1959 XII C4

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REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDYGROUP ON THE FUNCTION AND WORKING METHODS OF THE PERSONNEL SOCIAL WORKER

Introduction

Through industrialization and its consequences: mechanization, rationalization, automation, urbanization, etc., life and relations between human beings have grown more and more away from nature and have become the more complicated. Such a development can also be observed within undertakings [1] concerned with production, commerce, administration, service and so on.

The growth of such undertakings and the complexity of their structure have created many problems of individual well-being and of co-operation and leadership. This has necessitated looking into the "human factor" more consciously. Top-management has created personnel departments with one or more staff executives, who are specialized in the handling of human problems and of human relations problems in the work situation.

One of these specialized staff members is the personnel social worker.

Personnel social work has - in those countries where it started some 60 to 25 years ago - developed from family social work, undertaken by employers, to social work concerning the human being at work. The reasons for this evolution can be found firstly in the growing recognition of the particular problems created by modern business life, secondly in the workers' right for privacy and self-determination, which has become more and more acknowledged, and thirdly in the extension of social work in the community. Thus more and more personnel social work has developed into a specialization and has become concentrated on social problems within the working unit.

Because of the evolution of personnel social work in Europe, the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS felt the necessity to explore the lines on which development is proceeding, and the basic concepts behind it. Development might be stimulated further by the formulation of the ideas which are common to most countries.

The two studygroups on the function and working methods of the personnel social worker, sponsored by the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS and the UNITED NATIONS European Office (Technical Assistance), took place in September 1957 at Zürich (Switzerland) and in March 1959 at Dortmund (Germany). Respectively members of the studygroups were experienced personnel social workers representing the following nine countries:

Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland.

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[1]) In this report the words undertaking, enterprise, firm, plant, include all private and public bodies, which are aimed to perform some kind of work; e.g. industries, hospitals, public authorities, offices, etc.

The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS was represented by a member of the Executive Committee. The UNITED NATIONS assisted by assigning Miss Marjan Schröder (Netherland) to serve as a discussion leader and co-ordinator. The INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE and the EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY showed their interest in sending observers.

The present report, prepared by the two international studygroups at Zürich and Dortmund, is in the first place designed for personnel social workers themselves, and in the second place for staff members of Schools of Social Work. As it is written in technical language, which outsiders might not easily understand in all its nuances (or perhaps may even misunderstand in some details), it should not be issued out to other professional interests without comments.

The report is prepared in English and will probably be translated into French, German, Italian, Dutch and Swedish.

The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS hopes that discussion groups of personnel social workers might be formed around this report in the different countries. The Federation is convinced that there will be reactions to the contents of this report in social work circles in every country. The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS will be very greatful to hear of these reactions, be they questions, remarks, criticism or new conclusions, if possible before the spring of 1960. (Please address observations on the report to Miss H.Fredenhagen, Spitzliweg 12, Erlenbach, ZH, Switzerland).

The studygroups arrived at a number of conclusions, to most of which some comments have been added. These conclusions were formulated as follows:

The first conclusion concerns the PURPOSE OF THE STUDYGROUPS:

General 1. The purpose of the studygroups is to further the development of the profession of personnel social work in Europe, through clarification of aims, basic principles, tasks, limits, methods and conditions, peculiar to the working situation of the specialization. In this way the studygroup hopes to give a total picture of this branch of social work.

This picture might serve as a basis for ascertaining the best method of training personnel social workers. For this purpose a Europan Seminar is planned, organized by the UNITED NATIONS, with the co-operation of the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE and the WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

We hope that the personnel social workers who have co-operated in composing this report, and many who will read it, will be able to join the seminar as well as staffmembers of Schools for Social Work.

General 2. The FUNCTION of the personnel social worker can be described along the following lines:

A. basic principles
B. tasks - related to the in-plant situation
- related to the out-plant situation for individuals
C. methods
D. place in the organization
E. limitations and co-operation

A. Basic principles

A-1. Definition of social work

"Social work is a systematic way of helping individuals and groups towards better adaptation to society. The social worker will work together with clients to develop their inner resources and he will mobilize, if necessary, outside facilities for assistance to bring about changes in the environment. Thus, social work tries to contribute towards greater harmony in society. As in other professions social work is based on specialized knowledge, certain principles and skills."

