. This program was flexible and depended solely upon the types of individuals then and there resident.4

Guided by these principles, groups of old folks around a piano gave rise to a glee club; former lovers of theatre drama

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1Anne Smith, "Group Play in a Hospital Environment," Proceedings (1935), pp. 546-47.
2Ibid.
4Ibid., p. 607.
organized dramatic groups; students, politicians, and lodge members joined current-topics discussion groups. The dance floor found couples congregating to again try the dances of yesterday. This group life proved a powerful force in increasing the happiness of the residents.¹

Group Work and Psychiatry

Group workers have traditionally been concerned about persons whose needs are not being met through normal everyday processes. Group work is based on the needs of individuals. This has made group workers interested in many studies on the needs of individuals and the ways in which group work may be used to meet these needs.²

Group therapy which uses the principles of psychiatry, is based on the development of the individual from childhood to maturity. The normal person's needs are satisfied throughout his life in groups. Some of these developmental needs are a family, play groups, school, unisexual groups, heterosexual groups, occupational groups, adult voluntary groups and to head a family.³

Breakdown in the individual patterns of response are often precipitated when problems faced during one or more of the early group stages of development prevent one from experiencing sat-

¹Ibid., p. 608.
isfaction of particular needs. Some of the problems faced by older children that affect their needs are based on changes in modern civilization here in America. Typical of these changes are the shift in family functions, the lack of an understanding of responsibility found in many youth, and the centrifugal trends of the family.¹

Other problems are concerned with the age old ambivalent feelings, need for recognition, the present day shift in the basis for authority and in the area of age-youth relationships.²

In groups, young people have a chance to function successfully, adjust their personalities, determine worthwhile loyalties, and to adjust to the opposite sex.³ Group work, also, furnishes young people a chance to understand authority and to relate themselves to larger wholes.⁴

Slavson in his article described how these needs may be met in therapy groups for seriously disturbed youth. He stated that "the basic principles of our group therapy aim to meet the four fundamental needs of the child which he desired from all his microcultural groups that we described."⁵

Those needs referred to are met in four ways. First of all, the therapist provides a setting for "unconditional love"
which should have been provided by parents and other adults who play an important role in the child's life. Secondly, the therapist attempts to build up the "ego" and "sense of self-worth" which are frequently crushed in problem children. This is done by praising and encouraging constructive behavior and ignoring destructive behavior. Thirdly, the creative dynamic desires are given a chance to be fulfilled through craft programs. Finally, there is an attempt to rebuild distorted personalities.

Slavson states the outcome of the program as follows:

The members of the group work together, they quarrel, fight; they argue and haggle, but finally come to some working understanding of one another. Sometimes this process takes six months or more, but once it has been established it becomes a permanent attitude which is carried over to other group relationships in the home, school, and at play.

Other studies have been made on the application of group work in helping persons meet their needs. Gertrude Wilson brings out three aspects of group work as it involves human needs, in the following excerpt:

One aspect of group work is that it is developmental; it is an essential experience for every individual's social growth. In its second aspect group work is protective. Many individuals are unable to find groups which meet their needs in the civic life of the average neighborhood. For these individuals social work agencies provide an essential service in a great variety of specialized groups. In its third aspect group work is an instrument for the achievement of socially desirable goals.

Group work has not developed to its capacity in working

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1 Ibid., p. 347.
2 Ibid., p. 348.
with seriously disturbed individuals; however, the following example of work done in personality development with a normal group of children, aged four to seven, in a club that engaged in individual play, cooperative endeavor, and on rare occasions, corporate behavior. It illustrates in a simple manner the therapeutic treatment used in some groups:

In the beginning each "played dolls," or drew, or modeled side by side but was alone throughout the greater part of the weekly period. Games in which most of them participated were enjoyed, but this cooperative venture was under the leadership of the group worker. Gradually the activity grew more and more cooperative until by February the social development of the group had reached the stage where the children were able to develop a project which belonged to the whole group.¹

Summary. Case workers developed an interest in group work because they felt that integration of these two types of services made treatment more effective. Group work has been employed with success in work with the aged in institutions, children in hospitals, and with persons in correctional and custodial institutions. One of the pioneering interests of group work-case work integration has been in therapy.

¹Ibid., p. 343.
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY AND GROUP WORK

Group workers are frequently accused of having no formulated methodology. The *Proceedings* included twenty-nine articles on methodology and group work. There were thirteen articles written on training for leadership and six articles on record keeping. Eight papers were published on techniques of group leadership and three articles on the types of groups found in group work. These papers have indicated considerable advancement in the philosophy and practice regarding the methodology of group work.

