

THE WORK OF A LIFETIME: ONE MAN'S VIEW OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN ISRAEL, PAST AND PRESENT

Ruben Schindler, Ph.D., Ashkelon College, Ashkelon, Israel

Meeting common human needs is a nation's obligation to its citizens. But ways to meet those needs are often debated from diverse ideological visions. Such was the case of Israel in its emergence to statehood. The work ethic was elevated to a value of the highest order and thus, assistance to the indigent was disapproved. From the author's perspective, this approach countered the principles of Jewish ethics, embedded in the writings of the prophets and the Talmud. In time however, progressive social welfare policies were introduced in Israel, as reflected in universal services. Mass immigration, severe economic strains, and health concerns justified the need for these services. In addition, social work practice was given legitimacy in the creation of university and four year college programs to train cadres of social workers. Today these social workers are making inroads in helping a variety of client populations in urban and rural areas.

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever." Isaiah 17:17

Altruism is the basis of my interest in helping others. I recall a cold October morning in Munich, Germany. It was 1939 and I was five years old. My mother had just taken me and my brother to school, but lingered at the school entrance, reluctant to leave. She told us that she would be traveling and could not meet us after school. Our neighbor would do so. This was the beginning of a drama that has remained in my memory until today.

Nazi Germany was on the march as my parents struggled to find a safe haven for our family. My mother had made temporary arrangements for my brother and me to reside in a local facility for Jewish children, which was comparable to a modern community center. Until today I recall the loneliness and yearning for my parents' return. My grandparents were sent to work camps, thus my closeness to them had also been severed. It was some months later that my brother and I were notified of our imminent departure to Holland. I recall traveling to our destination together with German soldiers, the latter unaware of our identities. At frequent train stops, women in white from local communities provided food and drinks. They assured us that someone would be waiting for us at our

destination. It was only later that we were informed that our trip to safety was made possible by a volunteer group smuggling children out of Europe. Arriving in the Netherlands, we were provided temporary housing with the understanding that we would be leaving in a few days for the United States.

Although sixty years have passed, I still recall the loneliness and abandonment that permeated my very being. To this day these feelings often emerge and I share them with my classes when topics of development and trauma are discussed. Self-disclosure, when appropriate, has enriched my discussions with students.

The acts of altruism during this time appeared never-ending. On the long journey from Holland to America we were accompanied by an unidentified young couple. They taught us a few rudimentary words in English and provided the security and protection that was vital to our journey. As we drew closer to the shores of New York and saw the Statue of Liberty in the distance, an assembly of flags was hoisted on the bridges above our boat. One of the ship's crew commented, "They have come to welcome you." Hours later I was to learn that the flags were hoisted to commemorate George Washington's birthday. But the joy of arrival was in no way diminished.

Upon arrival we were met by my father. My mother was nowhere to be seen. Father

subsequently related that he had received a telegram from Munich that only one of us would be arriving. For my mother the news that she would be unable to welcome both of her children was devastating. Many years later I learned the fate of our young Jewish classmates from the community center. On a recent trip to Munich I discovered documents revealing that of the two hundred children in our residence, only four had survived. They did not have the good fortune to be saved and their memories are forever with me.

The Historical Perspective

Israel is a young country. It is only sixty three years old. In my college days I occasionally visited Israel and decided I wanted to join in the excitement of a pioneering society. After graduating from the City College of New York (today the City University of New York), I decided to pursue my social work studies at the New York School, Columbia University.

It was in graduate school that I made my career choice. I was influenced by Mitch Ginsberg, the dean, who was subsequently appointed commissioner of Social Welfare of the city of New York. My field placements in Manhattan focused on immigrant groups from an array of countries, an experience that would enhance my practice in Israel. After completing my doctoral studies in social work at Yeshiva University, I joined Bar-Ilan University in Israel. My interest at the time was in the areas of social policy and immigration studies. I felt it important to research the ideology of the welfare period prior to the state's independence in 1948, as I believed its early roots influenced its future directions, institutions and policies. These historical developments had hitherto been given limited attention by social work scholars and planners.