Although the adaptation of a group to a larger community will on occasion be the primary aim of the social work process, the eventual focus is always the individual in his way of life.

It is appreciated that any definition of social work is open to criticism and may not be fully comprehensive. But as a common starting-point for our thinking the above definition seems sufficiently applicable. No attempt is made to reach conclusions as to whether community organization, social policy, social planning and social research are parts of social work. However, it was agreed that social work could stimulate the development of social legislation and social policy, and that it is even the responsibility of social work to do so.

A-2. "Personnel social work is part of social work in general and accordingly must adhere to its general aims and principles. However, personnel social work in principle is limited to assisting in solving problems which are connected with the working situation. These problems might -

1. be caused by and occur in the work environment;
2. have unfavourable effects in the work situation, although not caused there;
3. be due to general arbitrary regulations in industry, the results of which affect the life of the workers outside their work.

Just as in social work in general, personnel social work has a threefold aim, namely:

a) to help any individual or group to adapt to the work situation and to meet the work requirements;
b) to stimulate management[1]) to adapt the work situation to the social needs of the employees;
c) to assist the work "community" as a whole to function in a better way.

These three aspects are very often interwoven."

It was agreed that personnel social work should have certain recognized bounds, which delimit it from other branches of social work, but this is not always possible. However, when general and specialized social work agencies in society are sufficient in number, it will be possible to confine personnel social work to the specialized field mentioned above.

Without exhausting the subject, the following motives are mentioned to show that problems not connected with work should be referred to the appropriate social work agency, just as these

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[1]) If "management" or "manager" is used it refers to managers and supervisors at all levels.

agencies in turn may refer work problems to the personnel social worker:

a) workers and their families are members of a larger community, which as a whole should take the responsibility for its members;
b) the private life of employees should be respected as much as possible by the employer;
c) work and work environment create special conditions and difficulties, which require a high degree of adaptation. To assist properly in solving these work problems effectively a specialized training is required, in addition to basic training, with the result that a personnel social worker generally will be less trained for other fields of social work.

A-3. "Some principles in personnel social work are:

a) General basic principles

1. Social work offers specialized help to people with social problems (see definition).
2. Social work is performed by means of a professional relationship between the social worker and his client.
3. Social work requires confidentiality and therefore professional secrecy.
4. Social work requiresa non-judgemental attitude from the social worker.
5. Social work demands respect for the client's right of self determination, for his own responsibility and individual integrity.
6. Social work requires understanding of the client in his total situation (including past, present and future experiences, family, work environment, etc.)
7. Social work requires the social worker's psychological independence from all people and parties involved.
8. Social work requires the social worker to be aware of the possibilities and limitations:
   a) of the client
   b) of the social work profession
   c) within the social worker himself.
9. Social work requires the social worker to be conscious of his own appearance, attitudes and development.

b) Basic principles specifically related to personnel social work

10. Personnel social work does not allow the social worker to have functional authority, except towards direct subordinates.
11. Personnel social work requires the social worker to be a consultant; he should not make decisions.
12. Personnel social work requires the social worker to recognize the limits of his functional relationships.
13. Personnel social work demands that the social worker promotes communication along the line of authority.
14. Personnel social work requires the social worker to be at the disposal of individuals and groups at any level of the organization."

The general principles mentioned above are common to all countries and all branches of social work.

The specific principles had to be developed at the two conferences, accordingly the list given above may not be complete.

It is not possible to expand on all these general principles. Only those which are of specific importance in personnel social work will be more fully considered (3, 4 and 7).

To an industrial organization professional secrecy (3) might appear to be an undermining principle, seeming to interfere with the concepts of co-ordination and communication, which are necessary for directing the organization. Regarded from the social work point of view, however, no real help can be offered if this principle is disregarded. Social assistance can only have satisfactory results if the client feels completely free to divulge all his troubles.

Professional secrecy (3) protects not only the client and potential clients, but also the social work profession.

There must, however, be some limits to professional secrecy, if, for example, other people concerned would be endangered physically or psychologically by adhering to it. In such cases the situation must be explained to the client. Another limiting factor might be the diminished capacity of the client to form an opinion (e.g. mental illness).