Group Work Training for Leadership

There are three aspects to group work training. These are the training of professional workers, the training of volunteers, and the supervision of workers. All are important to the effective rendering of group work services.¹

Arthur L. Swift in an article discussed all three aspects of group work training for leadership. However, he devoted more time to the professional training for leadership. He summarized the things that should be included in professional training as follows:

The essentials of training for group leadership are field work in the observation and leadership of groups under skilled supervision supplemented by dis-

cussions and lectures dealing with the place of group work in the field of social work and of social history, the underlying philosophy of group work, the conditions of it, of sociology and of psychology, educational, social and individual, the place of group work in a program of social action and the acquiring of skill in the conduct of group programs.¹

Field work program.—An important contribution to the professional aspect of group work training is found in the article by Clara A. Kaiser. She portrayed the development of the generic aspects of professional training for group work leaders. She described the responsibilities of professional education to social work in general as first to equip students adequately for activity in social work as it is currently practiced in the field, and second to provide leadership for advancing developments in the field to meet changing conditions.²

Schools formerly gave courses mainly based on group work skills, but the practice shifted to the generic aspects of educational and social work knowledge and skill, rather than specialized skills related to the specific activities included in agency and group programs.³

There were four main reasons for this shift in emphasis. First of all, group work programs were broadened to meet community organizational needs and services. Secondly, the functions of agencies and the needs that they will meet are being

¹Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 608.
constantly re-defined. Thirdly, the functions of leadership have changed to the practice of finding expert lay leadership and supervisors for specific programs or interests. The last reason may be found in the increasing need for individualization of services of agencies terms of differences of needs of community groups and the individual that they serve.¹

There were four problems facing professional education in group work. The first problem concerned the integration or correlation of classroom and field experience. The second problem embraced the fact that the range and content of courses pertinent to group work have not been sufficiently defined. The third problem faced the realization that both case workers and group workers need to understand human development, its possibilities and limitations as complicated by economic, cultural, and political problems of the day. The fourth problem is related to the interpretation of the psychological and emotional factors of mental hygiene and psychiatry.²

The four problems facing the teachers were the developing or finding sufficient case material for individual problems, adequate interpretation of the individualistic approach as an educational process, introducing the generic aspects of both case work and group work and providing professional training in areas of group work that are still in experimental stages.³

¹Ibid., p. 609.
²Ibid., p. 611.
³Ibid., p. 612.
This article presented a tremendous challenge to group work educators in that it showed that they will have to be constantly on the alert in the development and improvement of courses in order to be able to continue to provide expert professional leaders for group work.1

Many agencies giving group work services do not use as many professionally trained group workers as they should. Still too many group work agencies know too little about professional training for group work. Many persons working in group work agencies think that the agency training courses are sufficient for professional training. One way to overcome this deficiency is for the few fully trained practitioners to do such an excellent job that their worth will call for more professionally trained workers.2

Mildred Fairchild in her paper describes the group work methods used for workers who have jobs and are taking courses during their vacations at Bryn Mawr College. She explains the ideas behind the progressive educational methods and speaks of the similarities of progressive education and group work as follows:

The group work character of workers education is noticeable in the following points. The methodology of teaching is built entirely upon group activities and movement. The type of activity and the direction

1Ibid., p. 613.
of the movement arise naturally from the group's own interests and needs. The teacher as a group leader molds the group into unity and directs the line of movement, stimulating, or--it may be, at moments retarding its pace. But the group itself must be regarded as a living, growing and responsible body during the period of association.1

This paper shows that the progressive education methods and the theory behind them can contribute much to the training of group work leaders. Progressive education is built upon democratic theories and the equality of group members, and a program based upon the interests and needs of the group. This type of training course could give the trainee an excellent idea of how they should lead groups in the future.2

Volunteer leaders.—Mrs. John Dabney in the 1936 Proceedings gives some of the requirements in the preparation by volunteers for group leadership. The program she outlined may be adapted to fit the needs of any particular agency. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Dabney suggested that the training courses should be planned with the group work council of the city council of social agencies. The essential points of the program are listed as follows:

1. A good educational lecture course with interesting speakers should be given by the group work council for the group work volunteers in general.

2. The volunteers should be trained by the staff of the particular agency on problems peculiar to the work of the


2Ibid.
3. Regular and frequent conferences and discussions of problems should be arranged with the staff members.

4. There should be periodic meetings with the volunteers for purposes of discussions, book reports, and comparing mutual problems.

5. There should be constructive criticism from the staff and judicious praise. This will be greatly appreciated by the volunteer since he will be anxious to know what is right and wrong with his work and what to do about it.

6. There should be careful placement with a close followup. Volunteers should not be given problem or difficult groups until they have gained confidence and become thoroughly acquainted with program possibilities within the agency.

