BORDERLINES

A Partial View of Detached Work with Homeless Young People

Alistair and Gabrielle Cox

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£1.50

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'The cover picture is taken from a poster used by MAGIC - Manchester Alternative General Information Service - during the early 1970s.'

'TheYouth Development Trust was created in 1963 with the object of promoting "the welfare of mentally, physically or socially deprived youth". It has mounted a number of action-research projects, and has experience of contacting and helping young people who are normally unreached by the statutory services. In particular it sees its role as one of exploring particular areas of social need and writing fully on its experience, as a guide to further practical initiatives both within an area and nationally.

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PREFACE

The concept of detached work has been with the Youth Service for over ten years now. For more than five of those years the City Centre Project has been working with homeless young people in Manchester. This booklet is concerned with the work of the Project up to the beginning of 1976, and describes the Project's experience of what detached work entails, and the kind of problems it raises. In so doing it looks beyond the sphere of youth work to the whole concept of social work and the professional helping relationship.

The aim of the booklet is limited. It does not attempt to describe the work of the Project in specific detail, nor does it analyse what homelessness means for young people. Further publications will cover some of these areas: for example, a document on homelessness amongst young people is being prepared; a worker is writing a specific account of his own role in an accommodation scheme; and a further account of this scheme is to be produced by the charity with whom City Centre Project workers co-operated in the field of housing management.

This booklet is essentially the workers' view of what they were attempting to do, and mirrors some of the confusions and complexities of their task. In order to do this we have drawn upon subjective material of the period. Some will have come from a worker's hurried recording of the day's events, some will be internal project polemic, some will come from reports prepared for external view, some will be drawn from tape recordings of workers' conversations. The extracts have not been chosen for their literary value, nor for their internal cohesion and logic. Some would now be disowned by the people who wrote them. Many of them are raw and ill-formed. They have been chosen, however, because they reflect points of view at particular periods of time. We have not attributed them to particular people, since we were more interested in the way comments related to feelings within the team than in who said them. However, unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from members of the team. We have tried to avoid using footnotes, unless absolutely necessary.

The City Centre Project has tried to be a highly self-critical project. Workers have never been able to rest completely easy over what they were doing and how they were doing it. This may well spring from the marginal position of the Project — caught between the institutions of society and the world of homeless young people. This intermediate position is a vital one, yet difficult to maintain — the pulls towards 'legitimacy', for instance, can be very strong.

This booklet has been written because it offers a 'marginal' perspective on youth and social work. It is not, therefore, simply an esoteric exercise. It aims not

merely to help detached workers, but also to stimulate members of the helping professions into considering their own relationships with their clients and the structures within which they operate.

Chapter 1 is concerned with describing the situation within which the Project was working, and demonstrating just how 'peripheral' to society homeless young people are. Chapter 2 locates the Project historically within the city, introduces a simple model of detached work, and sets the framework for discussing the issues which arose. The third chapter is concerned with the problem of the worker's identity, and the basis upon which his contact with young people is made. In Chapter 4 the issue is relationships, and how far it is possible for a paid worker to relate to young people in a way which they would feel was meaningful. The other side of the coin, the 'professional' caution about over-involvement and the tension between detached work and the concept of 'professionalism', is explored in Chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 turn to the question of structures, and examine the effect of creating project structures, both upon work with young people and relationships with other agencies, and the importance of relevant management structures. The eighth chapter attempts to comment upon the role of the 'fringe' agency or worker in today's Welfare State.

We are grateful to the other workers on the City Centre Project (Bernard Jobson, Kathy Jones, Elinor Kelly, Arnis Teibe, Elspeth Mackenzie and John Roussel) and to Christine Jobson for their permission to use their words, and for their comments upon the draft. We are also grateful to Ralph Ruddock, Harold Marchant, David Brandon, Dave Thomas, Duncan Scott, Bernard Davies and Martin Pickstone for their helpful advice and criticism. Thanks are also due to the members of the Project Management Committee, who supported the workers through many good and bad times. Whilst we have been attempting to describe a corporate process of thought and growth, the responsibility for the form in which it is presented and the emphases and conclusions which have been made, must remain our own.

A. and G. Cox

This is the creature there has never been.
They never knew it, and yet, none the less,
they loved the way it moved, its suppleness,
its neck, its very gaze, mild and serene.

Not there, because they loved it, it behaved
as though it were. They always left some space.
And in that clear unpeopled space they saved
it lightly reared its head, with scarce a trace

of not being there. They fed it, not with corn,
but only with the possibility
of being. And that was able to confer

such strength, its brow put forth a horn. One horn.
Whitely it stole up to a maid — to be
within the silver mirror and in her.

Rilke

CHAPTER ONE

"We wait on corners, with nothing to bring but the songs we can sing which nobody wants to hear sung..."

T.S. Eliot : The Rock

"Being homeless is rotten. In a world of statistics and social analysis this is sometimes overlooked — it is a horrible way to live. For a start you aren't needed by anyone — you are a useless encumbrance to all concerned except perhaps some social work agencies and then mostly only within certain defined limits. You have nowhere to go and nothing to do except get through the day and night. You wander around the streets amidst bustling crowds of clean, well fed and busy people either rushing off to work , returning home to their families, or going out with friends for an evening's entertainment. You have little mney, no friends, and almost no content to your life save to keep warm in libraries or queue up for your benefit at the Social Security. Worst of all you are alone and that brings with it an ever increasing sense of isolation, for isolation breeds isolation."

The homeless young person is an outsider. He has lost many of the links which other young people, however 'alienated', have with society. He is 'marginal man' in extremis: peripheral, unproductive, unwanted, out of touch with conventional life-styles and values, friendless, purposeless... To say all this is to create, of course, a stereotype, and stereotypes are faithless, limiting and negative. Nevertheless, there are young people who fit this description in all its aspects, and many others who partially embody it.

This fringe position is one which confronts the youth worker, the social worker, the helping institutions of the Welfare State, as well as many ordinary concerned individuals. To encounter it is a disturbing experience. How does one offer help to young people who may have links with no other individual, let alone a family or social work organisation; and what kind of help is relevant? Detached youth work started in response to the problem presented by 'the unattached' — those young people who didn't make use of Youth Service provision. Homeless young people are 'unattached' in a far more fundamental sense, and they therefore often pose the detached work dilemmas in an extreme form. These dilemmas, however, are not confined to detached workers. They raise questions for all who are concerned to help people, whether on the fringe of society or not.

It is some of these questions which this booklet is designed to raise, through its account of the problems faced by a detached work project which set out to offer help to homeless young people. The background of the account is the twilight area of homelessness, unemployment and loneliness. The foreground is the area where homeless young people and project workers met: an area of tension, chaos, humour, sadness, dilemma, violence, friendship — the list is endless. In particular we want to examine whether a youth work project can escape, even momentarily, from the role of social engineering or social control, and enter into any kind of reciprocal relationship with young people who could be described as one of the least articulate, organised, recognised or appreciated sections of the community.

When we began work one august body questioned whether such young people existed — whether there was, in fact, any 'problem' at all. Five years later, single homelessness has become a much more politically sensitive subject, culminating recently in a wave of indignation and alarm following the TV documentary *Johnny Go Home* which dramatically described the plight of homeless youngsters in London. Sadly, at a time of economic recession and expenditure cuts, this indignation has failed to produce any positive results as far as homeless young people are concerned.

The whole subject of homelessness amongst young people is too large for detailed discussion here, but we need to touch upon some of its aspects in order to convey the context within which we were working.

To be homeless is qualitatively different from almost any other kind of social handicap or misfortune. It isolates you in the present — cut adrift from your past and with an unknown hazardous future — and no longer part of that normal, secure world where people have somewhere to go when it rains. The step into homelessness is, therefore, an immense one — yet young people are taking that step every day.

"Jenny tells me she has been thrown out of home 'for the last time'. Her dad is a foreman in an engineering works and they had a row about her being unemployed. She had an interview for a job on Monday, but she was out late on Sunday night and missed it, so her mum told her to go."

That row at home can be the last straw, the culmination of a series of incidents and crises, the final raw revelation of the tensions, incompatibilities, incomprehension, and prejudice which may underlie family life. Who can apportion blame? Sometimes it is the young person who is pushed out, like Jenny, by parental anger over her behaviour. Alternatively, it may be the young person who initiates the confrontation and makes the judgments.

"It was pouring with rain when I met David in an amusement arcade. He had had a row with his stepfather over the way his stepfather treated his mother. He left home yesterday and spent the night out. He had no idea what to do next..."

If family tensions are one age-old precipitator of young people leaving home, then another is the economic situation and the desire for a better life.

"I met a lad from Belfast in the all-night cafe. He'd come over a couple of months ago to find work, and was roughing it."

"A Youth Employment Officer phoned us at home about two boys from Glasgow. He wanted to know if we could help find accommodation for them. They had been sleeping rough over the weekend and were now pretty desperate to find somewhere more permanent to stay. The boys called in during the afternoon and it was soon clear that they were very 'green' and new to this kind of situation. They had both been working in Glasgow, one as a van boy and one as a painter and decorator, and had felt they were getting nowhere — out of half-a-dozen van boys, for instance, only one or two ever became drivers. They thought, therefore, of leaving Glasgow and heading south."

Or your reputation may have become tarnished in your home community, and if you're going to have a chance of succeeding you've got to escape the limitations of that label.

"Jack was thinking of going to London because of being constantly picked up by police in Manchester. He feels he is getting a bad reputation — doesn't want to go to court again but fears it is inevitable. He thinks all will be well in London."

What happens to these young people when they leave home? Where do they go and how do they manage?

"John (16) left home in Blackley two weeks ago after a row with his father about leaving his job as a welder. He spent a couple of nights wandering around the Piccadilly arcades, and was finally picked up in one of them by a bloke who worked in the Midland Hotel. He stayed with him for ten days. Now he is homeless again."

Hardly an auspicious start, yet a typical one. During detached work in the city centre of Manchester, project workers met many young people who had left home and were surviving by their casual companionship with individuals who were usually themselves already defined by society as 'outcast' or 'deviant'. Indeed, it was often only in such circles that they could expect to find acceptance and help, though even here standards varied and tensions arose.

"I was joined in the arcade by Des and Pete. They greeted me noisily and exuberantly, and told me Joey had been looking out for me that morning. Des said he was getting tired of Joey — 'after all, he isn't prepared to look after himself'. Des (probably about 18) is also dossing, in a derelict house in Cheetham, but although it is dirty 'I always keep myself clean'."

The early depressing experience of bare survival may push the young person out in search of adventure somewhere else.

"Jenny dossed last night in railway carriages with Paul and squint Dave. She looks and says she feels a mess. She says she is feeling very depressed...
Sue tells me Jenny is now in London. 'You should hear what she is getting up to. Stopping men on the street and then running off with their £5. I wouldn't have the nerve.' She showed me a letter from Jenny. It was a classic provincial girl in the big city letter. Described the bright lights but is very unhappy. Talked about the police, pubs in Soho, and all-night clubs."

Thus begins a process of drifting which it is difficult to stop. The word 'drifting' is an evocative one, rather than one to which we would wish to give a precise definition. Its key element is the quality of aimlessness it conveys. It serves to differentiate between those young people whose movement is purposive and planned, and those whose movement is unplanned, non-purposive, and totally at the mercy of prevailing conditions. Such a distinction is not, however, clear cut: between the two extremes there is a whole range of degrees, and also a debilitating process. Young people do not start out in life aimless, but the confusion and frustration of

subsequent events may make it difficult for them to distinguish what they want, or what they can reasonably expect. Young people may leave home with a clear purpose: to get a (better) job, and a place of their own. They may even feel that they have planned this well; they may wait till payday, save money, and choose carefully where they intend to go. All too soon they encounter problems — long term accommodation is difficult to find, short-term accommodation eats up all their money, and then they find themselves penniless and destitute.

