



Training for Social Work

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CAN the undergraduate of 1927 be made into a social worker? If not, why not? If so, how? This discussion is not a fundamental analysis of these queries. It is an aggregation of impressions received from visits to twenty-seven colleges, interviews with the directors of thirteen schools of social work and with the recruiting officers of six large commercial organizations. It seeks to raise questions rather than to answer them.

A generation ago, a zealous, self-sacrificing man or woman with a "cause" could not only get a hearing on the college campus but could with ease inspire large numbers of the young ones to go out and do likewise. That day is past. The modern college student is more skeptical of emotional appeals, more intent on finding a reasonable basis for work. The word "service" suffered at the hands of the war propagandists and will not again quicken the pulses of those who can remember as far back as 1914. As a prominent social worker recently stated it, "They will respond more readily to a vocation that promises them a life of experience." The whys of modern college students take them far outside the conventional paths of academic research. To be sentimental is taboo; to be hard-boiled a matter of course and of pride. Social service has as strong an appeal as the Wednesday night prayer meeting. In a mid-western college, during my visit, a notice of a lecture by an insurance expert was posted. The room was jammed. Another meeting, for a social worker, head of a large settlement house, brought an audience of two students, both dragged in by an embarrassed professor.

Even ten years ago a college girl found satisfaction in playing games one afternoon a week in a settlement house with the children, coaching a play, or teaching a sewing class. Last spring a college junior who had struggled with an embroidery class tendered her resignation to the head-worker of the settlement saying she felt there was nothing "vital" in what she was doing. The director agreed that of course there wasn't; further she considered the girl "egotistical" to expect to do anything "vital" in one afternoon a week during the college year. Naturally they parted with mutual misunderstanding. Superficially the only difference between the undergraduate today and the one a decade ago is that the latter really believed what she did was important.

The pioneers in social work were sure that their work would somehow help to change the social order fundamentally. The contemporary student has less faith in his own power to change that order. His interest is analytical and diagnostic rather than revolutionary or reformatory. He

does not share with his elders their dreams of Utopia. He just doesn't believe in it, any more than he believes in Santa Claus. He does believe that a more intelligent and therefore a more effectual handling of the ills of the present social order will lead to the prevention of some of them. That is about as far as he goes.

There are many reasons for the change. We are probably safe in thinking it is due partly to the war, partly to an increased prosperity and largely to an ever deepening respect for the scientific. This is mirrored in typical statements of professional teachers of social work: "students come knowing what they want;" "younger, with more mental equipment but less devotion and loyalty—on the whole much better;" "much better type of students who have sporting rather than sentimental or uplift attitudes." There is a healthy conviction that self-sacrifice for its own sake is "bunk," "blah," or "applesauce."

Our 1927 undergraduate still has a desire to "serve," even if he doesn't like the term, but social work is not the only calling in which this ego satisfaction can be found. The other professions and even business organizations have stolen the thunder of the social worker. Medicine, law, teaching and the public utilities speak in terms of public welfare and speak scientifically withal.

Social workers and that part of the friendly public that has through some personal contact become informed about modern social work, know that social work is not without its scientific principles. They recognize that the science of human behaviour and relationships is in the making and that the field of the social worker is the laboratory of that science. The natural place to look for guidance in principle and for theories of experimentation is in the classroom of the sociologist. The works of the authorities in this field should be the reference library of the practitioner as is the medical library the guide of the physician, while experiments in the field should be the basis for new undertakings. Unfortunately, this rarely happens.