7. Volunteers should also be included in the discussions about the larger aspects and problems of the agency.

8. There should be required reading with discussion afterwards.

Training and supervision of volunteers should not be a hit or miss affair. The volunteer leaders will be much more capable if supervisors help and encourage them. It will give a deeper meaning to their work with the agency if they are given a thorough training course and efficient follow-up.\(^1\)

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Articles explaining the system of volunteer training used by the government during wartime appeared in recent volumes of the Proceedings. The Office of Civilian Defense developed the Civilian Defense Volunteer Office as a centralized medium of recruiting, training, and placing volunteers in any type of community service that needed volunteer personnel. The underlying principle of the organization was that a volunteer would be effective in direct proportion to the degree of utilization of his or her particular interests and qualifications. Another principle is that the agency, city department, or committee to which the volunteer is referred must have the responsibility for accepting or rejecting him, and if it accepts him, it must take the responsibility for directing his work.\(^1\)

The advantages of this plan are obvious. It coordinates all volunteer work, obviating competition, duplication and waste of volunteer man power; it insures utilization of individual skills; it insures a proper balance of volunteers among all types of programs so that all needs are equitably met; it provides a place where citizens can get authoritative information on necessary training; it studies the field of volunteer training and stimulates the proper sources to give needed training; and, perhaps most important to social workers, it establishes clearly that provision for health and welfare needs is an integral part of the war effort.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 246.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Out of this experience with the CDVO has come three things to remember. First of all, such centralized facilities must be closely affiliated with the broadest local community planning agency and that agency should be widely representative of citizen interest. Secondly, the volunteer office should have adequate records on individual volunteers, and, in addition to that, the office should maintain effective relationships with organized membership groups in order to be able to top particular occupational skills or to obtain quickly large numbers of volunteers for work where no special skill is needed. Last of all, this centralized agency should not try to monopolize the field since other agencies have worked with volunteers before and have already set up good working systems.¹

Specialized methods.--The government has made some pertinent efforts in youth and adult voluntary education through its program known as the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. These are mass efforts to raise the standards of youth and young adults in our population and to help solve their problems of unemployment, lack of education and skills, and the problem of delinquency.²

The educational objectives of the CCC were to eliminate illiteracy, remove deficiencies in common school subjects, provide systematic training on camp and work projects, general

²Jack A. McMichiel Jr., "The Aspirations of Young America," Proceedings (1940), p. 84.
vocational training in camp schools or in nearby schools, to provide avocational and recreational activities, cultural and general educational opportunities character and citizenship training, and to assist youth in finding employment. Vocational counseling and guidance techniques were used in the entire program.¹

It has been found that the schools of today are not training youth to meet the problems that will face them when they finish high school. They receive no skills that will enable them to get a job. The NYA and CCC were designed to meet these needs of youth. It has been considered that a permanent government subsidy is needed for the public school set-up in the United States in the form of work and study projects for youth. The industries cooperated with the schools and the NYA and CCC in order to help prepare youth to adjust in the social and economic fields.²

One of the main interests that these projects presented to group workers is that the programs are based on many of the same theories and goals found in some group work programs.³

Record Keeping and Group Work

Record keeping in group work is developing rapidly since it

² Floyd W. Reeves, "Educational and Vocational Planning for Older Children," Proceedings (1940), p. 91.
is imperative to keep records if progress is to be made in the sphere of group work. These methods of record keeping need constant improvement in order to clarify the standards by which group work is evaluated. Evaluation is basic both in the practical leadership of groups and in research, since it facilitates the recognition of a good job and it enhances future planning.¹

Group work agencies have met the demands of community chests for statistics as to numbers and facts of publicity value for standardized accounting systems of financial support. Now they must attempt to meet the demands of professional social work for quality of service to their membership. The importance of records is involved in the use made of records. Records will vary from agency to agency, but the average record will contain the roster sheet, attendance, group program and behavior, and individual contacts.²

Major difficulties are met in the group work records concerning individuals of a group. Typical of such problems are the definition of behavior in concrete terms and the classification of behavior as defined. Then too, the separating of the prejudices of the recorder had to be considered.³

The United States Children's Bureau in connection with its

work on services to children developed a system of reporting for group work agencies in urban areas on a national basis.\(^1\) Forms were developed that would give a standard statistical measurement of the volume of social service. There were many problems connected with the development of these forms because of differences in agency function and programs from city to city. Another difficulty encountered was the lack of adequate records and record systems in the group work agencies. The agencies had trouble in classifying the persons who came to the agencies. There was difficulty also in determining which agencies to include in the reporting systems and in devising standard forms to fit certain groups of agencies.\(^2\)