It is at the point of failure that the young person begins to 'drift'. That point may be at home, where relationships break down and the young person leaves hurriedly and without thought. Or it may occur later during the course of an ill-prepared or ill-fated plan to find work and excitement in a larger city. An insidious process of redefinition begins to take place. Having failed to find somewhere to live locally, the young person may move on, confident of success elsewhere. Successive failures transform both his self-image and the image which society has of him.

"The police were turning people off the grass. One lad asked me for a light. He said he was living rough; had rowed with his parents and couldn't go home. He said dossing was no fun as nobody else is around, not like London where there are other people around also dossing. I invited him home for a meal and a wash. 'What would your wife say if you brought a dropout like me back with you?' 'Do you regard yourself as a dropout?' 'No, as somebody who has slipped to one side. I often find myself in a motorway caff and wonder how I got there.' Later he said he would like another chance. 'People say they want to help but they don't encourage you much when you want to make the break.' "

This process of redefinition is accelerated when the young person finds, as described earlier, that the sections of society who are willing to help him may be those which are themselves on the fringe of society. Indeed, he may be considerably bewildered to find himself suddenly in the company of dossers, or drug-addicts, or picked up in an arcade by a homosexual. Yet he has not many alternatives if he is to survive in a city, and the chances are he will become either rootless within a city or will simply move around the country.

"He had a sleeping bag over his shoulder and had been sleeping out in Piccadilly Gardens. He comes from Port Talbot which he describes as 'a one-industry place and nothing else'. Being completely unskilled he found employment hard to obtain, and he claimed there was no social life. Said he had been thrown out of home by his parents for repeatedly coming in late. He had drifted around and stayed in London for a while. He said he always throught of Manchester as a place with a good scene, but admitted he was disappointed in what he found. Reckoned he might drift south..."

When we talk about the phenomenon of drifting we are not talking about young people who see a drifting career as a romantic ideal which they *choose* to follow, but about those who drift in response to external pressures. We are concerned, too, with a physical state, rather than an existential one, although the two may be closely linked. By the latter we mean a kind of 'drifting' of the soul, someone, as one worker described it, 'without a conscious aim in life', or for whom 'a normal or average aim has been translated into something not so readily recognisable to either the person concerned or the rest of us'.

"John is a drifter in search of destiny he will never find. He cloaks himself in a culture he doesn't really understand as an excuse and really his drug taking must be seen in that context. There doesn't seem to be any way of allowing John to see his reflection and it is likely that he will continue as he continues ad infinitum. The only kind of force that would be useful to him in this respect would have to be of a religious conversion nature. His wounds are just too primal."

Many young people we know have been in just such a state of aimlessness: indeed the experiences which group around the axis of homelessness do much to create such a state. We would not wish to overlook, deny, or underestimate the state of 'existential terror' in homeless young people, yet this state is not their defining characteristic, indeed it is shared by a good proportion of the population. Rather, we need to simplify the concept of 'drifting' — to concentrate upon the actual physical process in order to avoid a purely personalised or psychological explanation and to focus upon the social and economic pressures upon the young person.

"I tend to regard Ken as the epitome of the drifter we are particularly concerned about. He is basically extremely isolated and vulnerable. He says he has seen no-one for a week. He is very self-conscious and analytical and always tries to chart his progress since arriving back in Manchester. He feels he has achieved very little. He talks about going down to London. He seems to think it would be easier to make friends down there and to achieve the kind of things he wants to achieve in his own eyes. He regards London as a place where the action is."

Here drifting is conceived in terms of movement from one situation to another, perhaps in response to inflated and unobtainable, yet strongly held, aims. One of the saddest processes to watch is the way in which frustration of aims, and enforced rootlessness and insecurity, can eat away at a young person's self concept until he abandons his purpose and adopts a nihilistic posture with regard both to himself and a wider society.

Although, therefore, one could embroider endlessly upon the theme of 'drifting', both as a social and an ethical concept, the rough and ready definition we have used in the past has been a physical one. The criterion for offering help has been that a young person is 'adrift'; carried by the current of unemployment to one spot, smashed around on the rock of homelessness in another, swept off somewhere else by police harassment — like a boat without power.

The words *without power* have become increasingly significant. It is precisely the lack of power which has been seen to underly the predicament of young people known to the project; and the work of the project has come again and again upon the concept of power — the power of institutions, the power of the workers, the alignment of power alongside young people, the attempt to discover how meaningful it is for young people to try and gain power over their own lives.

'Drifting', therefore, has been a formative word in the development of the project. For the early workers a developing awareness of the processes involved in drifting helped them to focus upon the kind of young people with whom they wanted to be involved, and to identify some points of intervention. The concept provided a direct link between the experience of local young people who remain within the city and other young people who travel the country — both being seen to be victims of external forces which kept them on the move.

Yet in practical terms to apply the word 'drifter' to a young person is hardly helpful — it is an emotive and simplistic label. We have therefore turned to the

word 'homeless' as a more neutral term. It also serves to identify one of the crucial elements in the situation which drives young people to 'drift' — the lack of accommodation. Whilst unemployment, poverty, and isolation are also great problems, none can be tackled whilst a young person is homeless: to have accommodation is a basic of survival.

However, we would wish to extend the term 'homeless young people' beyond simply those young people who are at a certain point of time physically without a roof over their heads. In the same way that 'single homeless' has become a generic term covering people in a variety of situations, so must 'homeless young people' encompass all those young people in insecure, substandard accommodation, who live under the threat of harassment and summary eviction, in constant risk of homelessness, without any form of community support — a whole range of young people whose lives are insecure, unsettled and isolated, and who survive precariously by floating around the dingy margins of the cheap furnished rented accommodation market.

The term "the vicious circle" has become well-worn, yet it continues to describe the lives of too many people who are faced with the brutal impossibility of breaking out of their situation. This circularity of circumstance applies equally to young people who have taken the step of leaving home and have run up against difficulties. In their case, the circle usually spirals gently downwards, until it flattens out into the "treadmill" where older single homeless people revolve wearily through psychiatric hospital, lodging house, prison, night shelter, hostel. Is there an escape route? Some young people swallow their pride and return home, though the problems that drove them out still remain, and may force them to move on again later.

"I called on Eddie. He is crashing in a large room at the top of a house — mattresses on the floor. There are four permanent tenants, plus Eddie and his friend. Eddie can't stay much longer, it is too crowded. He has just arrived from Cumberland and finds Manchester a real contrast. He is depressed by the difficulty in finding somewhere to live . . .

Eddie rang me today. He has now decided that it is impossible for him to settle in Manchester until he has some cash. He is going back to Cumberland to get some money — might come back next week and will contact me. I think he probably won't come back here — will probably drift somewhere else."

For others, their attempt to return home simply incurs further rejection.

"Tony had just been to see his mum. She told him not to come again. She called him 'one of those hippies'. He was very upset."

"Paul has just come back from Birmingham to find his father after an absence of a few months. He is 17 but comes across as very young and naive for his age. He feels he will be OK once he has traced his family. The problem is that their previous house has been demolished and Paul doesn't know where they have been rehoused...

We located Paul's father's new address and Paul went off this evening to see him. At 10 p.m. he rang to ask if he could stay with us again, as his father had refused to let him in the house and had told him not to bother coming again."

Nor, of course, should one assume that young people necessarily have any home at all to go to, as one young person pointed out:

"Me, I've never had a home since I was three. I've been in fourteen children's homes, then I was put in Borstal, and after that I just had to look after myself."

If home is not a possible choice, what chance does a young person stand of achieving a viable independent existence? In all our major cities the problem of the short supply of cheap rented accommodation is an acute one. Each year student bodies raise an outcry about the impossibility of housing all their students. Sit-ins and squats are becoming normal amongst students. If this generally articulate, intelligent and resourceful section of the population has difficulties, it can be imagined how many problems unemployed, unskilled, poorly educated young people have.

Different young people have different ways of trying to get into a city. Some arrive confident that they are well-equipped for the future.

"Three lads from Belfast called in at the suggestion of the Youth Employment Office. They were very interesting from the point of view of seeing the different ways that individuals adapt to the problem of arrival and settling into a new city. They were very smart, in jackets and ties, and clearly out to make a good impression. They had stayed two nights in the YMCA and spent £16.50. They had thought when they arrived that they had plenty of money so this was the first surprise. They were very naive about the prices and conditions of rooms. They wanted a flat which would take three of them with individual rooms. They had no idea about rent in advance, and got very depressed as we filled them in. They are determined to get work of any kind as quickly as possible so as to get settled, but it is quite clear that they won't get work until they get an address."

Another will see his initial problem as getting short-term accommodation, only to find that this restricts his later choices.

"I met Ivan as arranged. He had arrived in Manchester a week ago, planning to stay here and look for work. The only accommodation he could find had been in the Salvation Army hostel. He stayed there for two nights on a voucher and hated it. He is now very worried about getting trapped in that situation, i.e. receiving a voucher each week from Social Security and so never getting enough cash to break out of the situation. He said that the only way he saw out was by dossing out, so he had slept rough for the past two nights. I admire this as I see it as a refusal to get labelled as a Salvation Army hostel kind of person."

Others will make no arrangements about where they are going to stay, but will simply hope that something will turn up — even when such hope is contradicted by their experiences in the past.

"Phil and Mary were referred for emergency accommodation. They had just arrived from Dundee and had nowhere to go. I said we would be able to put them up. They carried two carriers with their clothes. They said they had hitched down the previous day and spent the night in a bus shelter. They planned staying in Manchester — they had come here before but had gone home because they couldn't find accommodation. They had left Dundee because they couldn't find work, only to find work down here but nowhere to stay."

The simple fact is, that, by whatever route they come, young people end up faced by homelessness. There is not enough accommodation for them easily to find a bedsitter. In Manchester, like most towns and cities, many factors have contributed to the crisis. Due to a large-scale programme of urban renewal, many areas containing large old multi-occupied houses have been demolished, causing a drastic reduction in the number of cheap rooms available. The student popula-

tion of the University and other further education institutions is constantly on the increase, with plans in hand for only a derisory increase in University accommodation schemes. As this sector of the market has become more and more profitable flat agencies have spread through the city, both buying property themselves and managing it for formerly independent landlords. These agencies have increased considerably the demands made on prospective tenants, such as references, four weeks' rent in advance, deposits, and so on. They will often only take students or workers. During the life of the project we have watched students and flat agencies invade and take over the traditionally cheaper and less 'respectable' areas of the city; we have noted a marked increase in demands for 'weeks in advance' (which are really deposits) — from one week to four weeks; and increasing selectivity on the part of landlords. This has effectively meant that the only remaining rooms available to the young people we know are those with the most dismal conditions and the most unscrupulous landlords. You don't find them by looking in the newspaper or 'phoning agencies. You find them by walking the streets, peering in the window of the corner newsagent for a grubby, ill-lettered card which is on permanent display and which may just be worth trying for a vacancy. Workers were prepared to put a lot of effort into searching for rooms, and would drive young people around the city. Whereas at one time they could expect to find a room for someone in a day, now we would expect it to take five or six days.

"It was a very depressing afternoon which convinced me that the stock is declining rapidly. We toured all the addresses I know in Whalley Range, Moss Side, and Rusholme, and found nowhere. Jim got very depressed, but Sylvia kept him going."

"I went flat hunting with Pete and George. A depressing affair. Both came in their best clothes, but with little optimism. They are fed up with dossing in derelicts. George in particular is depressed — their present house is very damp and he is unwell. He was ill during the afternoon. They have few substantial meals — mainly chips and beans. They both look unwell. The weather is getting cold. We found nowhere."

Moreover, any kind of disability or handicap — a speech impediment, for example — immediately reduces a young person's desireability.