Jewish life is predicated on the idea of pursuing "deeds of loving-kindness," that is, kind acts performed for the sake of our fellow man. This is seen as more virtuous than charity because it includes the giving of our personal selves through acts such as comforting the bereaved, visiting the sick and supporting those in need. These have become universal values.

In pre-state Israel (the Yishuv), it was the charitable necessities that emerged as vital to the survival of the small Jewish community in Palestine. In pre-state Palestine, many Jews devoted their daily lives to the study of the Torah and Holy Scriptures. These Jews were supported financially by their brethren abroad, known as *halukah*, meaning literally, "distribution." The latter had its origins in the religious community of the sixteenth century, and symbolized the financial support for the Jews of Palestine by their brethren in the Diaspora. Its philosophy was based on religious motives. Through financial support for one's fellow, a mutuality of interests is served. The provider fulfils his or her charitable obligations and the receiver is expected to devote his time to religious study.

Religious motivation, however, was not the only reason for establishing mutual aid. Economic reality prompted this support. For example, the small community of 20,000 Jews in the main cities of Jerusalem and Safed were unskilled. The rate of employment was high and motivation for work was not a value of the highest order. *Halukah* thus became a necessity and means for survival. This arrangement of mutual aid took a dramatic turn in the latter part of the nineteenth century: the work ethic was to become the value of highest order.

The Work Ethic: Central to the Ideology of Statehood

Immigration began to accelerate at the turn of the twentieth century in the pre-state. A number of factors contributed to this mass immigration, referred to as the Second Aliya (literally, "ascent"): the pogroms in Eastern Europe, the rise of political Zionism under Theodor Herzl and the realization that freedom and independence can best be achieved in a land of one's own. Members of the Second Aliya advocated the idea of *kibbush ha'avoda*, (conquest through labor). The pioneer's was to settle the land, cultivate its fields and be prepared to carry out his and her chores, however arduous and dangerous.

The most difficult challenge facing the immigrant was to "conquer" himself or herself. It became a matter of principle that only those

who lived by their own toil could join this "new and enlightened society." Members were to learn self-discipline and self-sacrifice through physical work. Both men and women would be expected to work the land, which had been largely unpopulated for centuries. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, noted that "not through money and not through benefits but through our work will [we] earn our country" (Ben Gurion, 1927)

A.D. Gordon, an influential leader of the pioneering movement, echoed a similar theme, speaking of work in terms of a modern religion. A secular mystic born in Russia, Gordon arrived in Palestine in 1904. He was committed to the ideal that the spiritual redemption of the Jew could only emerge through physical labor. He urged his brethren to abandon their non productive activities abroad and "free themselves" through tilling the soil.

The ideology expounded by early labor leaders had a profound impact on Israeli society in general and social welfare policies in particular. A central idea of this ideology was a society based on physical labor, non exploitation and equality for all. Immigrants who did not subscribe to the ideology of the new frontier or lacked the physical will, would find themselves in a minority. The following section elaborates on the historical consequences of this ideology.

Work, Philanthropy and Welfare Assistance

As the work ethic was elevated to a spiritual level, old forms of charity and philanthropy were abandoned. The new work ethic became so firmly entrenched that it affected the practice of mutual aid and philanthropy, traditions of long standing in the Jewish community. Furthermore, the antagonism toward philanthropy subsequently affected other forms of assistance. The new society rejected help to the needy, even when they faced the most difficult conditions. For example, the world economic crisis of the 1920s also affected life in Palestine. Between 1925 and 1927 unemployment took its toll. In a work force estimated at 26,000 people, about 35 percent were without jobs. In Tel Aviv the proportion was higher, with approximately

50% of the work force unemployed. When Ben-Gurion was confronted by hundreds of people crying, "Give us bread," he responded: "I do not have bread, but I do have a vision" (Ben Gurion, 1927). His vision was to harness all possible resources for a united effort toward productivity.