RECENTLY a study has been begun to determine how familiar are the professors in the social sciences with the work carried on by national social agencies. Sixty-six questionnaires have been returned from thirty-two colleges. The professors were asked to signify whether they were slightly informed about, well informed about, or completely ignorant of twenty-four national agencies. They were asked to state whether or not they would like further information about any of the organizations. The following table throws more light on our problem:

WHAT 66 COLLEGE PROFESSORS KNOW ABOUT NATIONAL SOCIAL AGENCIES

	Well In- formed About	Knew Noth- ing Of	Want More Infor- mation
American Red Cross	49	1	11
American Social Hygiene Assn.	36	7	18
National Child Labor Committee	35	10	14
Boy Scouts of America	34	2	8
National Committee for Mental Hygiene	33	2	21
National Board of Y.W.C.A.	32	5	8
Camp Fire Girls	31	4	13
National Consumers' League	30	6	13
American Assn. for Labor Legislation	27	9	15
National Tuberculosis Assn.	26	8	10
National Probation Assn.	26	16	19
Playground and Recreation Assn. of America	25	11	13
Girl Scouts	24	8	11
National Council of Y.M.C.A.	23	6	7
National Assn. of Travelers Aid Societies	20	14	11
American Country Life Assn.	19	18	13
American Assn. for Organization Family Social Work	19	19	20
American Child Health Assn.	18	21	11
National Organization of Public Health Nursing	18	19	11
Child Welfare League of America	18	18	19
National Assn. of Legal Aid Organiza- tions	12	18	16
National Health Council	9	28	15
Boys' Club Federation	7	29	15
National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness	5	27	16

Obviously a goodly number of teachers of social science do not agree that a knowledge of what goes on beyond the campus is necessary to an understanding of theoretical principles. When an instructor of rural sociology complacently admits complete ignorance of such an organization as the American Country Life Association some necessary link is missing somewhere.

The social worker is disdainful of a professor of this type. He feels that the teacher should keep himself well informed in the field, even if it costs him (as it does one sociologist of my acquaintance) a hundred dollars a year for the necessary memberships and publications. Only through the intelligent interest of the teacher will a student become aware of current social problems and of his own relation to them. No student is likely to become interested who has been working under a professor who describes social work as "uplift," dismissing it with the criticism that "dealing with inferiors creates inferiority."

Here again business leads. Many large business organizations are spending much thought and large sums of money in educating college professors in the needs and opportunities in their particular fields. To be specific, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company recognizes that college professors are in a strategic position. During the last three years they have held one institute in Chicago and two in New York to which they have invited college professors whose subjects have an intimate relation to the work of the company. The conferences last two or three days. All expenses are paid. The men who attend are given an understanding of the philosophy of the organization, the opportunity which it offers college men in terms of public service and financial returns. They go back to their classrooms with practical illustrations of their sociological and

economic principles and actually, if indirectly, they become recruiting officers.

Nor does business neglect what is probably the most outstanding development in the colleges in recent years, the placement and personnel bureaus. They are in all stages of development from the office with one secretary who tries to find summer jobs and teaching positions, to the office with an elaborate staff that studies the special aptitudes of the student from the day of matriculation and advises as to courses of study with a view to a future career. I quote from an annual report of the Bureau of Personnel Research of Dartmouth College:

When the old college graduated men almost entirely for the professions, the old college accepted the responsibility of acquainting a man with these professions during his senior year and in being as helpful to the individual as possible. In the new college, *with over sixty per cent going into business*, the college has the same responsibility for providing graduates with a similar amount of information regarding business. This it does.

This bureau recently published a thesis on The Department Store as a Vocation for College Trained Men. The report says further, "The professions have already compiled such information in booklets." The professions are listed elsewhere in the same report as law, medicine, religion, and teaching.

This lack of information about social work is not due to indifference on the part of the personnel advisers. They say that many students who come to them are temperamentally much better fitted for social work than for other types of professional life, but they do not know what kind of advice to give. Business does not wait for them to inform themselves as best they can. Why should social work?

THIS brings us to the whole subject of recruiting. Who should recruit, where, and for what? It is obviously impossible for each social agency to go on recruiting for its own organization from the colleges. The colleges are becoming more and more inhospitable to outside agencies making direct appeals to groups of students. Even in colleges where this condition has not as yet been reached and a social agency is still welcome to try to skim the cream, what will happen to graduates who start in without training? The average girl who is offered a fifteen- or sixteen-hundred-dollar job immediately upon graduation will not enroll in a graduate school. The schools are finding, however, that after three or four years of work, probably much of which has been by way of trial and error, the apprentice sees that to do effective work she will need more training. She leaves the agency that has struggled with her during her green years, returns to school, and in many cases after getting only superficial professional training, returns to work with another organization.