"It is really difficult to understand Bob and he looks a bit rundown. So it means that I have to approach landlords with him which at once raises doubts in their minds. Either we are homosexuals and therefore undesireable, or else I am from the Welfare and therefore the boy is automatically a problem person. It was a very depressing morning. Bob was obviously aware of what was going on and was also depressed. It was quite obvious that rooms were taken as soon as they heard me and saw him. The only room we saw was in Heald Grove. They wanted £6 for a tiny room without even a bed, just a settee, and a shared kitchen. When I mentioned to the caretaker that it seemed a bit expensive he was quite short and said they would have no difficulty in letting it."

Of course, with a baby your chances are also minimal, and you are forced into accepting accommodation that is almost unbearable.

"The room was blatantly inadequate. It was supposed to be the kitchen belonging to a larger room, and was now being let off as a single room. It was really very small — a chair, table, sink and two gas rings almost completely filled it, and one would still have to get a bed into it. It was very depressing and not very clean. Sally was aghast at the idea of living in this room with the baby, and said it would drive her mad."

Even a young person without such handicaps has little choice: his very need makes him an easy prey in a landlord's market.

"Eventually we found a rundown room... We were shown round the place by a seven year old boy. The actual business of letting the rooms is in the hands of two of the older sons who we were told were at school that morning! They turned out to be about 15. It was a bad room — attic with no furniture, just a filthy bed, for £6. Pete was forced to take it. While we haggled over the rent, another son turned up in a brand new car he had just purchased."

So, if you find a room — any room — you have to take it. There is no question of choice. And even when you find a room, your problems don't end there. You may, for instance, then have difficulty in getting money, convincing Social Security of the validity of the address, persuading the landlord to provide a rent book, waiting for days for a visitor from Social Security to check on you, or giros being stolen or delayed.

"The difficulty was highlighted when on Christmas Eve Donny rang me at 4.30 to say they had no food or cash. What could they do? He said his giro hadn't arrived. I asked why he hadn't contacted Social Security earlier, but he was too frightened to enquire. Said he thought they would be angry. I eventually contacted the emergency Social Security officer (through the police) who finally agreed to make a payment if we came to his house. He gave Donny £3 to cover the holiday. We found an Indian shop which was still open and he bought a bit of ham and a few other oddments for their Christmas dinner. When we got back we found Jill was ill again."

Not only is money a problem, but there is the whole question of boredom and loneliness in a room with few facilities and no heating.

"Jack rang us and said Alan had been to Social Security but they would only send money by giro, therefore they were still broke until tomorrow. Could I lend them 50p? I met them in town and they devoured the small amount of food I bought. I lent them 50p but they clearly wanted me to see their flat. Certainly it is very bad. Perhaps the worst room I have seen in Manchester. The attic of an old house in Rusholme. No sheets, no stove, no key, no rent book. Windows high up in the wall. Very dirty. They asked what they could do in the evenings. They borrowed Monopoly from us and I invited them round for a meal on Saturday evening."

You may just have settled in when you start to have problems with the landlord.

"Pat had received a notice to quit after a row with the landlord. She had asked him what happened to her deposit and was told she would have to go. A really bad room at a very high rent. We discussed whether she should fight the landlord over this, but she said she would rather look for a new flat."

What is important is that the whole complicated process of finding a room and getting money is an exhausting and draining one. It is no wonder that some young people drift off elsewhere even before they find a room. Even determined, capable young people are tempted to give in, like the couple described below, both of whom were articulate and intelligent, and who had each other for support and company.

"Charlie and Fay had travelled up from Bournemouth on Sunday. They dossed two nights in the city centre, and spent Tuesday night with a distant friend who was none too pleased. They had spent the whole of Wednesday, before they contacted us, searching for a flat. They didn't want a hostel as they didn't want to be separated — would rather doss. I said they could crash with us and I would drive them around next day. I would also forward the first week's rent as a loan. They were very relieved. They were both very tired and hungry. I took them home and we gave them a meal, which they both devoured. They hadn't eaten properly for three days...

Next day (Thursday) I left them to search around Rusholme/Fallowfield while I was busy. Met them at 2. They had tried 6-8 flats but with no luck. Again tired and depressed and hungry. We toured Withington, Chorlton, Whalley Range and Moss Side in the car, again with no luck. Both were getting very depressed. 'We should have made arrangements before coming. I would never just leave again. What on earth are we going to do?' They wanted to find work the next day. They still worked very hard at it, though they were getting a bit short-tempered. They were clearly tempted to wander off. At last we found a flat in Longsight — a reasonable room, but no fire and no bedding. Great exhaustion overtook them. I took them home for a snack, gave them a flask to last the night and a note for Social Security the next day. We loaned them our blankets and I drove them to the flat...

On Saturday I visited them at 6 p.m. They were sitting in their room in their coats. Social Security had refused to give them any money on Friday. They had gone to the Labour Exchange and at last got a B1 although the clerk had been fairly cynical: 'I see you're settling down in the winter. Why didn't you settle in the summer?' At 3.00 they were sent to the Social Security, but had no bus fare. They had to jump a bus, and the conductor let them go free. 'I felt so awful.' They arrived at Social Security not long before closing. The girl clerk said they couldn't pay anything before a visit; she only glanced at my letter. Charlie pointed out their situation, but after consultation the girl said there was nothing she could do until after a visit. I bought them a meal. They were both very hungry. They were annoyed at the attitude of the clerk, but said they decided not to cause a scene as the police were around...

I took them some food to cook on Sunday . . .
On Monday they still had no money. Social Security said a giro would arrive the next day, plus a visitor...

Tuesday: the giro arrived for £8 (part payment) and they waited in all day but there was no visitor. They had hoped to be in work by now. Worried because nearly all the giro would be eaten up by their next rent payment, which was almost due...

Wednesday: there was no visitor, but when Charlie rang up the Social Security said one would call first thing the following morning. They were getting very fed up and depressed...

Thursday: Charlie rang again, very relieved. The visitor had arrived, and would send a giro on Saturday. Fay had been for a job as a typist. He plans painting the room out, to try and cheer it up, as they both find it very depressing. He wonders whether they should try and move somewhere else, as the room is so cold..."

This, therefore, is the arena within which the Project has been working. It has been concerned, at a basic level, with helping young people to survive. It has been trying to ensure that what begins as a creative attempt to achieve a better life doesn't turn into complete disaster. But it doesn't end there; on a second level there is also the question of the quality of life. On the one hand workers have been dealing with questions of how to meet and offer acceptable and relevant help to homeless young people; on the other they have been trying to learn how to develop relationships which are mutually helpful and life-enhancing. They have been coping with the practical problems of finding scarce accommodation and fighting for people's rights; they have also been faced with personal questions about themselves and their raison d'etre in the light of their exposure to young people who have endured crisis and deprivation and at an early age found themselves totally alone in the world.

The story of the project is fraught with inconsistencies and problems: it has never tried to be a coherent, immaculate whole. It has reflected the needs of its various workers as well as the needs of young people. It has been, for all of us, a learning experience. Something of what we have learnt we try to describe in the following pages.

CHAPTER TWO

"Each torpid turn of the world
has such disinherited children,
to whom no longer what's been
and not yet what's coming belongs."

Rilke

"I got to The Anchor about 8 p.m. Despite the rumours about banning nobody was being excluded. It was crowded as usual. Pat was organising a group to go to a party. We all left at 9.30 for the party but her friend refused to admit anyone in jeans, so Pat organised everyone away again. Penny (who came with me) decided to stay after seeing someone she knew. We returned to The Anchor. John was in — hadn't returned to Bristol after all. Bob was back from Norway. Gerry was with Janet again. Sally and Joe were going to look at a flat in Parkfield Road tomorrow. Steve can't return to Chester yet, his pad has gone. Still with landlady here. Selling his last two LPs (says he's sold 100 for beer money). Richard has been for a job as a kitchen porter. Ann was looking pretty unkempt — said if she couldn't get high she'd have to get drunk. Carla came in — has got a job at The Castle at the weekends. She stayed out on Monday night but her dad hasn't thrown her out yet. The police were in again. We left for The Cavern and then on to Dino's. On the way I saw three young girls with rucksacks by the hot-dog man. I asked them where they were going — London. Invited them to come along to Dino's. It was very crowded. We went out for fresh air — Len and Lloyd on steps opposite called me over. They were sitting in the rain, both high and still smoking. Fantastic descriptions of the rain. Len was very uncertain of himself; afraid of the experience, wanted me to stay with him. The three girls in Dino's were not happy, many drunks trying to chat them up. Took them back to the flat with me about 11.30."

The origins of the City Centre Project lie in the concern of youth workers for the kind of young people and situations described above. Particularly during the late 1960's the city centre of Manchester could be identified as a place to which a variety of young people gravitated. For many young people, of course, it was simply a place which supplied an enjoyable night out. For others, however, it was more central — it provided the focus for their lives and expressed much of their disillusionment with wider society. They were seen as actual or potential 'drop-

outs' (as the terminology then was), and were described by one youth worker as follows:

"They flaunt their rejection of accepted soial values in their appearance: long hair, extravagant, exotic and untidy dress; they have their own music (the Times calls it 'minority pop'), avoid work if possible, and they substitute drugs for alcohol. They are mostly flat-dwellers and where they are still at home there is much antagonism from parents who are unable to comprehend the new 'language'. They are a mobile group moving to other cities (mainly London) and are accepted within similar groups in these cities. Likewise we are meeting young people who have come to Manchester from other areas."

Such a description is, however, misleading since it links together a whole range of attitudes and behaviour which are by no means necessarily connected. It suggests a coherence of philosophy and life-style which was certainly not shared by most of the young people who used the city centre facilities. The whole cultural and ethical world of "the alternative" was an attractive one for young people whose own worlds were often grim, conflict-ridden, lacking in opportunity or merely colourless and insipid. But it would be misleading to characterise all these young people as strong exponents of a particular world-view; rather it provided the particular contemporary setting within which they sought to escape from or mitigate the difficulties and problems of their lives. The 'hippies', the idealists, were comparatively few in number, but their slogans of love, freedom and peace, and the song and colour of the setting, were highly attractive to all kinds of young people. Even more unexpected and welcome was their genuine acceptance of these fringe members of their circle despite the practical problems they might pose — petty shoplifting and careless drug exchanges were commonplace. Thus, for a time, several worlds coalesced: the student, articulate, intellectual, largely middle-class, world of dissent mingled with the economically and socially disadvantaged worlds of skinheads, unemployed, truants, homeless. This phenomenon has now largely disappeared. Ideological dissent is more strongly activist, more political, and more community oriented. The dispossessed amongst the young are now worlds away again from their more fortunate contemporaries. During the life of the City Centre Project we have seen conditions becoming grimmer for these young people, as the economic climate has changed, and no longer is there even this cultural context within which they can submerge their isolation.

However, to return to the late 1960's, it was the 'city centre scene' which was identified as attracting many young people with difficulties. These young people were seen to be 'at risk' in various ways: their experimentation with a wide range of drugs sometimes got out of control; some were homeless; many were isolated and lacking in support in attempting to live on their own; some were becoming increasingly delinquent or criminal; many were open to considerable exploitation from more experienced adults. In 1968, therefore, the Youth Development Trust began a programme aimed at helping young people in the city centre. The kinds of situations in which the early volunteers became involved and the ways in which they saw their task are illustrated by the extracts below:

"Alex is 17. He is always high on mandrax (even at work). He wants to be liked (particularly wants a girlfriend), but knows the effects of the drug work against this. The relationship must be strengthened so that he can be met in a 'normal' state and his problem discussed."

"Philip is 16. Two months ago his father threw him out because he wouldn't find work; he slept on floors until his friends grew tired of him so he had to find work. I persuaded him I had a friend in the Youth Employment Office who wasn't a 'bastard' like the others, who would see him: he agreed to it, and after much hesitation gave me his surname."

