
the world. But yet, there is something else. The social worker is concerned more with duties and responsibilities than with rights, and with tolerance, forbearance, understanding, and love, in all aspects of the human relationship. Thus the social worker should study the mirror image of these great Declarations – for every right there is a duty. The development and maintenance of human rights is only a means to the harmonious existence of mankind – ‘all human beings’, says the Universal Declaration, ‘should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.’ From the Children’s Declaration, however, one can gather what the nations of the world thought were the ideal characteristics of an adult human. The child, so it says, is to be given an education which will enable him to develop his abilities, his individual judgment, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society. He is to be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

Empty words? Not so – and no one knows this better than the social worker.

Finland 1968

Miss Avery Jack

Contributed by Miss Avery Jack, BA, DipSocSci, Senior Social Worker at the Child Health Clinic, Wellington, until April last when she went to England on a Churchill Fellowship. Miss Jack was one of the Association’s delegates to the Helsinki Conference; she also represented Father Leo Downey at the IFSW Executive Committee and Permanent Council meetings.

The 14th International Conference on Social Welfare was held in Otaniemi near Helsinki, Finland from August 18-24. It was arranged by the International Council on Social Welfare which is a permanent world organisation for individuals and agencies concerned with meeting the social welfare needs of people. The International Council is independent, non-governmental, non-political and non-sectarian. It has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, ILO, the Council of Europe and the Organisation of American States (Pan-American Union).

The International Conferences, held biennially, form an integral part of the on-going programme of the I.C.S.W. They provide a world forum where all those involved in the work of agencies, and people interested in social welfare may meet to discuss the problems of social welfare. The basic working units of the I.C.S.W. are the National Committees and the international non-governmental member organisations. At the present time there are in membership 48 national committees throughout the world and 18 non-government organisations.

One member organisation is the International Association of Schools of Social Work which held a Congress and General Assembly from August 14-17 at Otaniemi. This Association is a world-wide organisation of individual Schools of Social Work and Association of Schools of Social Work. The present membership includes 16 Associations of Schools and 367 Schools in 47 countries. It holds non-governmental consultative status with the Eco-

conomic and Social Council of the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Organisation of American States.

Another member organisation is the International Federation of Social Workers which held its Executive Committee meeting and its Permanent Council meeting immediately before the International Conference and also arranged a symposium on the subject 'Social Work and Human Rights'.

The Conference, attended by more than 2,100 persons from 53 nations, had a very full programme, with a plenary session every day and with general meetings, committees, study groups and films running concurrently at other times. A number of international organisations also held meetings to which the public were invited. The theme of the whole Conference and of all the subsidiary meetings was 'Social Welfare and Human Rights'.

A Pre-Conference Working Party of 30 experts had met in Finland from August 6-11 and produced a report on the subject 'Human Rights and Social Welfare' which served as a focus for the Conference discussions and also formed the basis of one of the plenary sessions.

I find it impossible to try to summarise for you such a full and stimulating week. In any case I think it is rather like bread that has to be set aside to be fully leavened or a good wine that needs time to mature. There is unquestionably much re-thinking going on about social welfare and social work, but rather than a new look coming out of this it seems more likely that there will be a return to the ideals and the philosophy in which social work had its origin. This was the pervading impression that I gained from the Conference in external and internal discussions.

I should like to share with you the following section of the Pre-Conference Working Party's report. The opinions expressed in this report are relevant in the planning of the future of social work in New Zealand.

Social work: Functions, roles and human rights

It was possible to agree broadly that social work as a profession is charged with:

1. Providing services aimed at developing and restoring the capacity and ability for the social functioning of the individual within the context of his social setting.
2. The design, development and administration of policies, programmes, social and political action to support the first function, including modification and change of social institutions when these operate to the detriment of the social functioning of the individual.

At the present time it is clear that if adequate social work manpower is to become available many more sub-professional occupational positions must be created and utilised, requiring less training than the professional masters degree. This development, as it progresses, will lead to new and different uses of the professionally trained personnel. It is clear now from the reports considered by the Pre-Conference Working Party that there needs to be a much greater recruitment and retraining of social work personnel in policy, programme design, administration and political action areas. The pressure of the time is such that for the next decade social workers will have to learn much of these

things on the job. Thus a heavy responsibility is placed upon the individual worker, the employing institutions, the professional association, and upon programmes for social work education.

In relation to the second function the Pre-Conference Working Party asks the International Conference on Social Welfare to especially stress the importance of a broadly based university education.

Need for a greater participation in policy, development and administration

For various reasons social workers have not played a very effective role in development. They are quite often not involved or may not have had the opportunity or background to assume a more active role. They have been more concerned with the ultimate aim of development than with the means of development. Too many social workers do not understand sufficiently the opportunities to play a more contributing role in development. This situation must change if a more balanced progress in social and economic development is to be obtained. Social welfare requires participation of people in the planning process as essential to development. Social workers will have to play a more active and effective role and be development-minded if they are to effect a change in development policies and in the final realisation of human rights.