It is rather difficult to explain in short what is meant by a non-judgemental attitude (14). The main aim of leadership, especially in industry, is to induce workers to follow rules and regulations with the objective of a good work performance; but difficulties may arise when the behaviour of workers is not acceptable to management. The personnel social worker, however, is free from the need to censure or exercise authority and can by means of a sympathetic attitude try to appreciate and accept the client's feelings and behaviour. In this way the client feels free to consider and to decide whether to adapt himself to the situation or to change it.

Although psychological independence from all the people involved in the social problem on hand is a prerequisite for any social worker (7), in personnel social work this might be particularly stressed. The personnel social worker will very often work at both ends of the lines of communication. Identification with one end only will tend to prevent him from getting good results.

In personnel social work the relationship between social worker and client must be particularly secure. The industrial way of thinking moves along lines of power and authority and this creates part of the work problems. If a personnel social worker is appointed, his function must be arranged in such a way that he is outside this authoritative structure and can co-operate with his client in a situation with the least possible pressures and tensions (10, 11). This implies that the personnel social worker will neither be in authority over the client, nor have a direct influence on his career. The personnel social worker must also not intrude on line responsibilities.

Like everyone in the organization the personnel social worker should also be aware of the limits of his function and functional relationships (12). These limits are determined by the profession, the job-assignment, the organizational structure and by assignments to other functions.

Communication along the line of authority (13) is at least as important as a good relationship between the personnel social worker and the client. The best possible co-operation along the line is necessary not only to fulfil the company's aim, but also in the client's interest.

The personnel social worker tries to promote communication along

the line by the methods he uses in handling individual problems.

Point 14 is an attempt to make clear that personnel social work should not be restricted to particular levels of the organization. The personnel social worker can be called upon by any individual or any group in the enterprise.

Though not quite a principle, it might be useful to mention that social work also requires from every social worker "to be good to himself", e.g. to take time for relaxation and recreation.

A-4. "The most important reasons for the employment of a personnel social work specialist are related to:
a) the specific aims of personnel social work;
b) the knowledge, methods, techniques and tools;
c) the structure of this function in the organization."

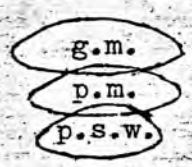
The following comments mention some of the motives behind the existence of personnel social work.

ad a) The total organization is directed towards the accomplishment of the work in the economic sense. Personnel social work is mainly directed towards one aspect of the general aim; it places the human being in the centre. As a result of this the personnel social worker can give full attention to his client, whereas the line executives need to give their attention to many matters, among which the worker is only one. Very often the result of this method of helping the individual is that by solving his social problems the client's efficiency at work will increase. Thus economic and social aspects need seldom be contradictory.

ad b) The personnel social worker is specially trained to help with social problems. Knowledge, methods, techniques and tools are more specialized than those used by other members of the organization.

ad c) The structure of the function can be seen from different angles.

1. In every large organization there is a trend towards specialization. Better results may be expected where personnel specially trained and educated for a particular field are engaged. Although personnel management (p.m.) will always be part of general management (g.m.), the field will be enlarged, new duties arranged, and original tasks performed in a more skilled way or along more methodical lines if a specialist is made responsible. The same can be said for personnel social work (p.s.w.). Thus a new form of specialization develops within the total field of personnel work, with the result that some old tasks are executed along more methodological lines and some new work can be developed.



2. Within the personnel department some differences between the social worker's function and those of other members of the department will exist. For instance the personnel manager's attention is mainly directed towards justice, equity, the creation of sound policy and the necessary measures for its execution along the line, whereas the aim of the personnel social worker, is primarily directed to the individual, his needs and to his social problems, which may arise in spite of sound policy or sometimes even as a result of just general rules and regulations.

In most instances the personnel manager will have a number of executive duties (e.g. collective bargaining), where he

acts as the representative of management and other tasks which influence considerably the employees careers (e.g. advice on selection, promotion, merit-rating, etc.). These duties tend to limit the employee's readiness to speak to the personnel manager about subjects, which might jeopardise his future prospects within the firm. However, a certain overlapping of duties between the personnel manager and personnel social worker seems unavoidable.