"Margaret, 16, has 7 'O' Levels, expelled from school. She is four months pregnant but won't tell her parents. Wants a flat. A difficult girl to contact so I'm working through her best friend who agrees she must tell her parents (thinks they will be unsympathetic). Margaret has obviously not faced up to the fact so far that she is pregnant. We must be there to help when she is prepared to consider her future."

This work was largely undertaken by volunteers, although for a time a full-time worker was employed, and during 1970 a part-time worker. The project was a detached youth work project. The various workers attempted to meet a variety of young people in cafes, stations, pubs and coin arcades, to get to know them and to help them sort out any difficulties they might have. The part-time worker was particularly 'successful' in this, and she became well known, liked and used by a number of teenagers.

A problem about this work, however, was its fragmentary nature. Dependent as it was upon volunteers, it was difficult to maintain a consistent programme of work. It might be possible, for example, to visit the railway and bus stations only once a week. The pressure of police harassment and the attitudes of pub and cafe owners kept young people on the move, so that the meeting places had to change. A local Trust supported the work, but the financial resources available to the project were very limited, and it was impossible to make long-term commitments in this area.

The problem was finally resolved in late 1970 when two sources of funding for a full-time project materialised. Two workers were to be funded for five years under the Urban Aid programme, with the specific brief of helping local young people at risk in the city centre; two further workers were to be funded (chiefly by the Gulbenkian Foundation, with support from a local charitable Trust) for three years with a peripatetic brief which was designed to enable them to contact and support young people from the area who went to London and to investigate the general drift from north to south (in particular with reference to Glasgow). In January 1971 a project leader was appointed and took on the task of trying in the existing fieldwork with implementing and exploring the two aspects of work agreed for funding.

This account of the project, therefore, dates from January 1971; this is the date that the City Centre Project as we now know it commenced. It was at this point that the first member of the team was appointed and that major funding started. The project leader had the clear responsibility of developing a project along the lines of the applications submitted to the grant-aiding bodies. For the first time work could be initiated with the prospect of long-term commitment.

Whilst we use this date as the commencement of the project, we must note the importance of the preliminary work, in particular in two respects. In the first place the project leader inherited a situation where he did not have to start from scratch. He was able to draw upon the previous work to immediately identify key meeting places in the city, and he was specifically introduced to some of the

young people with whom the part-time worker had established strong links. Secondly, the project was firmly established in the tradition of detached youth work, both as a result of its own practical work and the more general commitment of the Youth Development Trust, which had already mounted two detached work projects — one with delinquent boys in an inner city district of Manchester and one with adolescent girls in a Cheshire town.

Since that time the project has apparently moved some distance from its detached work beginnings. Yet it has, nonetheless, regarded the idea of detached work as one of the important constructs around which workers have attempted to theorise about their work. Since Mary Morse published 'The Unattached' (Penguin: 1965), detached work has moved from being seen as 'experimental' or 'new' to being an accepted part of youth work, yet we believe that many of its implications and internal contradictions have not been sufficiently explored. This project has enabled us to look closely at some of the questions raised by the ideology and practice of detached youth work; these questions have been thrown up from two sources — the practical problems of working in the field, and the varying perspectives and experiences of the seven workers who have participated in the project.

As a starting point we have used a simple (some would say simplistic) model of detached work: one which no doubt is unfair to those workers who operate with sensitivity and sophistication in difficult areas and under varying constraints. Nevertheless we believe this simple model to be the one which is commonly in the minds of those who appoint detached workers, and it is thus the starting point of many projects and defines the expectations of employers, and often of employees as well. It must be a matter of concern that whilst detached youth work is now a common feature of many local authority youth services, its acceptance and respectability — be it for reasons of novelty or short term political expediency — has outrun critical discussion and analysis of the role of such workers, their position vis a vis 'clients' and employers, and the kinds of influences which determine the form and progress of the work. The model of detached work and the role of detached worker can be limiting if they are narrowly determined. Such a label often forces a worker to continue working in a way which is no longer appropriate to the situation, rather than being free to develop his contacts with young people in a variety of ways. To a large extent, therefore, we feel that detached work as a *concept* has remained in its infancy: that the simple model prevails.

What, then, is this model of detached work? It is basically a concept associated with the Youth Service. It grew from concern about 'the unattached' or the 'unclubbables'. — those young people who most visibly demonstrated the failure of the Youth Service to reach them by kicking their heels on street corners or in coffee bars and coin arcades. Such young people are not always defined simply as being 'in need' in some sense; they are also often seen as posing a threat to society through their inadequately socialised or deviant behaviour. Thus detached workers are often appointed in response to problems such as vandalism or delinquency. Detached work is seen as a technique for contacting and helping these youngsters. It involves the worker going out to mix with young people on their own ground, frequently without revealing his identity or employment, gaining their confidence, and then attempting to use his relationship with them to achieve certain goals. (Often these goals are not explicit; it is assumed that every-

one knows what they are, just as it is assumed that we know what the goals of the youth club leader are.)

This lack of explicitness makes it difficult for the worker to know what his specific tasks are. The report of a recent conference of detached workers noted this problem, and the feeling that it led to underuse of the worker's potential.

*"Problems were encountered, especially amongst workers employed by Local Authorities, of an absence of direction of work. Neither the immediate employing agency, nor related agencies, seemed to know what the function of the detached worker was, although frequently both the geographical area and the age group of potential clients was, sometimes rigidly, defined. Lack of clarity of function led to situations in which workers were asked to check on pupils who were absent from schools and to do shopping for old people."**

This is a problem which has grown rather than diminished, as detached workers have been influenced by the developments in community work which have been taking place around them. At one time the detached work emphasis was almost solely upon the relationship which sprang up between the worker and 'client', and this was seen as the instrument by which change was effected. A Schools Council Working Paper on the roles of teachers and youth workers notes this emphasis in youth work:

*Dr. Cyril Smith has argued in this connection it is the methods of social work rather than educational methods which are appropriate. (Social Work Method and the Youth Service — Trends in Education, April 1968). 'Social work method' he maintains 'is based on a careful assessment of the emotional needs and social situation of the client, and the worker consciously uses himself to help the client resolve his own problems. Furthermore, social workers consider it essential to convince their clients that whatever they may do, they will still accept them as persons and try and help them although they cannot condone their behaviour.' He goes on to claim that it is this method which has been used in many successful 'youth work' projects with the 'unattached'. He quotes from the study by Goetschius and Tash, who define 'unattachment' as 'a conflict in expectations between those who offer the service (authorities, youth centres, and others in the youth service) and those — the young people — who want and need it but who are unable or unwilling to accept it on the conditions on which it is offered.' Smith argues the need for a casework approach to such young people and stresses that such a helping process is demanding in both time and skill. Small case loads are an inevitable consequence."***

However, much greater emphasis is now being placed upon the community setting within which the young person finds himself, and the need to relate the two. Thus an advert for a local authority detached worker recently gave the following job description.

"The job involves making contact with the youth population in the area, helping to develop relationships between them and the adult population, encouraging community projects and introducing the young people to available resources. Counselling will be needed to assist in their development and to help discover their needs."

*Mick Farrant, in Report of the fifth national Detached Youth Work Seminar.
**"Teachers and Youth Workers: A Study of their Roles" (Schools Council Working Paper 32). (Dr. Cyril Smith was a founder, and chairman, of the Youth Development Trust, and influential in the development of the first detached work projects in Manchester.)

There may well be advantages in this move away from a highly individual-biased view of detached work to a more general acknowledgment of the detached worker's involvement in interaction between young people and the community. Yet it does little or nothing to help the detached worker with his dilemmas, and may add to them. For along with the traditional detached work problems of vulnerability, exposure, strain, etc. the detached youth worker now also has to face the wide ranging conflicts posed by community work practice. Not only must he grapple with the stresses of individual relationships, he must also confront issues such as his relationship with authority structures and community groups, whose definition of situations is relevant, where do his loyalties primarily lie?

Since it is the detached worker who is the intermediary, it is within him that these problems become embodied. He faces, therefore, a very ambiguous and demanding role, which he has to work out at the same time as he sorts out the practical details of entering the world of 'the unattached' and becoming acceptable to the young people. This is by no means an easy task; in fact it is a demanding, difficult and often exhausting job to undertake. Understandably, therefore, much discussion of detached work has centred upon technique: how, for example, does one go about contacting young people? There are many 'technical' problems which arise out of such an exposed and unstructured method of working, some of which we shall later explore. We are concerned, however, that a preoccupation with technique can all too often obscure the ethical problems arising from the use of detached work, as well as the contradictions which the worker has to hold in tension within himself.

We find it helpful, therefore, to consider the history of the project in terms of these ideas. If an account of a project is to make any sense, we believe it must illuminate areas of general significance, rather than simply detail the minutiae of its internal and quite specific workings. Yet we wish to avoid a simplistic account which ignores the practical problems of putting ideals into action, which skates over the contradictory implications of many of our ideas, or which suggests that we have a coherent philosophy which all the workers equally affirm.

Even to attempt to give a brief history of the project raises problems, since workers make differing judgments upon the usefulness or implications of certain periods in the project. Yet in order to provide a framework for analysis it is necessary to show how the project developed over time; and there are some clear and non-controversial divisions which can be made.

Phase I

The project began in January 1971 with detached work similar to the model we set up earlier. The first worker spent his time chiefly in continuing contact with local young people who frequented particular commercial facilities and in attempting to meet young people from other cities who were drifting through Manchester (this was done mainly in coin arcades and all-night cafes). The first six months of the project, therefore, were largely exploratory (although they did entail considerable involvement in the crises and problems of particular young people); they were dominated by the need to establish a viable and acceptable project, and to link the local and national aspects of the project into a coherent and comprehensible whole.

In Chapter 3 we relate this phase to the problem of working out an identity for project workers. In making contact with young people, who did workers claim to

be, and how does this initial kind of structuring of role relate to the way in which young people are defined, how their needs are viewed, and the kind of action this analysis implies for the workers?

Phase II

In July 1971 a second worker was appointed and the two workers became heavily involved in various self-help groups then emerging in Manchester, in particular with an 'alternative' information service. Through these groups the workers not only met local young people who were experiencing a wide range of difficulties but also many young people who were moving from city to city. They particularly identified themselves as being concerned with accommodation difficulties and were involved not only with providing emergency accommodation in their own homes but also with finding bedsit accommodation and sorting out the various problems associated with trying to achieve an independent existence.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss two of the issues which were uppermost during this period. The workers continued to be very much detached workers in the traditional style, and were seen as individuals rather than part of any structure. The problem of 'making contact' had largely disappeared, and the workers were instead overwhelmed with demands from young people who, having received practical help, were often keen to explore other dimensions of their personal dilemmas. This led to a close examination of the kind of relationships the workers were developing. Many of the young people saw them as their friends, rather than in any specific helping role. In this respect they were clearly not normal social work relationships. Chapters 4 and 5, therefore, try to look at the nature and quality of these relationships, and the reasons why they came to be dominant in the work of the Project. We also try to explore the implications of this style of involvement both for a worker's personal sanity, and for the concept of professionalism within the helping relationship.

Phase III

This could be termed the 'structured' phase of the project, and covers the period from 1973 to early 1976. During this time the project operated as a clearly recognisable agency within Manchester. It now had four workers, having recently recruited a worker to liaise with London agencies and a research worker. It opened its own information service for homeless young people, and used this as a contact point and information resource. It continued to provide emergency accommodation and to find rooms in the commercial sector.

The London worker increased contact with agencies outside Manchester, and also was available to help young people who found themselves in difficulties in other towns. The research worker initiated contact with agencies in Glasgow, and became particularly involved in recording young people's perceptions of what had been happening to them.

In addition, two of the workers were closely involved in the setting up of two bedsit schemes for young people. Although these were managed by a small charity independent of the project there were close links — one worker was caretaker

at one of the schemes, whilst the other worker was a member of the management group.