The field of social welfare and the practice of social work and related professions have not yet developed adequate collaborative interdisciplinary working relationships. There is, of necessity, a good deal of working together. Most often it is side by side with each struggling to maintain identity. The recipients of services too often suffer in this process.

There is need for on-going study and research geared to clarification and possible re-definition of social worker roles as members of the inter-disciplinary team in various host situations and in practice taking place under different economic and social development conditions.

Social welfare service delivery systems are too often characterised by fragmented non-integrated operating agencies which tend to compete in a manner injurious to the user's welfare rather than be co-ordinated and integrated. Co-ordination is accepted as a concept and often agreed to at policy levels but not carried out in practice at the case service level. Integration of services cannot be left merely to the goodwill of separate bureaucracies and agencies. It is possible that co-ordination will continue to be a myth unless there is some organisation brought forth which has responsibility to ensure that service collaboration replaces agency competition at the point of service to the individual, family and group.

While availability of service and ease of accessibility to service are important, their mere presence is not enough of a guarantee for the human service. The service delivery system in most countries appears to need reorganisation so that greater emphasis is placed on problem solving as opposed to service concentration. In particular it is important that administrators in the social welfare field be adequately trained for these responsibilities. The job of the administrator needs to be viewed in such a way as to include a more active role in initiating change.

Human rights and the training of welfare workers

A review of the national report reflects the opinion that social work training does not presently prepare people well for the expanding role of the social worker. The reasons are many. For example, cultural, historical and political factors frequently discourage the raising of questions about the present situation. Many Schools of Social Work in the beginning were considered advanced in introducing new methods, but now they tend to become rather conservative. Social workers are dealing with both people and structures, and their effectiveness will depend on the proper training they receive before admission to the services. This raises the following questions:

1. To what extent do cultural attitudes and personal motivation affect the performance of professional responsibility in regard to human rights?
2. To what extent are the Schools of Social Work and the co-operating agencies through courses and field work giving the students a realistic understanding of the principles enunciated in the Declaration of Human Rights?
3. How much guidance and training are the students given in techniques of effecting changes either within an agency or in structure, programmes and policy of the community?
4. To what extent are students gaining factual knowledge about the realities of life in their community or country and about the social, economic conditions, the political framework, educational level and cultural factors which influence the practice of social work?

There were, however indications in several reports that there was a growing interest both among students and qualified social workers in broadening the training programme to include more content related to the issues being raised here. In fact in many countries students were questioning the curriculum and pressing the Schools to introduce new subjects and new methods of teaching.

The social worker's responsibility to inform and involve citizens about their rights

It is the duty of social workers and social work agencies to inform people of the available services and the nature and extent of their rights.

A growing area of concern is the involvement of clients in policy making and in certain experimental situations even in the administration of certain services. The examples which were available indicated that clients who previously would have been considered incapable of such participation proved to be more than adequate. In particular the Pre-Conference Working Party was concerned with the standards which social workers and welfare agencies should follow in respecting the rights of the users of their services. In this regard the Pre-Conference Working Party asked the Fifth Commission of the Conference to seriously review this issue and to possibly ask the International Conference on Social Welfare to give special study to the matter, with a view to taking appropriate steps to formally secure greater recognition of this problem.

In certain settings such as courts, prisons and other protective care institutions care must be taken to reconcile the authority position of the service with certain principles of social work. In other situations, such as in child protection, every effort must be made to strengthen

the natural authority, such as parents, before using the authority of the community to assist the child. In situations where the client may be unable, even temporarily, to make his or her own decisions, care must be taken in deciding when to use authority. The learning of the proper use of authority can be greatly facilitated through adequate supervision and consultation.

Government and voluntary co-operation

Finally, attention must be paid to the place and interdependence of government and voluntary welfare agencies in the safeguarding of human rights. With the development of governmental services two main issues arise; one is the question of a criteria for preference services operated by government and/or local municipalities as opposed to services operated by voluntary auspices. The second issue concerns the relationship between government, the law, and social institutions. By guaranteeing a standard of provision the government is able to enlarge the areas of freedom for the individual, where by providing more adequate economic maintenance the individual is able to have a wider variety of choice. But what provision should be made for varied voluntary efforts? It is clear that basic economic maintenance must be governmental responsibility. The dangers to human rights that arise from the activities of government in the social welfare development programmes relate to the great extension of administrative law, with the consequent need of careful scrutiny of such law and the provision of effective appeals procedure. Yet despite the appearance of broad and satisfactory provision, some people still appear to fall through the net of services even in welfare states. In part, this arises because there is often no one place to which the citizen can go to inquire about his rights. Instead, only separate aspects of need are looked at by the particular department concerned. In some cases the goal of the organisation will take second place to the self-interest of the officials running the organisation.

One final point should be made about the relationships between governmental and voluntary agencies. While recognising that some accountability must be brought into any relationship between them, and that the government should require certain standards of performance, it is in the interests of government to see that voluntary agencies exist and are strong. They require financial support, in part, to truly supplement and complement other programmes. It is important that government, in these circumstances does not impose its own interpretation on the goals of the agency.
