

should have been prevented, just as one should not treat a tuberculosis patient in his home without trying to protect his family.

Mass medicine will be mainly preventive medicine: it is less expensive and in fact the only kind that can be carried out in countries that are poor and where trained staff is lacking. Auxiliary health workers can be very useful in such circumstances: vaccination, insecticide spraying and basic health education do not call for an array of diplomas. On the other hand, individual diagnosis and medical care is the work of physicians and requires long and thorough preparation and training. As many doctors of as high a quality as possible should be produced and every country should build a basic health service to which all can turn—mobile health work should be no more than an intermediate and temporary stage on the road to health.

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**Division of functions between professional and voluntary workers, *Report on social service in Switzerland, Zurich, 1966.***

... The voluntary worker concept must still be defined. The term is used to designate people who do social work beside their professional activity. Originally, this work was unpaid. At the most, expenses were refunded. Today voluntary workers sometimes receive payment. The dividing line between the semi-professional and the voluntary worker is indistinct. Among the latter, there are married social assistants who work occasionally but also people who have never worked as professionals in the social field...

Widespread use is made of voluntary workers, on social service committees, as auditors, as collectors, or distributors of donations in kind, helpers to assist the unemployed to find work, home helps, organizers of leisure activities and sponsors (e.g. for juvenile delinquents, alcoholics and the mentally sick). They are also used in "group work".

Distribution of functions between professional and voluntary workers has not been given much study so far. Empiricism is the rule. There are no standard formulas for making this division. As a general guiding rule it might be admitted that voluntary workers should be entrusted with tasks of limited scope for which they are equipped. Within such limitations the voluntary social worker can give valuable service. Professional secrecy can give rise to obstacles in some official offices. In addition, voluntary work varies according to the social service concerned. However, the co-operation of the voluntary worker could be profitably developed. Not only does it relieve the professional worker but it also promotes

## BOOKS AND REVIEWS

among the public that civic spirit or feeling of solidarity which is the mainspring of social work.

Fortunately, attention is being paid to the tuition of voluntary workers. This is usually left to the social worker to whom the voluntary worker is assigned, but there are also courses and briefing sessions. Whichever form is adopted it must be stressed that it is not full professional training but only preparation and instruction.

Increasing recourse to voluntary workers is in keeping with evolutionary trends in social work but it must be done with greater discrimination than heretofore. The increasing application of psycho-social methods offers a wider field of activity to the voluntary worker . . .



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by

*Jean Pictet*

Director-General, International  
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<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of International Humanitarian Law* can be obtained from the ICRC, 7 avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva (postal cheque account No. 12-5527). Cost Sw.fr. 8.—.

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