Although any form of assistance related to unemployment was denied, other welfare services were rendered to members of the ruling labor establishment. Outstanding among these were health services, assistance to orphans and the widowed, support for the elderly and help for the disabled. It might appear contradictory that the very movement which so vehemently opposed any form of aid should inaugurate such services, but there was a rationale for the assistance programs. First assistance was based on the principle of mutual aid, with the more fortunate assisting their fellow members in time of need. It was selective, however, offering assistance only to members of the Histadrut, the recognized labor union. Second, benefits accrued only after insurance payments were made. Third, and perhaps most significant, all services were linked to a fund for the creation of work projects. The ultimate goal was to return as many people to the work force as possible. As a consequence, the principle of work and productivity dominated welfare programs. With opposition to assistance so firmly established by leaders of the future state, it is not surprising that unemployment assistance was not instituted until two decades after the creation of the State of Israel.

With continued immigration to the pre-state, it was vital that basic social services be available to all. This effort was vitalized when a striking personality from America reached the shores of Palestine. Her name was Henrietta Szold, a charismatic and influential woman who was able to reach out to those facing hardship in the Yishuv. In 1931, the Department of Social Services was established and placed under Szold's direction. From the outset, its activities were defined and the client population identified. The local bureaus were called upon, not only to devise and dispense constructive relief, but to be pension master to the old, the blind, the maimed, the paralyzed,

the chronically sick, that is, all those who could not be trained to perform the lightest form of productive work (Szold, 1932).

Over the short period of two decades, Israel's welfare policies emerged in meeting the needs outlined by Szold. Indeed, Israel's welfare policies appeared to be progressive in introducing a national insurance bill. The first draft was drawn up in November 1947, a year prior to the founding of the state. Five years later the national insurance bill was introduced in Israel's Knesset(parliament) and, in time, was passed. This included the establishment of six insurance branches covering a broad spectrum of human needs, including: maternity allowance, insurance for industrial injuries, payments for the aged, widows and orphans, unemployment and children's allowances and health services.

As I look back on this history, I have a number of reflections. First, ideological principles and helping others are not limited to a specific society. Although I have described the Israeli scene, there are countries, specifically the United States, whose views have their own ideological roots. In my class discussions with students, we refer to the Protestant work ethic as a religious dictum. The classic approach of Weber points to this view:

"The pioneers of the modern economic order elbowed their way to success in the teeth of the established aristocracy of land and commerce...What is significant is not the strength of the motive of economic self interest...it is the change of moral standards which converted a natural frailty in to an ornament of the spirit...Labor is not merely an economic means, it is a spiritual end" (Tawney quoted in Weber, 1958, pp.2-3).

Inevitably, my students, when placing their views in context, would quote from religious sources. One student commented: "Simon the Just...used to say: on three things the world stands—on the Torah, the temple service and on deeds of loving-kindness. And

the latter is more valued than the giving of charity (*tzedaka*). The latter is performed with property where loving-kindness includes our possessions and personal selves."

Historically, the work ethic also influenced the nature of health services, which for years was reserved for members of labor unions. With the establishment of Israeli health services, universal programs were introduced. Students attending my courses on policy were inclined to support the latter. They likewise lauded the virtues of Great Britain's health care system, which was open to all, regardless of economic class. With critical thinking in mind, I introduced my view, which was molded by growing up in America. The students could not accept, however, that citizens of the richest country in the world had limited access to health care. I suggested to them that selective, rather than universal, social services have benefits. Although selective programs serve fewer people, they may provide more in-depth care, and more carefully executed research. My students were not convinced. They were, however, more convinced when I described my recent doctor's visit. After a brief greeting, my doctor asked me what hurt, looked at his computer, suggested I take some pills. That concluded my visit. In less than five minutes, I was out. I asked my doctor humorously, "Why the hurry?" and he responded with a kind smile: "Well, today my limit is four minutes per patient." This anecdote reflects the pressure on the health system and demands placed upon physicians under a universal program.