This growing experience, coupled with the increasing severity of the accommodation crisis in the cheap rented sector, also led the whole team into involvement in attempting to influence policy with regard to the single homeless in the North West.

It was also during this phase that staff changes occured. At the end of 1973 the second and third workers left the project. The third worker was immediately replaced, and the second worker was replaced in July 1974, following a six-month temporary appointment.

Chapters 6 and 7 relate particularly to this phase, where the project developed specific structures of its own and therefore became particularly aware of this aspect of detached work. How relevant is it for the detached worker to set up a structure to serve the needs of young people, and does this erode his stance in any way? Given that he is still a detached worker, what is his relationship to other agencies, and what kind of management structure does he require in order to retain flexibility?

Each of these three phases, therefore, has been related to specific detached work issues. The early work was obviously markedly different from Phase III, when the project became 'established'. Yet it would be wrong to imply that particular issues relate only to particular chronological periods. The nature of the workers' relationship to other agencies, for example, arose in the first two phases, not only in Phase III; similarly, the question of relationships with young people was a recurring theme throughout the project. Whilst attempting to grapple with the new dilemmas thrown up as the project grew both in size and structures, we also tried to keep contact with the 'roots' of the project: to maintain the values of the 'detached work' period in the 'agency' phase. We have chosen to isolate issues and to place them in a particular context mainly in order, therefore, to reduce the complexity of the task. To understand the project and the particular stance it adopted it is necessary to see all these issues as facets of one central problem: what are we doing when we say we are working with young people?

CHAPTER THREE

He is quick, thinking in clear images;
I am slow, thinking in broken images.

He becomes dull, trusting to his clear images;
I become sharp, mistrusting my broken images.

Trusting his images, he assumes their relevance;
Mistrusting my images, I question their relevance.

Assuming their relevance, he assumes the fact;
Questioning their relevance, I question the fact.

When the fact fails him, he questions his senses;
When the fact fails me, I approve my senses.

He continues quick and dull in his clear images;
I continue slow and sharp in my broken images.

He in a new confusion of his understanding;
I in a new understanding of my confusion.

Robert Graves: In Broken Images

"I got the impression this evening that I was the centre of much attention. Perhaps it became something of an obsession, but wherever I looked folk seemed to be staring at me and then averting their eyes when they caught mine. I got the definite impression that they think I am a policeman and I had to make a conscious effort not to look around me for quite a while. It was an extremely unpleasant sensation, and only made me feel more out of place. I felt that my casual clothes were in some way obviously casual!"

The immediate question faced by the detached youth worker is "Who am I supposed to be?" He is aware that he is in a setting which is probably unusual in many respects, at least for him, and he needs to find an identity which makes sense for both him and the young people whom he hopes to meet. Only by so doing can he avoid the feeling of being watched and suspected.

In some early detached work in this country one stratagem was to conceal the identity of the worker: he became a kind of 'undercover agent' in the world of young people. This device was employed because it was felt that young people who had already rejected the Youth Service would not readily accept someone who was perceived as being sent from 'them'. The anticipated reactions of young people, therefore, were the major factor in determining that the worker should conceal his role. This, however, is not easy, since young people are clearly puzzled when an older person, or someone in a different life-situation, 'hangs around' their favourite haunts.

"I sat down opposite a lad... Told me he is an out-of-work electrician and has been unemployed for six months. Hadn't in fact finished his training... He was very surprised to find that I had a job."

What is a married man doing loitering in coin arcades of an evening?

"The girls asked whether myself or the Welsh lad were married. Couldn't understand why a married man was playing table football with them. 'Does your wife know where you are?' "

When the City Centre Project started the first worker was in this position of having an undefined role. He spent his time in two main areas: the coin arcades and all-night cafes where he was most likely to meet young people who were roughing it (there were few other places they could go to keep warm), and a city centre day-time cafe which was a social focus for a number of local young people. Each presented, in its own form, the problem of identity.

The world of the young 'dosser' was an isolated one, marked by inactivity, 'hanging around', casual contacts and pickups. To survive you had to be aware of the rigid rules of conduct, not obviously apparent in the outward chaos and fluidity — in the cafes, how long to sit over one's cup of tea, how to fall asleep in an acceptable manner, how to respond to violence and the autocratic whims of the proprietor's wife; in the arcades, how long to fiddle a particular machine, how to treat a suspicious commissionaire, how to give precedence correctly when waiting to play the pintables. Any overstepping of the bounds would lead to eviction from the premises and a consequent cold night on the streets. There was also a good deal of criminal activity. Girls would use the cafe as a pickup point for men, while men would pick up young boys in the arcades.

"Both of these lads were involved this evening with a group of four or five middle-aged men who appear to be homosexuals, but while Ben seems very much accepted by them, Johnny is somewhat ostracised. The whole group were standing around one of the pin tables watching the game, and whenever Johnny commented on the game he was told to 'F... off', at which he scurried around before returning to the group. Ben, in contrast, was busy fixing appointments for the coming night."

Violence was commonplace. The worker sometimes found himself threatened or under hostile attack; he certainly couldn't act as if he had just slipped in for a quiet cup of tea.

"I arrived in Fred's to find a fight had just taken place there. (I had in fact passed the group concerned on my way into Fred's.) Apparently a group of five or six Scots lads had attacked a drunk dosser who was still in the cafe, covered in blood. Blood everywhere, on the floor and tables; tables kicked over. Two girls from the group, and regulars in the cafe, were still around shouting at the own-

ers, who were threatening to call the police. I was able to show signs of support for one of the girls (who had previously associated me with the police) against the dosser, perhaps unjustly. The girl, who is about 18, swore that if the police arrived she would smash the sauce bottle over the assistant's head. Finally she left with her friend and got involved in a fight outside the cafe with another dosser."

We have already noted how easily a worker could find himself identified as a policeman. Whilst this made sense to young people, it was certainly not an identity the worker himself wanted to adopt! Yet even though he might convince young people of the inaccuracy of this identity, he was still likely to have some other kind of 'mistaken identity' thrust upon him. Another obvious interpretation of the fact that he hung around certain pubs and arcades, initiating conversations with young people, was that he was looking for a pickup himself.

"Stood with a young lad of 17-18 watching an older dosser playing the machines. The older man was drunk, singing and gesticulating. ...After a while the lad winked at me and told the older man that we wanted a drink but had no money, and would he buy us one. We all went off to Yates Wine Lodge... We were joined by his two mates... They joined in the duping of the older man with great glee. Peter told me he was dossing. Comes from Stockport. Had spent the previous night in the YMCA and hoped to get enough money tonight to find accommodation. We all left Yates to avoid being thrown out... Went to another pub where the small lad bought us all drinks. Told me how he had got a pound note from the dosser. Peter said he had already told me. Shorty told him he should be careful who he told these things to, but that I was all right as he had seen me around The Angel and I was 'one of their club'. Certainly at the moment they see me as part of the homosexual scene."

Often the worker managed to avoid these stereotyped kinds of identities, and would find himself accepted quite readily by a group of young people. He would then find confusion in his own mind over his identity — the conflict between young people's expectations of him as one of the crowd, his own life-style, and the consciousness of being 'a worker' with a task to perform.

"Tony's friend had a car outside and Tony was trying to persuade him to take them all out in search of girls. Various suggestions were made about the best place to go, Bob insisting that he knew an ideal place in Moss Side where women were to be had for the asking... Eventually they persuaded Tony's mate to take them, and to my surprise they invited me along, assuring me that the girls were really of a high quality. Caught on the hop I in fact declined the offer and they said they would let me know how they got on when they saw me again. My decision not to go was instinctive rather than rational. In retrospect the case is by no means clearcut. I feel there were several reasons why I shouldn't have gone (e.g. my previous conversation with Bob and my implied disapproval of 'pro hunting'; do I want to attract the image of a lad after the girls; the car was almost certainly stolen; and what would I have done at the other end?) On the other hand they probably wouldn't have found any girls anyway, and it would have been a good way of gaining their confidence and getting to know them better."

In this world, therefore, the worker was faced by a number of different reactions which seemed to complicate his task of offering help to individual young people.

Progress was painfully slow, individuals might never reappear after a first meeting, and questions of identity were rarely satisfactorily resolved. Yet the project's understanding of what it is like to be homeless — and the stark dilemma of the approach it had adopted — were probably most strongly rooted in these experiences.

The city centre day-time cafe which was the other area of work was, by contrast, a more friendly and accepting place, with a wide variety of people using the facility. There was a complicated interaction between a committed group of exponents of 'alternative' ideals, a hard core of registered drug addicts, some young skinheads and a small group of Hells Angels. Of most significance to the worker, however, were the large number of 'fringe members': they were 'marginal' in terms of ideology rather than in a social or physical sense. They were not associated with any particular one of the more 'hard core' groups and were attracted by a combination of alternative philosophy, minor drug-taking and the general 'clothes-music-nonconformity' life-style. Here the worker was introduced to a small number of young people by the part-time worker, and they began to use him in the same way as they used her — as a sounding board, a friendly supportive adult, and as a resource in times of crisis.

"When Sandra came in Mary toyed with the idea of returning with her to London. She looked at me and said, 'No, I mustn't do anything silly, you'll look after me won't you?' I decided I'd better find her a flat — we talked about all possible disadvantages but it was still preferable to home."

"Sue introduced me to Tony and Chris. Chris asked me if I would come and look for a flat with them in Rusholme. She is obviously keen to use me in the way she has used Sue."

Part of the ease of his entry into this world came from the fact that it was an extremely diverse one in which the worker was not particularly distinguished by class or age distinctions. (Although he was older than most of the young people there were nevertheless other people of his age around.) There was a very mixed group of young people using the cafe, and a general 'classlessness' about the place, which made it a world apart from conventional society.

"I talked with Bob for about an hour. We talked about his concern for ideas, his intellectualising, and the way he relates to people... He is very aware of 'class' and of the classlessness of the San Remo. He regards himself as working class — 'Dad is a manual worker, lives in a terraced house.' He sees the world of the San Remo as quite distinct from his home situation. Described how he had met one of the girls from the San Remo whilst standing at a bus stop near his home. When she said 'Hallo Bob' he said he had never been more shocked. It was the intrusion of one world into another."

Moreover, the worker shared certain interests with a number of young people, and found it easy to relate to them in a way that was not artificial.

"Terry came in carrying a copy of 'The Penguin Guide to English Literature' and we talked for a long time about this. He knew quite a bit about Tolkein, Lawrence, and the relation of hippy ideas to working class communities... He now has the ambition to get A Level English but cannot concentrate on a syllabus."

Indeed, he was clearly regarded in different ways by different young people, some of whom saw him as more part of the 'scene' than they themselves were.

"John is very concerned about the impression he makes on people. Says it doesn't matter with me what impression he makes. No facades that he is aware of when he talks to me. Says that is why he likes mixing with 'hairies like you'. 'I like you because you listen.'"

For others he was a fringe member of this particular world, seen to be largely an observer rather than a participant, but acceptable nonetheless.

"Sean would like to be a teacher but feels there is no room in the system for him. Very involved in drug-taking. Had various dealings with the Drug Squad. Argues that drug-taking is far more extensive than 'even a person like you who is fairly turned on would expect'. Spreading rapidly, he argues, in all classes, not just 'drop out fringe'. Quite interested in the reasons for my presence in the San Remo, but seemed to accept 'am interested in what young people are doing in this particular culture' as quite acceptable. Said he expected he would see me around some time."

Nevertheless, even within this atmosphere of easy acceptance, there were times when the worker's identity was questioned, often obliquely.

"Carl came up and said 'How's your wife? You're spending a lot of time here these days.'"

"Steve remarked how quiet I was. 'Are you sussing us all out? Let's discuss something.'"