3. To secure the right atmosphere to win his clients' confidence, and at the same time to maintain the confidence of management and supervisors towards social work, the personnel social worker
   - needs a recognized professional secrecy from management;
   - will have no part in the development of the employee's career;
   - must leave every decision to the staff in charge of the matter;
   - must not have any controlling tasks related to clients or potential clients;
   - will not have to report on a case to anyone without the client's consent. (However, the client cannot expect anyone to decide on a matter without having obtained the necessary information).

A-5. "The personnel social worker must be loyal to everyone in the organization, to every function and to the aims and policy of the organization. This is necessary to obtain the confidence of everyone concerned."

To allow a social worker to mediate in a problem he must be seen as a neutral person, not belonging to one or other of the sides. The greatest possible confidence in the personnel social worker is necessary in tackling such a problem, although it may be difficult for supervisors to conceive that a social worker, who maintains professional secrecy, is loyal to the organization. Everyone can approach the personnel social worker on any matter: this may include criticism of an immediate supervisor, and supervisors should appreciate that the social worker does not express an opinion to an employee about his complaint. In fact the personnel social worker should try to learn everyone's point of view; for social help it is more important to listen and observe carefully and to help the parties concerned to see all aspects of the problem more objectively than to express his personal opinions about the case.

Confidence in the personnel social worker will grow if everyone knows that he tries to approach a problem without censure and to understand the emotions involved on all sides.

To prevent conflict of loyalties it is important that professional secrecy for the personnel social worker is recognized by the management; it will then become part of the firm's policy.

B. Tasks

When discussing the personnel social worker's tasks it was realized that in practice many variations are possible, according to the country, the undertaking, the organizational set-up and even the social worker himself. The list given will thus at the same time be incomplete and yet include tasks not found in every firm.

B-1. "The personnel social worker's duties might be composed of
a) social work responsibilities;
b) some incidental tasks (e.g. receiving newcomers, maintenance of a library, general attention to health and safety, assisting the medical officer, participation in training programmes)."

This report is mainly intended to describe social work responsibilities; additional or incidental tasks vary too much from firm to firm according to the number of workers to whom one social worker is assigned, other specialists in the organization, cultural patterns, etc.

B-2. "However, additional tasks can be useful -
a) to introduce the personnel social worker and his function to the employees;
b) to further the contact with the employees;
c) to receive information on problems and atmosphere in the enterprise;
d) to give the personnel social worker a full time job in a small firm;
e) to counterbalance the social workers inner tensions caused by his work."

ad a) The introduction of social work and of the social worker can be seen as a continuing process, but there are many ways of introduction, of which contacts through additional tasks is only one.

ad b) It is recognized that many personnel social workers - especially new ones - only get those cases referred to them, which have become almost insoluble. This course of events appears to be frustrating for the personnel social worker and disappointing to management. Accordingly, the personnel social worker should try to sense or to get in touch with cases at an earlier stage.

ad c) Knowledge of what is happening in the firm will enable the personnel social worker to improve his methods of handling problems. It is therefore important that the personnel social worker has as much insight as possible into the formal and informal life of the organization and remains in touch with all changes as they occur. One way of keeping in touch might be the performance of some additional tasks; another way might be to take part in meetings.

ad d) In small firms it seems preferable to assign some additional tasks to the social worker, rather than have him working for two or more firms. In this way the personnel social worker will be better integrated into the total organization.

ad e) Personnel social work very often puts great strain on the social worker, especially on young social workers who get easily overburdened emotionally. This leaves little time to relax in less strenuous work and additional tasks might provide this opportunity.

B-3. "Additional tasks also have disadvantages, namely:
1. they may give a wrong impression of the social work function;

2. they tend to hinder the proper development of personnel social work;
3. they may offer the social worker a refuge from the real job."

B-4. "Additional tasks should never be contrary to social work principles and relationships."

It is rather usual for a personnel social worker to perform duties additional to social work tasks. Unfortunately these duties are sometimes added without much thought, and later it may become apparent that such duties interfere either with the quantity or quality or even with the principles of the social work (e.g. if the social worker assists in the selection of new employees these newcomers may regard the social worker as someone in authority, who can influence the worker's career).

In-plant and out-plant activities

Although it is difficult to divide the total duties of the social worker into in-plant and out-plant activities, it would be useful to try to do so. In this way it is easier to appreciate and show where the limits of th function should be drawn.