A number of contemporary themes cut across borders and societies where health care emerges as central. The focus today is on cost, caregiving, longevity, and dealing with patients who suffer from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. Increasingly, social workers discuss the challenges facing such families and consider helping models with a particular focus on the "fourth age" (80 and beyond), extending theoretical formulations on the life cycle and quality of life.

Immigration and the Challenge of Diversity

Israel, as a land of immigrants, comprises a vast kaleidoscope of cultures. This is best reflected in a senior seminar course that I teach. Although the majority of students were born in Israel, their parents emigrated from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Morocco, Romania and the United States. Two Arab students round out the range of backgrounds. The school of social work, which is comprised of some 500 undergraduates, also includes students from India and South America. The topics chosen for their seminar papers reflect their interests and the challenges that new immigrants face. My student from Romania is researching her grandparents' experience upon arriving in this country in the mid-fifties and their move to one of the country's transit camps, which was their first step to permanent housing. She is collecting information about this transition and the complexities of living in such a setting. She is examining the ecological implication of living in what turned out to be a "tent city." It took the state of Israel a long time to complete permanent housing because of the country's limited resources. This student is currently interviewing her grandmother, who is now in her eighties. Migration as crises and trauma will likely be the theme for her final paper.

Trauma was also of interest to my Ethiopian student. She recalled her parents' trek from Ethiopia via the Sudan desert. Although she was only ten at the time, the events are still very much with her. Her family had escaped prior to the mass exodus of Ethiopian Jewry two decades ago, which took place in May 1990 when 14,000 Jews were airlifted to Israel via the Sudan in a dramatic 34-hour journey Code-named Operation Solomon, it was a touching and historical event. Biblical sources write of the origins of Ethiopian Jews in the south west of Arabia and their relationship to the Queen of Sheba. Tradition relates that the latter was married to King Solomon and folklore suggests the Ethiopians were from one of ten "lost tribes" of Israel. They were ecstatic on their arrival, kissing the ground in homage to Zion—a name often applied to the land of Israel. In time, this

enthusiasm was tempered as questions arose about their Jewish origins. Fortunately, these issues were resolved when a number of rabbinical scholars unequivocally authenticated their Jewish origins.

My Ethiopian student enabled me to explore the importance of indigenous culture, a focus that can enrich practice. In her studies, my Ethiopian student explored the ancient Ethiopian concept of the "Zar" spirits. In Ethiopia, there are those who believe that physical symptoms are caused by named spirits which take possession of the person. The person is engulfed by the spirits and daily functioning becomes unbearable. Mental health practitioners will recognize this as disassociation, a consequence of post-traumatic stress disorder. Within the Jewish Ethiopian context, treatment is given by a senior cleric who uses his knowledge of the Zar to exorcize the spirit.

On one occasion I traveled with my student to Jerusalem and met with a leading Ethiopian rabbi to inquire about the Zar spirits. He noted that the phenomena of the Zar is mentioned in Talmudic literature. The term *shaydim*, demons, is common usage and widely documented in the many tracts of ancient Jewish literature. The Kessoq, the Ethiopian religious leaders, have always been viewed as the wise counselors of the community, and it was their spiritual insight that facilitated the treatment process. Indigenous community counselors were also involved in mental health support. A *shimagille*, an elderly guide and "wise person," was consulted when family issues arose. Fortunately, with modern technology, we were able to view how the Zar is exorcized. One of our students was able to access a video tape, which graphically showed a young woman being freed of her Zar demon. The video illustrated the intense involvement by the patient, as emotional catharsis is very explicit when the demon is freed.