What is required is an understanding of his investment in or commitment to the particular world in which he finds himself. He may not *necessarily* be 'alien' to that world in any cultural sense, yet unless he is seen to have a valid reason for being there then he must face questions about who he is:

"Mary told me that John was asking her questions about the project. Planning to write an article 'exposing' us. Mary said she had defended us against criticisms of trying to 'make people go straight.'"

Very often the worker's sense of difficulty may arise not from feeling 'alien' in the world he has entered, but simply from the weight of the realisation that he is supposed to be 'working' in that situation, and his uncertainty about where his commitment lies. Indeed, simply as a 'worker' he may find himself in situations which threaten his credibility with young people.

"The Drug Squad visited San Remo. Six Officers. One went to check the loo, and another stood by me. The other four searched all the males in the cafe. The one next to me had seen me at a Drug Liaison Committee and said "How are you getting on?" I ignored this remark, and he searched me as well. I expressed some reluctance. He asked for details of name, address and occupation."

Even, therefore, in a setting characterised by acceptance, where the worker has little difficulty in making relationships with young people, he encounters pressure over his identity. He may be exposed to suspicion from young people and the need to be seen in a way which they would define as acceptable, and he also has the need to justify his employment and develop a role which enables him to offer help to some of these young people. By virtue of his job, if nothing more, he knows himself to be apart from the young people. Does this apartness erode the idea of detached work?

One worker on the project has likened detached work to "the introduction of a new species into the jungle... The client is confronted by something alien to his

experience — a person who has effectively just parachuted down from another planet." Clearly there are bound to be some differences between detached workers and young people — differences perhaps of age, class, education or experience. To what extent are these differences fundamentally crippling? Are we all prisoners of our upbringing and unable to communicate across the divide? Are detached workers some kind of middle class self-flagellants, or Lady Bountifuls revamped with jeans and a beard, or agents provocateurs in the class war? Does detached work only make sense if

"you choose someone already in the jungle... In other words if there's a guy in the field doing his own thing give him the bread to expand a little if his own thing happens to coincide with the aim of the would-be project"?

These kinds of issues, therefore, forced the early workers on the project to examine closely what kind of identity was both practicable and ethical.

One traditional method of overcoming the problem of identity for detached workers was to construct a 'bogus' identity. This is not to infer that the worker claimed to be someone he was not (though this sometimes happened). But often workers would take 'acceptable' jobs (such as waitress in a coffee bar) which concealed, or at least blurred, the nature of their 'real' task. However, the first City Centre Project worker rejected the notion of a bogus identity. He felt that the only terms on which he could meet young people must be honest ones, where the young people understood who he was. Only in this way could the potentially manipulative and exploitive nature of detached work be avoided. When confronting other professional workers, for example, young people know where they stand; whilst they may not enter the relationship as equals, they can at least try and preserve such defences as they may consider necessary to their integrity. They know what they can expect, and they also have some concept of what they can demand. Just as the social worker or policeman can adopt one role, they can adopt another. There is an element of choice. Unless the detached worker is open about who he is, he becomes a spy — he exploits the trust placed in him and the relationship he develops. This is not to say that he does not work for the good of the young person, or that he actively manipulates situations. But if one partner to a relationship dishonestly represents himself and his investment in the relationship, then he subverts the very concept.

"I've come to feel that maybe there should be signs up, on the lines of those guard-dog ones — something like 'Danger: Detached Workers Operate in this Arcade'."

With the rejection of the notion of 'infiltration' came also the rejection of the 'client as unsuspecting victim' approach. By this we mean the kind of strategy where particular individuals may be selected as the objects of detached work without their knowledge or approval. Such an approach may even require the worker to 'pursue' a young person to ensure that he receives help. This is not to suggest that detached youth workers should not formulate a definition of who they are trying to help, nor attempt to identify and contact such young people. But it does require that at some stage the individual young person should be presented with an idea of the worker's role. It also means that the worker must allow the young person to choose whether he feels the worker has anything to offer him — either personally or in terms of his specific role.

"As I hadn't heard anything from Brian since meeting him from prison and find-

ing the flat, I decided to call on him. It was difficult for me to balance the desire to be available and the problem of not imposing myself on him. When he came to our house he was clearly quite ill at ease and a bit embarrassed. When I first met him he said that he wanted a room of his own — not sharing or in anyone's home. He was not in at the flat. I decided to leave a note for him so that the decision to keep up a relationship is more clearly his. I think I will have to leave it at that."

To adopt the maxim of 'young person choice of worker' rather than 'worker choice of young person' imposes, we believe, a very healthy requirement upon the worker to find a role which is acceptable to the young people concerned.

Finding an acceptable role is not, of course, easy and certainly not foolproof. The simplest statement can be invested with a variety of meanings, nor is any one role universally acceptable. Partly it may depend on how the worker is perceived as a person.

"Sam has recently been interested in who I am. He questioned me closely about my identity. 'What actually do you do?' I defined it in terms of finding accommodation for a wide range of people. He sees the point of this. 'How did you get that job? It's the kind of job I would like to do myself.' I think this has cleared up the problem for him."

"I met a lad from Perth who arrived here two months ago. He is very anti-Manchester. 'All tramps and dossers here.' 'All working class.' Much worse than Glasgow which no longer deserves its bad reputation. A good deal of questioning about me. As I had entered Fred's Cafe I had halted to make sure I had some money. His opening gambit was 'Who are you scared of rolling you?I saw you hide your wallet.' He asked me what I did. Immediately associated accommodation help with a commercial agency and was very hostile..."

If the worker is to allow young people to choose him then he has to face the problem of how to limit the demands made upon him. In this situation it is more helpful to have a clearly specified role which young people can understand and accept, rather than a diffuse, misunderstood one. Otherwise the worker is forced to place *arbitrary* limits upon his contact with young people, such as choosing to work with only a certain number of them. The problem about this is that it can lead to artificiality in the relationships a worker makes with a particular group of young people, since some may be singled out for attention whilst others appear to be rejected. It is far more satisfactory for a young person to choose whether or not the worker has something useful to him, than for the worker to make that decision; yet the young person cannot choose in ignorance of what the worker is about. Nor can the worker operate in a situation where *everybody* chooses him: the explicit nature of his role must help to define the limits. We believe this is important if the worker is to have a viable workload without applying arbitrary boundaries which to a young person may appear to be a rejection of him as a person.

So far we have been talking about 'means' to making relationships with young people. What about ends? The question "Who am I supposed to be?" is not simply a matter of projecting a credible/useful persona. If it is then it is open to the criticism that this is just another form of manipulation, rather than an attempt to find a genuinely acceptable role. The question must imply examination of the

worker's own objectives, his reasons for being involved in detached work, his relationship with his employers and society as a whole. It is often assumed that to identify young people as being 'in need' sufficiently states the problem, and that to 'work with' them sufficiently states the answer. Yet any detached worker is bound to encounter conflicts of interest, and is forced to ask "on whose behalf am I working?" Whose perception of need, whose analysis of the answer, is the determining one?

The way in which a worker answers the question of his identity determines the way in which he defines the young people with whom he comes into contact, and may also sometimes determine the answers he gives to the previous questions. If he sees himself as attempting to combat delinquency, for example, then the young people will essentially be defined as delinquent. This will be his guiding precept in his relationships with them. He is also thus committing himself to society's image of the young people, rather than their own. His task, and the evaluation of that task, will be on society's terms.

For the first worker on the project, therefore, his ill-defined role was not merely difficult on a practical level. To be 'interested in helping young people in this scene' is not merely a vague formulation of role — it leaves unsaid how one is to regard these young people. Clearly many of them were fairly rootless — both those encountered in the cafe and those met in the arcades had problems with accommodation, money and isolation. They were generally cut off, either completely or in terms of emotion and understanding, from their home communities. The concept which appeared to link the world of the long-distance traveller to that of the local young people was that of 'drifting' — either 'drifting' within the city or from one city to another (indeed the former might be a prelude to the latter). But the project's early interest in 'drifting' young people ran the danger of imposing a restrictive label upon complex and varied young people:

"One criticism I would make would be that in confining themselves to drifters the workers receive a distorted view of young people not only in terms of where they are at but also in terms of determining the necessary help needed by a person".

Thus, although the project originally identified the young people in whom it was interested as 'drifting', this came to be seen as a label imposed upon young people, which they would not necessarily recognise themselves. It was for this reason that the first two project workers began to reject the definition that they were working with 'drifting' young people (without denying that the term 'drifting' can illuminate the processes at work in many young people's lives). They chose rather to adopt the term 'homeless' young people. This was intended to be a far more descriptive and neutral definition — one which could be accepted by young people, workers, and society as a whole. Whilst no word is totally neutral, 'homelessness' has in recent years lost many of its connotations of fecklessness and personal inadequacy, and has come to be seen as the outcome of much wider forces — economic, political and social. It was hoped, therefore, that to admit to being homeless would not require the young person to thereby label himself as a 'problem' person.

A young person can be regarded as a problem person in the sense that he is seen as having personal difficulties and inadequacies that distinguish him from his more normal contemporaries (as in the case of a schizophrenic). Or he may be

seen as a problem person in the sense that he presents severe problems to the functioning of the community (the vandal). In both cases the problem is presented as inhering within the individual. We are not here making a statement about the causes of deviance or mental illness, we are merely stating society's view: this is a problem *person*. Such a definition is not only unhelpful to the young person, it can make the worker's task more difficult.

"Met Tom to go flat hunting. He arrived with two carrier bags saying that he had left his digs and was now homeless. This introduced an element of panic into the proceedings which I had not anticipated for that day. Tom was clearly very relieved to be getting out of the digs and using this pressure to ensure that he has not got to go back again. Made me feel short-tempered with him. Not a good afternoon at all. I did all the work looking for the place... Eventually I encouraged him to take the first place we could find even though it was £8 and really for two... A strange afternoon with me at my worst! I was influenced far too much by (the probation officer)'s account of Tom, and the pressure of needing to live up to his expectations as well as Tom's... His description of Tom just did not prepare me for the kind of person I now see. He emphasised all the psychiatric problems of the boy and I think I superimposed these onto the situation when we first went looking for a flat. Introduced an element of panic into the situation which I don't usually feel even though it might be late on a Friday afternoon."

The workers felt strongly that young people should not be labelled in this way. Many young people have been defined as problem people in both senses of the phrase; to continue this perception was conceived as being damaging. If self-image and the redefinition of self-image are crucial in the 'drifting' process, then it is important to refuse to connive in a definition which reinforces a young person's lack of esteem. If a positive and creative relationship is to grow then it is important to try and avoid the practised and structured responses which young people *tend* to make to institutional figures such as teachers or social workers.

This was the ideal. It was intended to inform the actions of the workers and relationships they made. It also helped to pin down the workers' identity. By eliminating what they did *not* wish to be workers became far clearer about their task, their identity and their relationship to young people. During the second phase of the project, therefore, the two workers became widely known as people who would help with accommodation difficulties. They would put people up for the night, help find bedsits, and help sort out the hassles of getting the first week's rent. Instead of seeking out young people, they were themselves being sought out, mainly through their involvement in an 'alternative' information service but also through individuals and groups who knew of their interest in homelessness. They were also committed to allowing young people to define the situation and the kind of action they wanted workers to take.

They were thus no longer 'hidden agents' but were clearly identifiable by young people as offering help which the young people themselves saw as relevant. Yet this position threatened other aspects of the detached work stance — such as informality, and lack of structure — in that some young people wanted to use them according to a preconceived image of 'social workers'.

"Frank pressurising me to organise food parcels and emergency help. Putting the social worker role on me again!"

This was a problem which became even more acute when the project got its own premises.

"Bill really gets me angry by asking me why I haven't got the phone repaired yet (he had broken it in the bother last night). 'You're in charge here, aren't you?'"

