

What steps should be taken to release nurses from too rigid a framework or too rigid an attitude and to prepare them better for their responsibilities?

Those who took part in the meeting stressed the importance of making use, both in training (basic or higher) and in service, of methods of instruction that stimulate the processes of thought, a critical spirit and the capacity to adjust to constant changes in working situations. They put forward bold proposals for new procedures in respect of recruitment, training and the structural organization of services.

Throughout they laid emphasis on the role of research and on the scope it offers for a sounder analysis of the particular contribution of nursing services within the health services as a whole, for a better use of existing resources, and for a re-examination of the profession designed to adapt it to the developing status of women...

JUVENILE MALADJUSTMENT

The topical nature and importance of the juvenile maladjustment problem in many countries is well known. Because it engenders in youth a feeling of human fellowship and awakens in them greater consideration for others, the Red Cross goes some way to providing a remedy. But the problem, whilst it involves education, morality and sometimes medicine, has also social roots, as shown by Dr. W. Bettschart in an article entitled Juvenile Maladjustment—The Individual and Society¹ from which we quote the following extracts:

The current upheaval of social structures leads us to consider juvenile adjustment and maladjustment and all that this implies. Taboos, often of a secular nature, are transgressed, the distinctions between legality and illegality change, political and economic concepts are questioned and traditions which used to provide security, and which were considered immutable, are abolished. At a time when technology and scientific progress are leading to ever greater specialization, to increasingly thoroughgoing and

¹ See *International Child Welfare Review*, Geneva, Feb. 1971.

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specific fields of knowledge, we are coming to realise that group or team work is becoming increasingly necessary, and that a contradictory need is arising for ever greater individualization offset by the need to give up certain individual prerogatives. The individual strives for more authentic personal fulfilment both in his professional and in his private life. Faced with economic needs and social realities which are brought home to him by mass media, he must subscribe to a sense of cohesion and a broader form of joint responsibility. In this world with its contradictions and changes, everyone is aware that man cannot be this "zoon politikon", this naturally sociable being that the philosophers of Ancient Greece considered to be the ideal.

Is it the individual or society that is maladjusted? The individual proclaiming his freedom or society trying to preserve its traditional opinions? Is the individual overstepping the line laid down by society or by the community, or is society fraught with certain structures which inhibit the development of the individual? This is a delicate subject which, from the outset, involves us in a difficult dialectic involving consideration of the reciprocal relationships between the individual and society, wherein a number of interests and stresses interact. This is an emotionally explosive subject which concerns the most intimate of personal convictions. How can we draw the line between the manifestations of maladjustment and the structure of the personality, how can we conciliate jurisprudence, psychiatry, education and upbringing, how are we to consider the persons responsible for maintaining law and order and public safety and those who defend their personal interests?...

...First, we should point out that "society" makes an easy target for projection. It is accused of all sorts of mistakes, it is held responsible for all manner of problems. The process is easily discerned, yet it is nevertheless in current use. The individual can, by using this device, eliminate his own problems by foisting on to others whatever he finds unpleasant. This is one of the crossroads at which we must each take our own decision, either to unload our responsibility on to society or to feel partly responsible for the maladjustment. Which are we to choose? Even the best equipped of societies can do nothing to forearm and help the maladjusted

unless each member of that society feels that he is implicated and involved.

The discussion becomes more concrete if, instead of speaking of society, we refer to social structures. Here we shall simply list the dangers which await social administrations which are responsible for maladjusted young people and the education system. It would obviously be too easy to sit in judgement on the social services, so we shall just mention a few facts. Owing to the importance of the administrative side of these services, the public authorities tend to entrust these functions to administrators or technicians. Instead of remaining a co-ordination and planning centre, a setting in which the workers can practise their profession on a one-to-one basis with the maladjusted person, these services are tending to become organizations with their own rules and regulations. Personal and flexible contact with the patient, infused with personal responsibility, is replaced by the file, the visible expression of "a job well done". The application of a doctrine is preferred to multi-disciplinary team-work where fundamentals are continually being questioned.

Mention should also be made of the "asocialising" concepts of certain teaching methods. Most of the time, classes are too big and therefore the teacher-child relationship is mainly of a disciplinary nature. The teacher consequently refuses to play a truly educational role and simply concentrates on transmitting his knowledge. The accent is laid solely on academic success. Instead of helping the child to discover the value of co-operation by working in small groups, he is stimulated by competitions and marks which awaken a sense of rivalry among the pupils. How can we be surprised if children become maladjusted? Schools really must once again find their vocation, that of education and training in the broadest sense. By teaching on a more personal basis adapted to the knowledge and degree of maturation reached by each pupil and by exploiting the pupils' own co-operation, school could become an exciting place where the children would learn about human relations and how really to make contact. Similarly, an end must be put to the segregationist practice of geographically separating special and specialized classes from ordinary classes. Cohabitation would go a long way towards facilitating mutual understanding.

Many workers, with one eye on the maladjusted individual and the other on our maladjusted society, feel committed both to the work they have to do with their patient and to public life and society. They consider the public insufficiently informed and the tools, put in their hands for "socialising" the young, inadequate and insufficient, and they feel that any improvement would presuppose the active participation of the worker in public and political affairs. How are we to understand socialization? First, we could say, defining it negatively, that it is not a question of "normalising" the individual, of wanting to make him toe the line, of giving him orders. The educational aim is to help the individual to mature thereby allowing him to live as harmoniously as possible, striking a balance between personal fulfilment and an acceptance of the facts of society. This idea of socialization does not always prove possible. We have often to resign ourselves to propping up the situation. The aim, however, is the same and that is to teach the maladjusted person the art of living, to work with him to find the path best suited to him and to strive for his development. Neither the worker nor the maladjusted person can avoid the difficult struggle between personal desires and external demands. The maladjusted person must be accepted and loved for what he is and, at the same time, socialised, that is, changed. The young person must be able to decide freely, whereas the worker must guide him until he reaches the necessary emotional maturity. Firmness and resolve are necessary at times, freedom and indulgence at others. Such flexibility calls for rich personalities who fully understand their inner selves and their relations with others. The self-confidence and capability of a worker depend on a solid training, possibilities for further training and supervision when working. In this way he will be able to live and work through the difficult problems that his client will be trying to solve...

...Social institutions will never be able to be anything other than a framework. The prevention and treatment of maladjustment will always be related to persons who feel themselves responsible for others. Direct contact will always be essential in combating maladjustment, this problem inherent in our existence which derives its true meaning from human relations.