The importance and use made of records to agencies that are attempting a program involving both case work and group work services was discussed in an article describing cooperation between a group work agency and a juvenile court. The records kept attempted to discover the source of the child's problem and to help him with the specific difficulty that brought him to court. The records also helped increase the number of successful referrals as well as to enable the child to enjoy the benefits of the group to a greater extent once he was affiliated. Last of all, the records helped the workers

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understand just what happened to an individual in a group experience by bringing out the child's characteristics and the way he acts.1

Techniques of Leadership

Dan Adler and his co-workers conducted an experiment with young people under democratic, autocratic, and laissez faire atmospheres. In the democratic group, policies were determined by the group in discussion and decisions were made by the group which was encouraged and assisted by the leader. In the autocratic group the adult leader determined everything and the group carried out his orders. In the laissez faire group there was complete freedom for individual and group decisions, but there was no leader participation.2

The results of the three types of leadership showed the democratic leadership as most effective. Those in the democratic groups were friendly, cooperative and accomplished things with enjoyment. The autocratic groups reacted in two ways. One group showed aggressive tendencies that were for self only and the rule of the strong. The other autocratic group gave apathetic reactions. They could do nothing without the leader and did not show any enthusiasm. The group operating under laissez faire methods gave evidences of confusion, instability and lacked direction and the ability to stick to a

job. The conclusion was that the democratic atmosphere with intelligent leadership was best. This emphasizes the group work principle of basing the activity on the needs and interests of the group and not superimposing a program on the group.1

There are nine main problems facing the leaders of groups using the techniques developed in group work. They are listed as follows:

1. How may groups most effectively be formed and with what types of organization?

2. How may mutually satisfying relationships be established between the worker and the group?

3. How may individual interests, capacities, differences, attitudes, backgrounds and needs be discovered?

4. How may a tentative program of group activities be developed on this basis?

5. How may the group status of each member be determined and modified?

6. How may conflicts resulting from different norms, or standards, objectives, and personalities be adjusted?

7. How may the relationships between members within the group be improved, and how may the relationships of the group itself to others be developed?

8. How can the leader provide the personal guidance for individual members when necessary?

1Ibid.
9. How can the group process be made to serve individual and social ends simultaneously?  

The importance of a mature leader with a good basic social philosophy should be considered. The leaders of groups should have lived each phase of her life fully. She should have a life of her own outside of her work, goals, standards, ideals, and faith in youth.

National Coordination Efforts

There are four types of national organizations that are working on seven broader problems concerning group work that also includes the nine problems just listed. The seven problems are: the function and field of group work, group work objectives, interpretation, study and appraisal of group work, problems of professional education, security, labor, group work leaders, and group work methods and techniques.

The four types of organizations are (1) the council types, such as the National Social Work Council and the National Education-Recreation Council; (2) the conference type which includes the National Conference of Social Work with its group work section; (3) the consultation type such as the advisory Conference of Professional Leaders of Character-Building Agen-

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cies sponsored by the International Council of Religious Education; and (4) continuing and co-ordinated types of combined local and national inquiry represented by the National Association for the Study of Group Work.¹

These organizations are evidence of the increasing professional interest among group workers in the development of their skill as educational and social workers. Their concerted efforts to unify group workers and to improve practices may be seen in reports on these efforts.²

Organizational Forms Used

Group work is a method of working with individuals and their relationships, based on an understanding of the motivation of human behavior. The program should be related to what the members of the group can do about situations in which basic needs are unmet. The essential service is that of providing a creative group experience, and small continuous groups best provide this experience. While the group worker works with the whole individual, he does not attempt to meet all his needs. He helps the members of the group to a realization of their own capacities to unite with others in the struggle to create a better world.³

An examination of practice reveals that the media which group workers use have many forms, such as arts and crafts,

¹Ibid.
²Ibid.
dramatics, music, pottery, photography, nature study, games, woodwork, sewing, dancing, sports, public affairs—civic, national and international, home management, nursing, first aid, pre and post natal care, care of babies, sex information, discussion of problems of religion and labor, and other interests known to human beings.¹

These media are carried on in club programs, classes, workshops, camps, forums, discussion groups, special board and committee meetings, clinics, and other organizational patterns. The value of the content and organizational form to the individual who is using them to meet his need is dependent upon the quality of the process of which the individual is a part. The individual may gain some help from belonging to a group. But, if he belongs to a group in which he learns not only a new skill, but, also, how to participate in the direction of the group's program and through the stimulation of other members and of the leader, this program is related to his own personal needs and to the world outside himself and his club; he has then been part of a group work process which has helped the individual meet his personal needs and has also helped society to meet its needs.²

The use of specialized interest groups as a basis of group organization is declining. Studies have shown that agency pro-