Moreover, whilst the workers were rejecting the 'problem person' definition of young people, their very availability and acceptability made young people want to bring 'problems' to them. By setting up a 'helping' role, whatever its nature, they were inviting the presentation of personal difficulties by young people who lacked any other support. They tried to overcome the social worker/client stereotype of the helping relationship by developing much more personal relationships with young people (as Chapter 4 describes), yet this again heightened their awareness of the dilemmas of young people.

This had two outcomes. Firstly, it made the workers very much more aware of the many external constraints and pressures which create problems for young people. Secondly, it helped the workers to understand more fully that loneliness fear, feelings of inadequacy, and all the other 'problems' of young people were elements of the experience of all of us, and that the artificial segregation of people into 'clients' and 'helpers' is in many ways a device for staving off the recognition of this fact. This is an unhelpful revelation if workers then accept a 'problem person' label for themselves and everyone else: the negative stereotype becomes extended rather than destroyed. What becomes necessary is a positive declaration of faith: if I, having problems, yet see *myself/am seen by others* as a creative person, then you, having problems, can also *see yourself/be seen by others as a creative person*.

The problem of the identity of the detached worker is, therefore, a complex one. We have suggested that it is necessary for the detached worker, for a number of reasons, to be explicit about what he is doing. At the same time he has to counter the negative aspects of such a stance. He cannot, therefore, ever rest easy. He has to perform a continual balancing act, trying to maintain a practicable, acceptable and positive position under numerous conflicting pressures which make it impossible to give a simplistic answer to the question "Who am I supposed to be?"

CHAPTER FOUR

"Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me,
why should you not speak to me?
And why should I not speak to you?"

Walt Whitman : To You

Whilst the workers were in the process of sorting out some of their hang ups about who they were supposed to be, they found themselves in a maelstrom of activity. The 'alternative' was flourishing and they became involved in particular with an 'alternative' information service and an alternative-to-psychiatry group. They found themselves thinking more and more about the kind of relationships they were making. After all, the detached worker is mainly dependent upon himself — his personality and own personal resources; he does not have a youth club, sports equipment, or office hours, for example, to mediate and support his efforts to help young people.

"Consequently, varying barriers are broken down but new ones (in terms of strain to the workers, etc.) are created. The worker is able to discard the desk, the scripted (on both sides) interview, the rules of conduct (which narrowly define the degree of intervention) in favour of gaining more background knowledge (usually personally experienced), more equal and informal relationships, greater freedom of manoeuvre. In short, he strips himself of everything which had previously protected him (and the client) and plunges joyfully in a state of vulnerable nudity into an acid world of human suffering."

It was this kind of exposure which the first two workers experienced vividly as they came to know more and more homeless young people.

Although they had defined themselves as helping with accommodation difficulties, they were not prepared to make this an entrenched position. It was not some kind of stockade behind which they crouched, carefully examining the rights and wrongs of every move, the validity of every encounter. Rather, by proclaiming themselves ready to help in this way, it was as if they had set up camp on a strategically situated hilltop and found themselves open on all sides.

"It is very important to me that I remain open to the kids as people, that it doesn't become a social work job. I dislike the idea of social work and the assumptions behind it — it thoroughly bores me. I don't see social work as providing any kind of creative way of looking at myself (least of all) or of looking at other people."

The workers' instinct, therefore, was to use this role not as a defence or a filter, but as a focus or framework which enabled them to become involved as people with other people. They could have chosen simply an instrumental role, whereby they helped young people to find accommodation and then left them to fend for themselves, and many young people have used the project in this way to find a flat and then required nothing more. The alternative was to be open to the young person in a way which allowed him to explore his present situation and make choices about the future.

This came to be seen as important because so many young people *themselves* were defining their life-style as unchosen and restrictive.

"Vic is getting very depressed these days. He is staying at the Salvation Army erratically, but usually turns up to crash with me on Tuesdays. He hates the hostel, but is completely unable to get a flat... Dosses out occasionally. Has clean clothes, which he keeps immaculately. He had left them in the left luggage, and when he came to draw them out they cost £3... I think it is quite likely he will disappear soon — he can't take much more of the hostel life. And who can blame him? I think in his situation I would do the same."

"Alan sees himself as too old to doss any longer. Implies there is police pressure on him in Glasgow and London."

"Ken came down to Manchester yet again to try and settle. Arrived with a friend and dossed one night in Worsley. Arrested and fined for vagrancy. Stayed with us one night. He is incredibly aware of the situation confronting him... 'I see the winoes in Piccadilly Gardens and I will be like them in ten years' time — but I hope I will be dead first.' He hates hostel life, but knows he can't survive in a room alone. When he had a room in Heald Place he used to go on the street at 10 p.m. and invite in the first person he met."

In particular, it seemed pointless to provide accommodation and to ignore young people's fears about loneliness and isolation.

"Garry would like a closer relationship with me. He said he would give 50p to

MAGIC if I visited him once a week. Quite a desperate position. Says he finds me sympathetic and easy to talk to."

"I met Jack as arranged. Looking as Hellish as ever — it is not surprising that everyone is terrified of him! Jeans in shreds, wearing two pairs, two jackets (one a torn denim, the other a camouflage jacket), huge lace-up boots, a large earring, and a Rhada Krishna haircut! He confided in me that he would like a room of his own (he has never had one) but is frightened of loneliness. In the middle of the night he often awakes in the grip of a terrible panic and can't move. It soon goes away, but he is worried about his ability to keep a room because of this."

The workers, therefore, were adopting an informal, open style of work which encouraged the formation of relationships. Sometimes this seemed to leave them in an invidious position — they weren't sure quite what they were offering:

"My own identity after knowing them for about nine months is that of a friend — this embarrasses me: 'Oh what a surprise to see you today, are you not working or something'... in spite of the fact that in the past I have told them of my involvement with the project. On my own side I do not regard them as friends as I am paid to go out there and it is unlikely that I would go if I were not paid. I don't quite know what to do about this one..."

For a time the workers thrashed around wondering about the reality of their friendship with young people. Is this just another form of do-gooding, another example of patronising? This is how a later worker reacted to the emphasis within the project on relationships:

"I enjoy meeting people (much of the time) and sometimes choose to put myself in a situation where this is likely to happen and sometimes don't. I value relationships with other people and often both learn and develop through contact with the other. I cannot, however, feel that this works as a one way situation — that I have so much to offer that I can go round 'working' trying to meet and develop relationships with young people so that they can develop within that relationship (which seems to be the basis of much detached work) — making a beeline for and developing a relationship with someone **because** *they appear to be at risk and in need of support. This strikes me as a deliberate fostering of potentially dependent relationships and based in a patronising view of life — I've got more to offer as a person and in my values than you have. This is probably the way in which the other workers in the project have felt too in talk of relative power, potential exploitation, etc., but what it means personally is that I cannot hold as an aim to make relationships with young people — though this doesn't mean I want to shut myself off from all and sundry, but that relationships should be natural and not forced, not stemming from a feeling that it is my job to deliberately set out to make friends with as many young people as possible."*

What the workers couldn't ignore was that young people wanted to make relationships with them, and that they themselves were being affected by their involvement.

"Gerry came to the group after reading about it in a newsletter. He brings back feelings in me of being torn in several directions at the group. He clearly wants to spend a lot of time with me, but feels unable to meet people in general. So

we talk for a while in the kitchen... He finds it hard to maintain a conversation; keeps asking me if I mind talking with him. Says he finds it easy to be with me. I feel a high degree of warmth towards him. I think I recognise some of my own feelings of isolation in him in an extreme form...

Our meetings now assume an intense air — long silences with Gerry clinging to me emotionally. I like him a lot. He says that he has met no one in his circle who appears to understand the way he feels...

Gerry phoned in the morning and asked me to meet him. I felt guilty and inadequate here — he had travelled from Rochdale to see me, and I had to leave prompt at 5.30. He really seems to rely a lot on me. This frightens me... When I have to leave he tries to delay me..."

It became more and more clear that if these relationships were important then we would have to work out the basis on which worker and young person met. This, therefore, became the subject of much discussion, though no one single stance was adopted by all the workers.

The workers, for instance, come on the whole from different backgrounds to the young people. They have usually had more education and other social and economic advantages. The temporary worker felt this to be an insuperable barrier to valid communication and relationship during his time with the project. He took a distinctly jaundiced view of attempts to get alongside young people and understand their situation. To him this represented a false position.

"I draw an analogy with 'Chips with Everything'. The main character in it, the general's son slumming it with the soldiers — that seems to me to be like us slumming it with clients. In his terms it was a power kick, but it is the description of that character which also describes to me the majority of so-called social workers, which is the fact that it is a game, nothing more."

On the other hand, the wife of a worker wrote some time after her husband had left the project:

"What I would like to say is that I have always been committed, whether voluntary or not, to the 'project', but never as a 'project'. The 'clients' are, or have been, my friends and acquaintances; in other words people with a similar life-style and ideals in many ways, though we may express it differently taking into account our different personality 'quirks', our different educational and financial advantages, and the unavoidable heritage of our parents... Even now I am still indirectly involved, and I don't see how this can be any other way really."

There has sometimes been conflict, therefore, between those workers who see class/cultural divides as unbridgeable, and those who see people being bound together rather by their common humanity. Even where a worker found this difficult to put into practice, it was seen as something to be worked at, rather than as an unworkable idea:

"I had problems of my own to work out and in the end was so stuck with them in myself that I couldn't relate to anyone, not how I wanted to. If I were to have a place of my own now I'd like to think that anyone would feel free to call and that I'd welcome them — irrespective of background, social position, intelligence and all those rifts between people that I know don't really matter at all but are hard to overcome in oneself. I still feel that we learn from personal example, and that our own activity must breed other activity."

There is the extreme, therefore, which classifies all such work as middle-class

meddling, which contends that people would be better off left alone, and suggests the project should self-destruct. This disintegrative point of view was certainly that of the temporary worker who joined the project in the middle of its life. Such extremes of cynicism have, however, been rare. What we have experienced has been a more gentle pervasive anxiety about the usefulness of what we have been doing, and just how naive it really is. It is open to the gibe of being some kind of wishy-washy liberalism, which jumps blindfolded into the midst of other people's lives. For this reason, those who have argued that relationships are important have also tried to set out clearly the basis upon which those relationships should develop.

Firstly, they should be based on mutual respect, and the willingness of the worker to take as well as to give. This concept of reciprocity is a difficult one to put into practice, since it threatens so many of the assumptions underlying the helping role. Yet without it the relationship becomes paternalistic and one sided. To refuse to a young person the right to give is to deny him part of his humanity. This is particularly important when one recognises that the relationship with the worker may be the only one the young person has. But the worker's willingness to receive should not be seen simply as a device to encourage young people: it must essentially recognise the ways in which young people can influence and extend the life and outlook of the worker.

"I shall never forget what Carol said about the birth of her baby: that although it was a painful experience it was also a sensuous one. That remark certainly influenced my attitude to the subsequent births of my children, and I shall always be grateful to her for her positiveness and perception in the midst of some months of absolutely harrowing experiences, for anyone, let alone a sixteen year old."

In the second place, the worker must regard the young person's perception of reality and what he wants to achieve as crucial in offering any help. This means that the relationship may be unequal (since the worker usually has more access to resources than the young person), but the worker must not fall into the 'I know what's best for you' trap. Only by taking seriously what the young person says can the worker begin to understand what life is like for that person, and also to appreciate the unique contribution the young person can make to his own life. It should be a question of aligning any resources the worker has alongside the young person's own in order to tackle problems together.

"To be homeless can be a frightening, lonely and draining experience. Having stated ourselves to be on the same 'side' as the young people it is only natural to expect that many should wish to share with us some of the difficulties they experience... I find that I have very diverse relationships with the young people I have met through the project, and that one certainly cannot be dogmatic about the kind of relationships which should develop. Basically, I feel it is the willingness to allow relationships to develop which is crucial."