B-5. "In-plant activities are those activities where social treatment or preventive advice is directed towards causes or consequences of social problems, which occur inside the organization."

In-plant activities may consist of:
a) help in the solution of social problems to any individual in the organization;
b) mediation between individuals or groups in personal relationships;
c) co-operating with the personnel manager, management, supervisors, shop-stewards, etc., in the solution of individual social problems;
d) home visits to improve the social worker's appreciation of an in-plant problem;
e) attention to general personnel problems;
f) advising the personnel manager and management on changes of policy and rules and their introduction
g) advising joint councils on social and human problems;
h) promoting good relationships within the personnel department and personnel services;
i) contact with parents of young apprentices and other young employees in case of in-plant problems;
k) keeping all levels informed about the task of social work.

B-6. "Out-plant activities are those activities, where social treatment or preventive advice is directed towards causes or consequences of social problems, which occur outside the organization."

Some out-plant activities might be:
a) help to relatives of deceased employees;
b) attention to social problems of pensioned workers and widows.

B-7. "Many activities have in-plant as well as out-plant aspects."

Examples are:
a) attention to specific categories (the disabled, young workers, old people before retirment, etc.);
b) advising any committee of welfare facilities;

c) home visits necessary to give assistance;
d) follow-up of sick people;
e) follow-up of workers who have had an accident;
f) rehabilitation
g) referrals to and co-operation with other agencies;
h) follow-up of referrals.

B-8. "The personnel social worker may get in touch with individual clients, problem groups or general questions in the following ways:
a) a client may come on his own initiative;
b) the social worker's attention may be invited by:
1. a member of management at any level
2. a member of the personnel department;
3. a shop steward or a member of the joint council;
4. a fellow worker;
5. family members;
6. an outside agency;
c) the social worker may become aware of a problem through his own observation."

The personnel social worker may take action on his own initiative, though a great deal of consideration is necessary before he will do so. In a number of cases it may be useful to make a move, without a client asking for help (e.g. group tensions may be observed before someone approaches the social worker to talk about the situation).

C. Methods

During the last two decades, the methodological aspects of social work in general have been developed considerably, along the lines of case-work, group-work, community organization and social administration. In personnel social work these methods are of great use. But it is necessary to consider the implications of these methods in each particular setting. It might also be necessary to develop some supplementary methods for each field.

The development of methods in personnel social work is fairly new, and this report does not pretend to be complete or entirely accurate; its object is to stimulate further thought in this field.

No distinction is made between methods which are only an application of general methods in this specific field and new methods, which belong mainly to personnel social work. If some methods, such as non-directive counseling, group-work, etc., are new to the personnel social worker, they should not be applied to the worker before proper training.

C-1. "Methods of in-plant social work are:
a) methods of general social work, e.g.
social case-work and
social group-work.
These methods consist of:
interviewing,
diagnosing,
planning help,
execution of the help,
follow-up of the help;
b) non-directive counseling;
c) systematic observation;
d) investigation;

e) use of the organizational structure;
f) promoting communication along the hierarchical line;
g) reporting along the hierarchical line;
h) assisting with the solution of group-problems;
i) promoting teamwork;
j) anticipation and prevention of problems;
k) stimulating management to adapt the work to the workers;
l) referring clients to other inside and outside agencies;
m) introduction of and information on social work,
n) handling questions of professional secrecy;
o) keeping records, daily notes and statistics of the social work;
p) documentation."

ad b) Although non-directive counseling (a method developed by Carl Rogers, U.S.A.) can be seen as a psycho-therapeutic method, in some cases it may be of use in diminishing emotional tensions.

ad d) Investigations may concern facts and problems of a particular group or all employees.

ad e) Use of the organizational structure means that the personnel social worker must follow the hierarchical structure,
respect other people's responsibilities,
refer clients to the department which is in charge of the subject.

ad f) The social worker is a link in communication, promoting it systematically or incidentally
1. along the line, helping people to talk throughout the organization
(this requires: knowledge of the theory of organization and of the organization of the firm and case-work applied to the situation);
2. between different departments;
3. through helping with leadership problems relating to personnel (here the individual supervisor is the client);
4. through information and discussion with management (reporting to management on general problems, about the social worker's own work, compiling statistics, stimulating training for foremen, etc.);
5. by stimulating the development of systematic methods of imparting information;
6. through informal group discussions.