¹Ibid., p. 357.
²Ibid.
grams set up by the agency with specialized interests as the invitation for participation fails to do the work. One reason for this failure is that many persons' interests change quickly and they do not possess the aptitude to perfect the skills needed, and more often do not wish to work long enough and hard enough to do acceptable work.¹

The natural group is a new type of group formation that has been fostered in a number of agencies. A small congenial group of neighborhood people, adults or youths, may ask for the facilities of an agency to carry on their already organized activities. They live near each other, work and play together, have common national, racial and economic backgrounds and a certain predominating set of interests as a group. They come together because they like doing things together, rather than a specified thing. Their existence does not depend upon pre-arranged programs or activities for which the agency is responsible.²

This is compared with the agencies special interest groups. The agency can do much for the natural group members to help develop outside contacts, to broaden their program, and to give them new ideas and interests. The natural group affords opportunity for a diversified and flexible program to fit

the needs of its members. The influence of the agency can be extended to the homes and communities of the natural groups.¹

Summary.--Group workers are rapidly developing and continually planning courses for the training of leaders that equip them for activity in social work as it is currently practiced. They are devising records that will accurately report the progress made in group work situations. National organizations are aiding in these efforts through their study groups, conferences, and surveys of the progress made in agencies and schools. Finally, group workers have discovered that the natural group provides an excellent setting for their work with groups.

¹Ibid.
CHAPTER V

SOCIAL ACTION AND GROUP WORK

During the latter part of the depression period in the United States, there were several changes made in many areas of the lives of the people of this country. Some of these changes were concerned with the way people thought about many things, other changes were made through legislation. These changes meant that many people had many new adjustments to make.¹

The social effects of the way people thought and of the bills passed by legislators called for much interpretation to the people of the United States. The people began to see their government as an agency charged with the welfare of the American people. Pressure groups then formed in order to more forcibly present their needs to the government. These groups were composed of the masses of people whose low level of living in the midst of plenty made them complain. These masses were the people that group workers were concerned about in the formulation of the goals of group work. Leroy E. Bowman echoed these facts in his paper presented at the 1935 Conference when he said:

My thesis is that group workers now must look out to social forces more than to their own skills, although not to the exclusion of consideration of skills. They must help to relate the members of their groups.

to the national or mass concerns of the day. They must be frankly ethical, moral, idealistic, even propagandist in the sense of helping people find their own goals, and giving some stimulus to interest in the important things in this day and age, by the group worker himself showing an enthusiasm, loyalty, and willingness to sacrifice for the interests of the mass of people.

If democracy represents desirable balance between change and stability; if it represents application of judgment and concerted volition to a common problem; then one way to achieve it or to maintain it is by relating group work of children to vital social issues, and by giving youth an opportunity to exercise mind, heart, and ambition on things that matter most to all of us.1

Discussions also appeared in the 1935 Proceedings concerning the problems facing youth at that time and the programs set up by the government to aid youth. Mary H. S. Hayes in an article relates the governmental programs and group work. In speaking of the CCC's program Mary Hayes stated:

The desire for adventure and fellowship with others their age helps to explain the popularity of the CCC, as it explained the international student movement from which the idea of work camps grew. This desire for companionship coupled with recreation, especially outdoor sports, is evidenced in the popularity of recreation programs when they are sufficiently simple in nature and can be participated in without undue red tape. Surveys made in various parts of the country presented rather startling facts as to the small percentage enrolled in organizations for young people, and one wonders if the group work agencies might not profit from the failures of the schools in trying to impose an established curriculum rather than building on the native background of culture and intellect of the groups they serve.2

The governments of Italy, Germany, Japan, and Russia have

made great use of youth organizations to influence the youth in the direction that they wish them to go. The United States has not used this technique in its efforts to preserve or explain its ideals of democracy. The idea has been expressed many times that the group work agency can be used to do this, especially the private group work agency. These agencies can give youth the much needed opportunity for experience in democratic control. These agencies can aid in the adjustment of its member's personalities for life in a democracy and develop desirable leadership for our country. They also can afford its members a chance to know more about, and to respect the varied cultures and races that make up America. In short these efforts can lead to a more effective program of social action based on first hand knowledge and understanding.¹

An example of such situations is found in the following excerpt:

A group of colored and white girls from a nearby plant asked to use the swimming pool and were told that the agency hadn't yet reached the stage, but they would be welcome to come for other activities. They came in and brought their problem to the council. That council brought the problem before an interracial committee on which girls from club groups served, and through that committee a recommendation was made to the board for an interracial policy that would include the swimming pool. On the board was at least one girl who could speak firsthand for the desire of her group.²

In the efforts for a better understanding of the elements

²Ibid., p. 273.
that make up the democratic system here in the United States it
is important that seven factors found in a real democratic set-
up be recognized by all members or participants of this demo-
cracy. The seven factors are listed as follows:

1. Social, economic and political democracy are inter-
woven to make a whole and are not complete in themselves. De-
mocracy moves toward a leveling of all outcomes in social,
economic and political efforts and rewards.