Another issue related to immigration involves language. One of the students, a Russian immigrant, spoke of her responsibilities to her family in becoming the interpreter for all matters relating to their welfare. After two years in the country, she spoke Hebrew fluently. Her parents did not. This presented a

problem regarding access to services, such as those relating to health services and immigrant rights. We explored the options for her in seeking assistance. As a social work student, she was encouraged to contact the many services for immigrants. We suggested that her parents join an ulpan (intensive Hebrew-language institute) to learn the language, explore the rich support services in her community, search the Internet for a host of services open to the public and sign up for the subsidized bus services in order to do the shopping. While these issues were primarily about access to services, a yet more formidable challenge was taken up in class discussion.

Some class members decided to focus their seminar papers on language and identity. A recently married young student spoke of her difficulty in addressing her two-year-old daughter. Her husband was a recent immigrant from Spain and he wanted to preserve his primary language. They both agreed on the duality of language. I moved the discussion to the importance of valuing one's mother tongue for development of the core and subjective self which is integrally related to identity. There are times in the classroom situation when I share with students my own quandary about language. My seminar classes are conducted in Hebrew, although I think in English. In clarifying a complex idea, I move into my mother tongue where I feel confident. But then my students may be more confused. I often wonder how my students cope with their mindset in Russian, Arabic, Amharic (Ethiopian) and French.

Language also brings us back to our early memories of our country of origin. A class illustration most recently brought this home to my students. I mentioned reading a review of a book about the Nobel Prize winner Joseph Brodsky. In his native Russia, at the age of twenty-four, he was imprisoned for subversive activities and was confined to a mental hospital. Later he emigrated to the United States. Literature and poetry brought him fame in America, but his yearning for his homeland never ceased. In spite of his anguish over his imprisonment, the affection for his homeland

never ceased. Language was one of the key elements of his nostalgia and yearning.

From Voluntarism to Professional Education

A number of years ago I discovered a letter by Henrietta Szold (an early pioneer in developing health and social services in Israel) in one of the archives in Jerusalem. She had taken on the directorship of the social welfare offices dealing with the Jewish community. One of the issues raised in the letter was how to upgrade knowledge for volunteers in the social services. She was debating whether to establish seminars for social work practice or let altruism take its course. She argued that Jewish tradition had as its central mission caring for the destitute and indigent. Why not continue with this ancient tradition and pursue these normative practice principles? Her decision to introduce courses was the outcome of mass immigration and the hardships facing pioneers. In the early 1930s she established the Department of Social Services. Three years after its creation, nearly 12% of the population was being helped by local welfare bureaus.

With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 social work began to gain increasing recognition as a profession. In Israel today one can find volunteers, paraprofessionals and professionals working with a wide range of client groups in human service settings. These include social welfare bureaus, mental health centers, informal settings for early childhood education, community centers, homes and centers for the aged, correctional institutions, rehabilitation centers, counseling and family service agencies. As an outgrowth of these services, a framework for increasing knowledge and accountability through university education was created.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was established in 1955 and schools were opened in other major cities including Tel Aviv, Haifa and Beer Sheba in the Negev. Today five major schools of social work offer programs in a variety of fields of concentration, which include B.A., M.S.W. and Ph.D. offerings in clinical, policy and community work.

When I arrived at Bar-Ilan University in the early Sixties, the student population numbered less than a thousand. Social work was not part of the university curriculum. The school was subsequently established in 1967 and was integrated into the faculty of Social Science. The growth of the school and the university reflects the growth of higher education in Israel. The school of social work numbers about 600 today and the total student population has reached approximately 40,000. In the past decade new challenges have emerged which relate to the cutting edge of social work education. These challenges have also prompted my own involvement in the process which I discuss in the following section.