ad h) As individual problems are often interwoven with group problems the personnel social worker will sometimes be able to assist in the solution of the group problem.

ad i) Promoting team-work may be considered as part of group-work. In general social workers tend to forget that their own co-operation with, e.g., members of the personnel department and the medical officer is on the same principle as co-operation in other groups. In some instances the personnel social worker can also promote teamwork in other groups (e.g. between supervisors, within a department, etc.).

ad l) Referrals are mentioned separately, because of their difficult technique. This subject requires special attention in case-work training for personnel social work.

ad m) One cannot expect employees and even management to be sufficiently aware of the possibilities of personnel social

work. Therefore it is necessary for the personnel social worker to give on a regular basis concise information about his work. The introduction of social work is mentioned as a method of in-plant social work, because this information must be adapted to each group. The contents and the process of presenting it need careful consideration.
To be able to develop personnel social work in the undertaking, the personnel social worker himself must have ideas about the possibilities of the profession and how to get into contact with people. It is helpful to try to get to know people and their work and to give also full attention to the simplest cases. It will be of great use if a few principles of personnel social work are recognized and made known by management (e.g. no authority and no decisions by the personnel worker, professional secrecy, responsibility remains with the hierarchical line, every employee is free to call on the social worker.)

ad n) Problems in handling professional secrecy arise especially in cases of:

1. Knowledge of illegal matters or crimes;
2. Co-operation with management at any level;
3. Co-operation with the personnel manager;
4. In teamwork with specialists.

1. The personnel worker will first handle the case, tell the client about the consequences, try to find a solution together, follow up.
   If he thinks it necessary to report to someone else, he should ask first for the client's consent. If other people are in great danger, the personnel social worker may have to go ahead without the client's consent, but informing him as soon as possible: this is a matter of conscience.
2. In co-operation with management at any level.
   Some problems of the social worker related to management in connection with professional secrecy might be:
   - Insecurity, because the personnel social worker is not sufficiently clear about his duties and the methods of handling professional secrecy.
   - Criticism and aggressiveness from management. Through insufficient information to management, the social worker's field of work becomes isolated.
   - The personnel social worker can try to handle cases in such a way that the communication between the employee and his direct superior is encouraged.
   - Management's decision will be necessary for any change in the employee's working situation. Such a decision cannot be asked for without the necessary information being given. Treating important information as confidential will become exceptional, if the personnel social worker is clear about his aims and methods.
   - The personnel social worker will give management as much general information as is possible. Acceptance of social work and its principles by management is most important.
3. In co-operation with the personnel manager.
   In general, the social worker gets more information from the personnel department, through personnel records, than he gives to the personnel manager.
   It is important, that the personnel manager has confidence in the social worker's way of working and of handling

professional secrecy.
The personnel social worker will help the client to accept the rules of the firm and of the personnel manager's task.

4. In teamwork with specialists.
E.g. with the industrial doctor. The personnel social worker should not expect the doctor to divulge more about the client's illness than the personnel worker can tell the doctor about the social problems involved. Only practical questions which are of direct importance for the personnel social worker's work, should be put to the doctor. The medical practitioner outside the firm can be made to understand that the personnel social worker is not part of management, and that his only intention is to help the client. As a rule, the social worker should get the client's consent before giving information. The personnel social worker must be fully aware of the consequences of keeping professional secrecy; consequences may exist for the client, for the organization and for the social worker.

ad o) As in general there is no guarantee that a social worker's records and notes at all times will be kept secret, it is difficult to decide what written records should be kept. It is recognized that records are important e.g. for diagnosing a case, the continuity of the work, general reports to managements, etc.

ad p) Included in documentation is collecting, keeping up to date and disseminating of information as for instance about social legislation, social work facilities in the community, etc.

D. Place in the organization

In this paragraph an attempt is made to give the personnel social worker a clear place in the organization. If this is not done, many problems of insecurity and of overlapping functions may arise: responsibilities will not be clear and other departments may feel their work has been taken over; the personnel social worker will not know to whom he will have to report, etc.