2. Democracy is dynamic. It is impossible for a society
to be both democratic and static.

3. Democracy is founded upon wide series of diversities.

4. Democracy respects the individual, and personal digni-
ty is one of the bases of democracy.

5. A society is democratic when revelant and pertinent
facts are being made steadily and increasingly available to
all the people.

6. A democracy represents the amateur even if specialists
are ever in demand because they devise a scheme that will do a-
way with one type of specialist and the amateur would then be-
come a specialist of a more refined order.

7. Education in a democracy always has a definite tend-
ency. The purpose of education is equally as important as the
material amassed in education for a democracy.¹

Participation in Planning

In view of the above facts it is the job of social technicians to help discover how both individuals and groups may function in such a manner as to realize a cultural system that includes the above seven factors. Those factors also have bearing on the interpretation of group work in a democracy if the program of the agency is to meet the various needs of the persons connected with the agency.1

Group work agencies say that one of their chief aims is that of developing the capacities of individuals to participate intelligently and effectively in the groups and communities of which they are a part. They believe that the elements of responsible participation in the larger aspects of civil and social life in a democracy are learned through experience in smaller groups in which they share with other members the privileges and responsibilities of group life.2

In connection with one's rights in a democracy, the committee in planning for the section on social group work of the National Conference of Social Work recognized that there was need for further exploration of the problems that agencies specializing in group work were facing in maintaining and extending civil liberties, especially in view of the prospects of the United States entering the war. The term "civil liberties"

1Ibid., p. 347.
is construed by the committee to pertain not only to legal guarantees, but also to the social attitudes and controls which are vital to the exercise of fundamental rights as are laws.¹

The committee sent out questionnaires asking about the agencies' program emphases, their membership, policies regarding relationship to other groups in the community, how policies are determined, who controls and participates in policy programs, group discussions on current problems, whether members participated in social action groups, and whether such groups held meetings in the particular agency.²

The replies, since they did not reflect official agency opinions, gave only generalized impressions of the conditions and trends regarding methods of determining policies in agencies in the communities surveyed. There were evidences of awareness of need for discussion of ways for democratization of methods of determining policies in group work agencies. Numerous ways were reported, such as, representative groups of membership to help formulate policies, and the fact that boards of directors should represent the community served. The answers indicated that few of the agencies and their groups were interested in discussions on broad social and economic problems of the day. The agencies felt that such activities should be encouraged. Many of the answers indicated tension and conflict

¹Ibid., pp. 186-89.
²Ibid.
where races and nationalities were concerned.  

Group Work in Community Organization

Group work as a recognized method of work with individuals and groups has developed to the point that it is cooperating with various efforts of councils of social agencies and community chest projects in coordinating and improving needed group work services in a community along with other pertinent services. 

Roy Sorenson and a committee made a study of six cities and one area to discover the significance of group work facilities in social function, personnel, community and neighborhood organization, constituency, group work methods, finance, equipment, criteria for evaluation and standards. 

Some of their findings indicated that some of the agencies studied needed to clarify and define the functions of public and private agencies. The personnel of many agencies included too few professionally trained workers. The supervision of volunteers was poor in some agencies and the volunteers were too young. Many agencies needed to participate in community organization projects and work closer with the councils of social agencies to help bring better planning to the community.

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1Ibid., pp. 187-97.
in general. Group work methods were not being used in as many instances as was necessary. The agencies need to revise their programs and make them broader to meet more community needs.¹

A committee inquiry sponsored by the group work section of the National Conference of Social Work concerning the coordination of group work services in communities was able to submit eight suggestions to make group work function more adequately in communities. The suggestions were based on replies from questionnaires sent to community chests and councils in different cities. The eight suggestions are listed as follows:

1. Group work activity on councils of social agencies must be improved.

2. Planning with councils of social agencies is more effective than with only the group work section of the council.

3. Group workers must be more concerned with education and training for group work and standards of personnel.

4. There is not as yet a satisfactory definition of an approved group work agency or an adequate measure of group work performance as a basis for council membership.

5. There is need for more evaluation in terms other than statistical; therefore, the development of adequate methods of record keeping is indicated.

6. Provisions for needed services must be in some way started.

¹Ibid., p. 315.
7. There is a problem concerning the participation of the group work secretary in council hearings.