New Horizons

While I was on sabbatical at Rutgers University in New Jersey about ten years ago, a colleague inquired whether I would teach a course in policy on my return to Israel. A new social work program was planned for one of our southern cities an hour from our main campus in the city of Ashkelon near the Mediterranean. The offer intrigued me because the program was new, and a number of challenges prompted my positive response. Because the city was known as a hub of immigrants with newcomers from the Soviet Union, Ethiopia and North Africa, it was an opportunity to meet and become familiar with these cultures. In addition, I learned that Ashkelon has a large percentage of elderly, the third highest in the country. I was curious about the social agencies and services they provided and how they coped with the population of the "fourth age." Were the day centers, health services, homes for the aging and access services similar to those in other urban areas of Israel? It was an opportunity to engage in research with this emerging population.

My curiosity also focused on the pioneering work of a new social work program. With a class of only fifteen students our venture progressed modestly. The students I met were from diverse cultural backgrounds ranging from North Africa to women from the Bedouin rural community. The curriculum was

very much Western in orientation, much like the traditional university framework. The program centered on field experience which was based on individual supervision covering a three-year period. The student engaged with client populations focusing on the needs of individual, family and community. The importance of the client's indigenous culture, and populations with specific needs, were stressed. A number of illustrations follow.

We found that Russian families had limited experience of the roles and functions of social service agencies and service providers. This should not be surprising because the social welfare structure in the former Soviet Union was unlike that of Western social services. Within the Ethiopian community one has to be sensitive to the very nature of time which is viewed differently than in the West. The counseling sessions have to be arranged with much flexibility, and the "therapeutic hour" as we know it and which is common in mental health centers is not the norm in Ethiopian society. It is not unusual to spend two to three hours with clients until the objectives of the session have been achieved. In addition, it is important to encourage proactive responses from clients, and the expression of feelings toward the worker. Giving legitimacy to these actions is vital since it may conflict with the "code of honor" of their culture. This code is very clear about showing respect and honor for the elder and the "one who has wisdom." I feel with sound supervision the duality of honoring and empowering clients can be achieved.

As I write this a decade later, there have been significant changes in social work education and practice. There has been a growing interest in the profession and opportunities for students who live outside city centers. In the past decade, a host of new social work programs have been opened in rural settings. These include the city of Safed in the northern Galilee, and the city of Ashkelon (where I currently teach and serve as Dean). In all, there are five schools which serve communities countrywide.

In order to appreciate these developments, I reflect on my own Social Work Program at Ashkelon College in southern Israel, which

commenced twelve years ago. There were a number of factors which led to our development. With the influx of immigrants to the south, the need for qualified social workers took on urgency. Immigrant groups called for greater representation of their community in the helping services. In addition, the professional services stressed the importance of training in fields of practice where shortages existed. Specifically, these population groups included the elderly and children's services. A particularly important development was the call for the skills of school social workers to engage teachers and parents to increase children's welfare.

Over the years many social services hired paraprofessionals to meet the increasing needs of their clients. It was now important to move them along professionally in order to enrich their knowledge and practice competence. In addition, the School of Social Work at Ashkelon College has established a retraining program of graduates in all disciplines who seek a major in social work.

Expanding educational institutions to rural populations has always been the policy of the Israeli government, but it has not always been vigorous in meeting these goals. However, I have found students who are now pursuing higher education with enthusiasm. Many students have not had opportunities in studying at university centers because of steep entry requirements and economic demands. It is the former, the issue of admissions, that has preoccupied me in the last few years. I have always felt that students who did not do well in high school and failed to meet our admission requirements should still be given opportunities for further education. Thus, life experience of our applicants should warrant serious consideration for entry. One case in point was a candidate who had spent two years in a small town near Israel's border. In her role as support staff in the local school she had to deal with children's trauma in light of continuous missile fire. Her resilience to these challenges matured her and her motivation to help others led her to social work as a career.

A rather touching response from one candidate who was accepted into our program occurred at the conclusion of our opening

assembly. When faculty and students returned to their classes, she commented that this was her first exposure to academic life. She loved being with other students: the atmosphere, the library, access to computers. Growing up in a small village, this was all new to her and she felt privileged to be with us. When I met her the following year, she mentioned that her grades were above average and her interest was in community development. I was delighted.