There is a general though not complete agreement that students should be recruited for social work training. Professional schools have sprung up like mushrooms. There are now thirty-nine of them, thirty-two of which have come into existence since the war. They vary widely. Their entrance requirements range from a highschool diploma to a college degree. Thirteen of them offer undergraduate and twelve graduate degrees. (They are working on standardization of requirements for entrance, courses of study and degrees received.) Some (Continued on page 522)



EDITORIALS

WHEN they struck out for independence, for liberty, justice and the rights of common men as against the arbitrary acts of courts and governors, our forefathers took pains to pay a decent respect to the opinion of mankind. Governor Alvan Fuller of Massachusetts took one step in line with their example in his public explanation of his reasons for refusing to intervene in the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. He took a second step in giving out the report of his committee of advisers. But neither his investigation nor theirs, his statement nor theirs resolved the crucial issues in the case. This is not saying that they failed of endorsement on many hands, especially among the groups socially and economically dominant in his own state. It is to be noted that their findings have been most loudly acclaimed by such as denounce the two Italians as anarchists. The men admitted this from the beginning. Governor Fuller roundly condemned the South Braintree murder. Its cold-bloodedness they have never denied. But that they were guilty of this murder they denied, and that their trial fell short of even-handed justice won them the espousal of so conservative a lawyer as William G. Thompson, of so keen and disinterested a reviewer of the case as Professor Felix M. Frankfurter. The statements of Governor Fuller and his associates failed to dispel the grave doubts, widespread throughout the world, as to the guilt of the men and as to the fairness of their trial. Rather they strengthened the suspicion that the United States in our day is no exception in the history of intolerance when it comes to executing men for their ideas. In the face of this recoil, here and abroad, in which men and women of all shades of opinion have joined [the liberals as a minor note in the solidly banked chords of radical and working-class protest], Governor Fuller has taken a third step as this issue of the Survey Graphic goes to press: granting a twelve day stay while final appeals are argued before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts.

Whether the state procedure, which has hitherto vested in the trial judge all discretion as to evidence as distinct from the law in case, will prove too brittle to make this more than an empty gesture, will be known before these pages are read. Nothing short of a new trial, before a judge whose prejudices are not engaged so outrageously, before a jury not bedevilled with post-war hysteria, weighing the new evidence pro and con, will clear the record. Otherwise the heritage of all Americans who cherish New England for the ideals of justice it has courageously handed

down to us, will be tarnished by the blood of men who dead or alive may yet be proved innocent, and who have not been convicted in the court of mankind, nor in the minds and hearts of many an American.



A GREAT human issue like this inexorably fingers out any flaw, any weak spot, and old and bloody knot in the fabric of our institutions. Such is the case of the Massachusetts law which left it to one man, Judge Thayer, with all the limitations of human nature, with all the warping which tradition, training, emotions gave to him, to hold the lives of two men in the hollow of his prejudice for eight successive times, and to pass on whether their case should come before another court. Again, such has been the position confronting Governor Fuller. His courage in standing his ground in the face of world-wide agitation has met with outspoken praise. This is not discounted in pointing out that had his decision been otherwise it would have gone counter to the mind-set of the groups with which his associations and political fortunes are bound up. That also would have taken courage, perhaps of a finer order. He would have been denounced by some of his present acclaimers as a weakling and a renegade. His integrity, rather than his courage, hinged on his acting according to his lights. The needless, the oppressive burden upon him was that in his case also the lives of two men depended upon the judgment of one other man: and he that man. Once Sacco and Vanzetti are dead no reparation can ever be made if Governor Fuller's judgment was wrong.



BUT let us assume that the governor's decision was just as well as honest. Nonetheless there are a great many disinterested and intelligent people who firmly believe that Sacco and Vanzetti did not have a fair trial, or even further, that they were not guilty. The effect of a decision of this sort, which closes the case forever so far as the lives of the