8. Another problem concerns whether or not the council of social agencies should be controlled by member agencies or not.\(^{1}\)

A study, reported by Edward D. Lynde, of an area in Cleveland that was densely populated and had many social ills was made to determine resources and to ascertain needs. The planning for this project was made in cooperation with all the social agencies in the city and recommendations were made from the findings of the study of the area. This project showed that improvement could be made with cooperation of all agencies.\(^{2}\)

All of these studies were made by group work and community organization experts. They were reported principally from the point of view of relating group work’s place in community organization. The reports stressed the use of group work techniques as needed by the areas studied and efforts were made to carry out the accepted group work philosophy and practice to solve the problem.\(^{3}\)

Utilization of Social Research

A survey of the actual practices used in the various agen-

\(^{1}\)M. W. Beckelman, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 356-70.


\(^{3}\)M. W. Beckelman, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 356.
cies revealed that these practices were not on the whole based upon the accepted philosophy. In comparing the philosophy with the practices Ray Johns found a definite lag between practices and philosophy. However, this should be expected since philosophy always precedes practices.¹

Examples of the practices that did not match the philosophy of group work are listed as follows:

1. Group work is an educational and democratic process. Actual practices reveal a lack of planning councils and too many classes instead of club form groups.

2. Group work meets personality needs. The poor types of records kept do not show what group work is doing in many examples.

3. Group workers should be trained sympathetic persons. Many workers are untrained, too young, and poorly supervised.

4. Needs should be the basis of group work programs. Many programs studied were not flexible and were fixed by the agency.

5. Group work should be included in the total process of community planning for social welfare. There was evidence of too little intensive planning.²

Ray John's paper was based on Charles Hendry's "Review of Group Work's Affirmations" which was presented at the same

²Ibid., pp. 352-63.
The summary of group work included in the 1942 *Proceedings* described area studies of cities in different sections of the United States in light of their social work problems. The relation of group work services to community organization in solving the problems was discussed. The executive of a private agency concluded that there was no general pattern in all communities efforts in solving group work needs in the particular community. This executive, also said that a vast increase of public expenditures was inevitable and should be welcomed.

It was decided that the indications for private agencies were: the further development and demonstration of group work as an educational method and as an essential function; work with minority groups; work with spiritual emphasis; supplementation of public services, and work for higher standards of services. There will always be a place for the private agency under our present form of government.

Summary.—Group workers recognized that social action and community organization techniques offer many opportunities for the successful application of group work principles. In the agencies, efforts are made to give individuals a chance to develop the ability to participate in the larger aspects of civil

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3Ibid., p. 375.
and social life through experience in small groups. Agencies, through participation in social planning councils, community chests, and other organizations, are attempting to coordinate and improve needed group work services in communities along with other pertinent services.
CHAPTER VI

GENERAL TRENDS IN SOCIAL GROUP WORK

Through the years the emphases in group work have expanded to include the rapid developments in civilization. An example of this may be found in the following statement made by Dorothea F. Sullivan.

Modern invention is fast making neighbors of all the people of the world. Science has given us insight into how a socialized personality may be cultivated. Group work is the laboratory in which the process may be applied and watched.

Many trends have been reported by authors in the group work practice of social work. Significant among these trends are the practices concerning professional education, the emphases upon the use of progressive educational methods in dealing with groups, the integration of case and group work techniques which includes therapeutic experimentation, and the continued interest in the individualization of treatment in group experience to meet needs of group members. The work of national organizations to unify group workers and to improve practices, and group work's efforts in services other than recreational are also trends of importance. An enlargement on these brief statements concerning the general trends in group work seems advisable.1

A noticeable trend in the direction of professional training of group workers may be seen in the fact that professional education for group workers tends to be concerned with broad phases of social work. It has been found that to perform effective group work, leaders need training in the understanding of basic human needs and knowledge of all the factors that affect the satisfaction and fulfillment of these needs. It is the group work leader's job to help make programs designed to meet community organizational needs and services. In short, the functions of professional leadership have changed. The practice of finding expert lay leadership, and supervisors for specific programs or interests constitutes a major part of the professional leader's job.

Many agency leadership training projects have been reported, and they emphasize the importance of orientation to the agency and to the segment of the community that it serves. The problems faced by the agency and the ultimate goals of the agencies program should be included in the volunteer's training. It has been found that a thorough training course and an efficient follow-up help to give deeper meaning to the volunteer's work with the agency.

The trend which concerns the methods of dealing with groups may be broken down to include these points: the group is an instrument to develop personality and is based on the participants needs and interests; the relationship of the leader to the group is one of helper and guide; and progressive education-
methods which are based on democratic principles should be used in the leadership of groups.