Many meetings within the school and college are spent discussing the virtues of formal academic standards. I tend to take a liberal view, particularly toward students with life experience and those who display a genuine interest in helping others.

Three- and four-year colleges in rural communities are now designing curricula for graduate programs. At Ashkelon College, I hope to see our first entering class of social work graduate students in the fall of 2013. The focus of study will be on fields of practice including aging populations and children. Both tracks are likely to be over-subscribed because entering students, many of whom are practitioners, are seeking new knowledge in meeting common human needs.

The Next Decade

Predicting the future in times of uncertainty is perilous. Recently I received an invitation to attend the annual meeting of an Israeli social work group to discuss social work professional trends over the next decade. What follows are some of my reflections on this topic.

As I noted earlier, Israel has almost reached universal social services in meeting common human needs. An emerging concern is how to best advance the cost effectiveness of resources. For example, the proportion of aged, who now comprise ten percent of Israel's inhabitants, will increase significantly. The fourth age of eighty and beyond is expected to consume further resources of the country. No less important are the moral and ethical issues of how to advance the quality of life. There is increasing literature today that places the year 2045 (not quite 2021) as the period when man becomes immortal. I raised these issues in one of my seminars and asked

whether any of my students could imagine living eternally. One or two acknowledged they would like to experience life at age one hundred and twenty, viewed as a blessing in Jewish tradition, but not beyond that. Moving to the present, the emerging challenges of intergenerational responsibilities comprising five generations is very much a reality today. Family loyalties, care giving priorities, career choices, sharing cherished values of compassion and empathy bring further challenges for family members.

Immigration will continue to preoccupy policy makers and practitioners alike in the years to come. In this paper I discussed the Russian and Ethiopian populations. Immigrants continue to arrive, but in more limited numbers. In the past two years they have come from the Yemen, Tunisia, South America, and Great Britain. Multiculturalism is the focus of debate, and the issue of identity is one of its central features. Specifically, how can we integrate newcomers into Israeli society and yet retain the values of their indigenous cultures? How should we go about connecting them to the values of the Jewish state, the language, and its historic roots? And above all, how can we encourage established communities to welcome the newcomer with greater acceptance and tolerance?

I believe there will be further opportunities for students to study social work in rural communities in the years ahead. At this writing a number of undergraduate and graduate social work programs are awaiting accreditation. As I mentioned, Ashkelon College is in the process of completing its master's proposals. We anticipate that accreditation will be completed by Spring of 2013. In Israel, academic assessment procedures fall within the purview of the ministry of higher education and budget committees.

Trends in Israeli social work education have been influenced from abroad. We have been enriched by the cutting edge research, and expertise that has come from the United States. Three of our major schools have been established with the cooperation of leading social work educators from America. Much of our curricula followed the American model with the classic policy, research, social work

methods, and fields of practice as the major curricular areas. In Israel there are efforts to focus on the unique and indigenous content relevant to the country's rich cultural influx. It is my hope that these efforts will increase in the years ahead. The overwhelming interest in clinical social work is now incrementally being balanced by community development and social policy concentrations. These tendencies can only strengthen social work knowledge and education in the next decade.

References

- Ben Gurion. Lemilchama B'choser Avodah. (War against unemployment). Kuntras 14, no.17(1927): 10. In Hebrew.
- Schindler, R.(1981). Welfare and work in Israel: A case study. *Social Service Review*. 636-648.
- Schindler, R., & Brawley, B. (1987). *Social Care at the Front Line*. New York, London: Tavistock
- Szold, H. Letter to her sister in America from Jerusalem. Sep. 10, 1932. Hadassah Archives, New York.
- Weber, M. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Foreword by R.H. Tawney. New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons. pp. 2-3.

Ruben Schindler, Ph.D., is Dean and Professor at the Ashkelon College School of Social Work, Ashkelon, Israel. Comments regarding this article can be sent to: Schindr@013.net

Copyright of Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping is the property of Cleveland State University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.