D-1. "If a social worker is employed by an undertaking he should have a definite place in the organization. This place ought to be a staff function and might be -
a) under the personnel manager;
b) on the same level as the personnel manager;
c) under the head of the social service department."

"If the social worker is subordinated to the personnel manager, he can only discuss personnel policy matters or other general questions with top-management after having informed the personnel manager of his intention. Even if the social worker and the personnel manager are working on the same level, it will be wise to keep the personnel manager fully informed for the sake of good co-operation, and in any case the matter should be discussed first with the personnel manager, as it may concern his field."

The method of contacting top-management should be discussed with the personnel manager when the personnel social worker starts to operate in a new firm.

Sometimes misunderstanding arises as to the responsibility of the personnel social worker, who has a staff function[1]). The first responsibility of the personnel social worker is to perform work of the best possible quality, as well as assisting the individual client as in giving general advices to management or to the personnel manager. His initiative can only go as far as management allows him.

Helping individual clients with social problems means a contribution to meeting human needs, as well as improving job performance, communication and human relations within the organization.

The personnel social worker should be careful not to intrude on the responsibilities of other executives.

D-2. a) "If a number of social workers are employed in an undertaking the most desirable method of allocating the work is to assign certain departments to each social worker."

In this way all the problems of the client will be handled by one social worker and every manager will know which social worker serves his department.

b) "Another method might be the allocation of certain categories of workers e.g. youths, disabled, etc. to one social worker."

The advantage of this is a greater specialization. A disadvantage, however, is that the departmental manager will have to deal with several personnel social workers. If only one of these were to have the main contact with the manager the social worker would have to discuss problems not handled by him.

Whichever system is used, one of the social workers should co-ordinate the work.

D-3. "To make personnel social work services available to small undertakings, a personnel social worker might be:

a) employed by an outside agency, serving a number of undertakings;
b) employed by two or more undertakings together;
c) employed by one undertaking, doing part time social work and taking on additional tasks in order to have a full-time job."

This last solution seems to be preferable, as the personnel social worker - being on the spot - will be more readily available for consultation on daily events; he will also be better able to keep in touch with and to understand in-plant problems.

D-4. "If the personnel social worker is employed by an outside agency, his work should be so arranged that he can feel himself to be part of the firm he is serving. His methods of contacting people should also be clearly defined in his duties and in the directives of the management."

The undertaking should consider the social worker as part of its staff. The personnel social worker may thus be serving:

a) one firm;
b) several smaller firms.

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[1]) Staff-function means as being advisory to all levels of the line of command. This implies that responsibility for social work - as well as for all other staff-functions - lies with management.

E. Co-operation and limitations in the work of the personnel social worker

In addition to carrying out certain duties directly, the personnel social worker will have to co-operate with different functions in and outside the organization, governed by the organizational setup and limited by the duties assigned to the different executives.

Also the personnel social work function itself has its limitations, which must be realized by the social worker, as by everyone with whom the social worker co-operates.

But even when a clear job description is available, the personnel social worker's duties will to a certain extent overlap with the duties of management and of other specialists.

E-1. "Co-operation with management and other specialists is necessary to ensure the best possible help to the client and to promote good personnel policy."

E-2. "Two main conditions for co-operation are:
a) a clear division of tasks and a clear structure of the departments involved;
b) mutual information."

E-3. "The personnel social worker's contribution in this collaboration might be:
- referring cases to management and other specialists;
- not encroaching on the responsibility of others;
- promoting regular consultation and deliberation;
- giving clear information about particular situations where possible;
- keeping management informed about social work."

E-4. "Co-operation with the personnel manager (or his assistants) can be related to many aspects of personnel management e.g. placement and replacement, rehabilitation, working conditions."

On the one hand the personnel social worker can assist by helping employees to adapt himself to new work and working conditions, by helping the supervisor and the group to have the employees integrated, either when difficulties arise or to prevent them. The personnel social worker, on the other hand, can inform the personnel manager about difficulties in adaptation which seem to arise from placing a certain type of worker on particular jobs. The personnel social worker will receive this information mainly by handling difficulties and complaints brought up by the workers involved or by members of different supervisory levels.

The personnel social worker can also give information to those employees, who do not quite understand new regulations and again he can draw the personnel manager's attention to the kind of information which is not understood properly by the people concerned. Much collaboration can be achieved in mutual discussion on general personnel problems.