The trend which includes case work and therapeutic experimentation combined with group work has shown the tremendous value of reciprocal referral of individuals who may need the services of either one or both types of agencies. The experiments in group therapy with individuals who, for one reason or another, seem unable to respond to individual case or psychiatric treatment have given amazing examples of adjustment in their literature discussing methods of treatment and the results.

Group workers have, in the past, borrowed heavily on the social sciences in order to help develop and perfect their programs and practices. However, since group work has "come of age", group workers do not feel the need to continue to borrow from social scientists. Group work has developed social scientists that fit their own needs; so studies are being made and reports published by expert group workers who also have a succinct knowledge of the social sciences.

Another trend indicates the attempts of the numerous organizations that are studying and doing research on group work. A few of these organizations are the National Conference of Social Work, the National Association for the Study of Group Work, the American Association of Social Workers, and the American Association of Schools of Social Work. All these organizations have active sections of group work. These organizations
in some cases have local study groups and they all attempt to relate their investigations and studies to those carried on by other groups. They all have a common goal in their desire to improve practices in group work. Their interests include professional education for group workers, records used in group work, and techniques used in group work.

The last trend is an increasingly important one in life today. This trend includes the greater participation of group members and agencies in activities other than recreational. These interests include social action and community organization projects with such problems as racial antagonisms, civil liberties, consumer education, national and international politics, and unmet community needs. Group work's interest in social action and community organization may be seen in the numerous studies reported in the Proceedings devoted to showing how group workers are employing their bodies of knowledge in a joint attack upon the group work needs and problems in communities.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study on the articles found in the *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* over the eleven year period, 1935 to 1946 indicates that the efforts of social group work to establish itself as a necessary and important part of the field of social work have definitely been progressive. The *Proceedings* are noted for their constant efforts to present papers of paramount importance in the present to the general field of social work. Their success in that effort is noticeable in the articles published concerning social group work. From a total of sixty-eight articles pertinent to group work read for this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The integration of case work and group work services has been caused by the unprecedented demands being made for case work services. Experiments with the integration of services have proved essential in the quest for better and more effective services for individuals.

2. The inclusion of group work services in an institution is important if the institution is to fulfill its function, that of human rehabilitation, in an adequate manner. Experiments have shown that institutions, such as correctional, custodial, homes for aged, and hospitals, can provide a much more effective program of treatment when group work and group therapy activities are included in the treatment.
3. Group therapy or psychiatric treatment on a group basis is still in the experimental stages. There are many individuals who, for various reasons, are unable to adjust in a normal group or to accept individual case work, or psychiatric treatment; consequently, group therapy attempts to treat such persons by the group approach.

4. Considerable attention has been given to the methods employed in group work. The fact that a total of twenty-nine articles on methodology are included in the Proceedings for the years studied shows that social group workers are concerned with closing the gap between philosophy and practice of social work.

The content of courses for professional leaders has been a problem since group work professional training is attempting to please many agencies. Courses for volunteers are advocated and skilled supervision is important in the training of volunteers. Group workers have observed and participated in the Federal government's voluntary educational programs for youth. Group workers have also heeded the government's program of volunteer recruiting and training used during World War II.

5. Leadership training methods are presented with concern for the improvement of professional and volunteer leaders.

6. Group workers, in order to provide services of the finest quality for their membership, are trying to develop records that will indicate whether or not there is improvement both in individuals and in the groups as a whole.
7. The techniques of leaders of groups have been studied and the conclusion reached that mature persons with a social philosophy are desirable. This philosophy should include an understanding of democratic principles and the importance of such practices to any development in groups.

8. Group work has traditionally catered to groups which come together out of interest in a special activity. Group workers are exploring with increasing interest "the natural group". A natural group is one based on common backgrounds and interests. The persons are well known to each other and like to play and work together. The group is based on group friendliness instead of interest in a special activity.

9. Since the depression in the years after World War I, the United States has come through many changes that have affected its social, economic and political life. Group workers have expressed a keen interest in these changes and in the interpretation of the changes, and those yet to come. Therefore, activity on the part of group workers in social action has resulted. Many clubs, too, have as their interest national and international affairs. Some of their discussions involve racial problems, civil liberties in the United States, and what they can do about such problems, as well as, the extension of civil liberties.

10. Group work is a recognized method of work with individuals and groups, and has established its place in case work and community organization services. Group work has a training
program for the development of professional leaders; it has standards of work, quality of personnel, techniques of performance, and a plan for the evaluation of results. All of these aspects of group work are used in the efforts to solve the group work needs and problems of communities.

In summary, it may be concluded that group work has emerged and become recognized as a basic social function, common to and characteristic of a great variety of agencies and programs. Primarily, group work is an educational process, with definite methods and a formulated philosophy designed to meet human needs on a group basis. The trends of social group work are in the direction of furthering the professionalization of techniques.
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