E-5. "In co-operating with management the personnel social worker will assist in the execution of personnel policy as it is formulated by top-management (mainly after proposals of the personnel manager). He too will influence general social thinking."

E-6. "The personnel social worker will try to contribute to the promotion of the relationship between the personnel department and other departments."

E-7. "The work of the personnel social worker might be limited by:

a) the client's ability to make use of the help;
b) personal and professional limitations of the personnel social worker;
c) policies and regulations of the firm;
d) the organization's structure;
e) the directives of the personnel social worker's superior;
f) cultural, political and denominational patterns;
g) geographical situations;
h) social equipment of the area;
i) professional secrecy of other specialists.

The personnel social worker will have to recognize and accept these limitations, as long as they exist.

APPENDIX I

Suggestions for the training of personnel social work

This appendix endeavours to summarize the training conclusions of the report on personnel social work with a view to serving as a basis for discussions on the training of personnel social workers.

As personnel social work is partly dependent on national traditions, legislation, etc., specialized training will always need adaptation to the industrial situation of the various countries.

A. These suggestions for training should be regarded as additional to the basic training for social work. It is felt that this is essential, although in fact every social worker has not had basic training.

Additional training for personnel social work is important and desirable partly because the profession would become clearer in structure as a result and could be developed on more homogeneous lines than at present; partly because the personnel social worker would be more competent to perform his duties and even acquire more confidence in himself and in the job. Also, the rightful demands of management that the personnel social worker should have special knowledge and skills related to the industrial situation would be fulfilled, thus making it easier for the personnel social worker to assert his position in the undertaking.

For good personnel social work, the personnel social worker must have a knowledge and perception of general economic and industrial problems, and in the functions and principles of personnel social work. He must be able to analyse problems in or related to the work situation, and to deal with those problems (e.g. adaptation to work and work situation, relations between an employee, his superiors, fellow-workers or subordinates, conflicts between work and family-life, etc.).

This implies a training in theoretical subjects, in the application of theory to practical situations and in methods. Theoretical training might include:

industrial economics;
industrial organization and management;
industrial law;
industrial psychology and sociology;
industrial health and safety;
personnel management.

The application of these theoretical points need much attention. It is useful to analyse cases in order to appreciate complicated situations.

Under this heading come, for example, the method of acquiring knowledge of different aspects of an undertaking (formal and informal organization, production, general policy, personnel policy, atmosphere, etc.), appreciation of the function and rôle of the personnel social worker and the limits of his duties;
understanding of problems related to co-operation with other functions; problems of leadership, communication, co-operation, the locational and personal aspects of poor adaptation at different levels of the organization, the influence of industry in a wider area, etc.

In regard to the training in methods reference is made to all methods mentioned in the report (D-1).

Special emphasis might be put on methods involved:

- in the introduction of social work and of the social worker;
- on the building of good relationships between the personnel social worker and all levels and groups (including joint councils and shop-stewards);

- stimulating management to adapt the work to the workers;
- reporting (how and to whom);
- observing;
- investigating.

The teaching methods might consist of:
seminars,
group-discussions,
case-studies,
analyzing written interview-reports,
rôle-playing,
exercises in reporting, keeping records, etc.,
use of films and filmstrips.

In addition to the training of the Schools of Social Work, field-work (including some work as an unskilled labourer in industry) - if possible with close social work supervision - is most advisable, in order to give the student opportunities to use and develop his own skills, factory visits, directed to organization, working conditions, health and safety, personnel work and personnel social work.

B. As so many personnel social workers, already working in the field, have had no opportunity to have specialized training, attention is drawn to the desirability of arranging conferences, courses and in-service training for these groups. Schools of Social Work, as well as Associations of social workers might take the initiative in this respect.

C. Finally, the study-group would like to invite attention to the question whether social work students should be given some knowledge of and training in social work research methods. In the whole field of social work little research is done, although the profession certainly requires it.

Research might become easier and might be stimulated if social workers could assist with it, have sufficient appreciation of the results and help by working out the application of these results. By this we do not want to infer that social work research is only necessary in personnel social work; on the contrary, all fields of social work are in great need for it.

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