It is this willingness to experiment in abandoning traditional barriers between helper and helped which we feel is crucial, rather than any demand for a particular depth of relationship. As one Project Management Committee member, himself with considerable experience of detached work, pointed out, it is the 'person' behind the 'client' who is important.

"I often feel we are identifying externals as representing the identity of a person. This is not always so: I think that the detached youth worker is trying

to identify a 'personality', making a relationship with it and respecting it."

This may be a troubling process, since it exposes the worker himself. He cannot try and drop the 'client' stereotype without committing himself to abandoning the worker status. The development of such open relationships may be crucial to the detached work process, but one should not take the idea lightly.

"As far as I am concerned the whole case for and against detached youth work rests on this process of interaction — the implications of which are yet to be realised, let alone incorporated into any form of discipline. It may be that detached youth work is completely untenable in certain spheres, if not all."

The workers have generally, therefore, opened a large area of their lives to the young people. This has obviously varied from worker to worker, according to circumstances, personality, and the possibilities he saw for creative relationships with young people. This has meant opening their homes for people to stay, introducing them to family and friends, being available at home nearly all the time, sharing outings and experiences — trying to treat young people met through the project in the same way as they would treat their other friends.

"I went down to see Peter and Kathy and stayed for a day. We all had to share the same bed — they were clearly relieved that this didn't worry me."

"Phil rang: 'In a fix. Could you do us a great boon?' Asked if we could look after Sean (their 6 week old baby) for a few days. Phil's father has had a serious heart attack and they are hitching down to see him. I said I would come over for him straight away."

"Molly came for tea at 5 p.m. Had been in her flat all afternoon tidying up. Seemed quite happy. Paul would not be back till late so she stayed the whole evening and did some painting. 10.30 I walked home with her and helped her carry things. She said she would try and get me a ticket for the 'Rolling Stones' on Sunday morning as I was away for the weekend."

It also sometimes meant hurdling the hardest barrier of all — the acknowledgement to young people of one's own need.

"Paul has helped me often. After I left the project I was often short of money. I met him in Piccadilly one afternoon while waiting to catch a bus to London, penniless. He gave me cigarettes, biscuits and came to the bus station to wave me off — that was fantastic. I met him one day in Fallowfield, again I had no money. He gave me £1 and with it I bought food to cook a meal for us both. I gave him small amounts of money from time to time for bus fare when I worked in the Basement, and it was his way of giving me something when financially our situations were reversed. I shared my life with him as much as he did his with me. He saw me depressed as well as happy, saw me ranting and raving about problems personal to me that I never wished to explain but he listened anyway. In a way I could relate to him more freely than I could to my fellow workers."

For those workers who took the plunge, therefore, the impact of the relationships they made was terrific. In a world characterised so often by despair, they found themselves confronted again and again by questions about themselves and their values. If relationships were to be mutual, if they were to be different in kind from social-work relationships, then workers had to drop their defences and face their own needs.

"During the course of the last 12 months I underwent a personal crisis which threatened the basis of my own security and consequently for a period of about 6 weeks I was effectively a 'client'. The value of this experience was that I was able to discern for myself which forms of help were the most appropriate to my situation. This experience strengthened a feeling I had had for some time that the 'problem' orientated approach of 'social workers' forces the 'client' into a position in parallel with his existential needs. In short, the individual who is depressed/unhappy/aggressive, etc. does not want to understand the origins of his feelings or even to understand how to cope with or transcend his feelings. He wants, first of all, to share them with someone and then perhaps to understand them. In addition, he does not want to share them objectively or academically, but to emotionally share his experience of his own situation. Everyone is isolated, a few manage to accept that, the majority manage to conceal it, and a few find it too overbearing to cope with. To share someone else's experience demands a spontaneous reaction to that person which is in total opposition to the application of professional techniques. Thus the worker, if he is to avoid reaching a plateau of professional ability must start by learning to know himself and develop by relating as himself to other people. It is an upward spiral, the more he learns about himself, the better he will relate to other people; the better he relates to other people the more he will know himself. Thus an important factor in working with individuals this year has been the awareness of the necessity for self-development."

For some the growth was dramatic and traumatic:

"That year marked the beginning of a personally freeing process that has been going on ever since... I know that its drastically changed my life, for the better. My job gave me so much freedom that I didn't know where to begin, and to begin at all to freely relate to other people I had to confront whole areas of myself that previously I'd had no need to attempt to unravel. Before I began the job I'd been personally secure — I was propped up by all those things that make the bridge between 'us and them'... I began with perhaps a lot more sympathy or empathy than the average social worker, but I was still ridden with an arrogance that derives from a lack of real understanding of how, for instance, a person like John faces the day... My attitude was all wrong and it hit me harder the more involved I became because the more I hated myself for my own shallow needs, desires and idiosyncrasies .."

We would not wish to claim that by becoming involved in these relationships some magical 'cure' for the problems of life was discovered. However, we emphasise the importance of coming close to people because such a stance helps to counterbalance the many pressures towards a rigidly defined 'helping' role. If detached work is about meeting people on their own ground, on terms they can understand, then the question of relationships cannot be escaped: the worker must know how much of himself he is prepared to invest in the relationship, what defences he needs to put up, whether he can relate genuinely to young people or whether such an idea is a chimera, and the degree to which he is prepared to allow the young people to be involved in discussion of such issues.

We believe that in many cases the key to understanding young people on the fringe of society is the willingness to break through some of the barriers which isolate them. The only way to do this is to meet as person with person. This immediately raises a whole number of problems — do young people become

over-dependent, does the worker lose an essential objective perspective, is his effectiveness diminished and his power to help weakened? The dangers and drawbacks have to be recognised as part of the parcel. At the same time there are a host of advantages, not least of which is that the detached worker may become the medium through which reconciliation or adaptation is achieved.

Rather, therefore, than seeing a commitment to relationships as the be all and end all, we see it as the cornerstone upon which a whole edifice can be constructed. For the detached worker, we find it difficult to identify a more central issue than the nature of his relationship with young people.

Certainly we have found that a willingness to confront a young person in personal terms has opened up whole areas of understanding and experience. It has posed fundamental questions, and confronted workers with perspectives of the world which at one and the same time horrify and challenge.

"There was the time that Pauline — just a girlfriend of Kens — and myself were mainly responsible for seeing Anne through a three day freak out the like of which we had never seen before. And I'd worked in three differing types of mental hospitals prior to that. This involved a shift system of anything up to eight hours sitting and holding, hugging, physically restraining, crying with, shouting at, sometimes lying on top of Anne as she retreated back to her childhood state and beyond. It was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life. I still get upset at the memory of it. Anne just took off from the world and we decided that we would try and see her through it mainly because we felt that a psychiatric hospital wouldn't help but only contain her — the whole Mary Barnes trip I suppose. We also knew that Anne was almost hysterically freaked by the possibility of returning to hospital. And we didn't want any phoney white-coated bastards who didn't have an inkling of understanding about where she was at dragging her out of her home and killing her off... I don't think I've ever suffered so much, emotionally, as I did then. I would sit for hours holding Anne like a baby and inwardly hating the rottenness of this world, of how some small child had been hurt and hurt and hurt till she was reduced to this frightened and unloved person that I was holding. Oh how I hated the world and the way it made people suffer. If some psychiatrist had come in with a professional businesslike manner and tried to take her away I would have smashed him to pulp for all that he stood for — for dry arid theories, for statistics, for spirit-dissolving drug techniques, for everything that is dead in this world. Anne needed love and more love and more and more and more. She needed to drown in love to help her heal the wounds that come from not being loved. She needed to be understood — oh hell, she needed what we all need but the extremity of this situation threw everything into relief...

I still remember being almost lead out of Anne's room in a daze — completely disorientated. During the course of one's time in that room one left the surface world and descended into a deeper and more primal one — one in which the only communication was raw non-verbal emotion — words were invalidated by their sophistication, there was only gut feeling. I remember Anne punching me in my eye and myself repeatedly punching the bed, still unable to see out of my smarting eye, shouting that she mustn't do that. God, I really wanted to hit her

back for that. You see it was the type of world that rapidly lost touch with convention and publicly adopted attitudes. It was almost total in its effect — like two people being adrift on a raft in a turbulent ocean. This was what the project was about to me — not the drifters' accommodation problems but homelessness in its real sense, in a sense that we all share."

Whilst sharing that kind of torment with someone you have known for years, you yet understand 'society's' perspective. On the one hand you face someone who has been abandoned and driven into a corner, on the other you see the need to protect people from the frustration and rage which results. That dilemma cannot be sidestepped, and it may only be by facing it within ourselves that we will ever be forced into finding a solution.

"John came back from London in the depths of despair — he had put his whole survival and sanity on the success of his relationship with Janet and when this collapsed there was really nothing left to appeal to in him. His world really had collapsed and I'm sure he realised that the only other alternative was the locked ward at Prestwich. So we had the awful fight in the office between John and Scotch Joe when John went berserk and after tearing out handfuls of Joe's hair just broke the place apart. I have nightmare memories of John advancing on me with the carpet sweeper handle like a villain in a Wild West piece, of the phone ringing and John swearing down it at the office staff from downstairs who were alarmed by the commotion, of his throwing cups and a shovel down the stairway at the fleeing figures of Joe and his pals. Then of my return to the office in the afternoon for a bit of peace and quiet only to hear steps on the stairs and the sound of his voice. At that I rushed out of the office, locked it and fled for the street. At that point of time I remember being afraid of a sheer physical violent presence, of the possibility of physical injury, and I sought safety in the street. But even there the fear was as great — it was as though the world contained only John and myself as he pursued me through Piccadilly making all sorts of threats if I didn't do this or that. I remember trying to appear calm and 'in control', trying to control my urge to flee, locating possible individuals who passed who might come to my assistance. I have always argued that there is a way of responding to violence that defuses the situation — a certain poise, a refusal to escalate the issue, a certain relaxation of body posture and breath control, etc., etc. — and even that now seemed in question.

This fear I feel led me to make judgments about John and his situation which are crippling and opposed to much that I have come to feel is important. We spend a sleepless night preventing a now drunk John from breaking into our house — helplessly seeing him mugged outside our front door — and eventually calling the police to remove him (after all there are the children to protect, I remember arguing to myself as John hurtled himself against the front door having already crashed his head through the front window). And next day I connive with his Probation Officer to convince a reluctant hospital that John should be committed. We argue that while left to wander the streets he is a danger to others and to himself (and of course to me!) and that it is likely he will attack someone soon; they argue that it is impossible to commit someone for what he might do in the future. Where do my views on mental health and labelling of people stand in all this? John himself sees the locked ward at Prestwich as the end of the road, yet agrees to move into an open ward. His probation officer and I go to see his psychiatrist to try and devise some sort of strategy. Yes, John is a classic psychopath — if he survives till he is 35 he should quieten down. The psychiatrist is well aware of the difficulties — already John has caused confusion on his ward and the psychiatrist is prepared to take the necessary steps to incarcerate him. We come away feeling what a helpful man, and John soon finds himself a 'voluntary' patient on the locked ward...

But even my personal fears can't ignore the reality of the process of dehumanisation within the locked ward. I go to visit him and the sweat pours off me as we sit behind the locked doors and barred windows encircled by a pitiful procession of unhappy, tense, drugged men who have lived in this zombie-like state for years. The atmosphere is electric — John typically orders others around to get me some tea (for Christ's sake, John, I don't want any tea and the response is sullen and antagonistic. I have never seen John in such a state — edgy, angry and defiant. He is supposed to have thrown a billiard ball at a patient in the open ward and angrily declaims against the injustice of it. He is angry too that while the psychiatrist was able to see the probation officer and myself he hasn't yet interviewed John. So he talks of leaving the hospital with me — he is still able to leave the ward — and asks if I will give him a lift to town. He says he will kill someone if he stays much longer. I believe him and yet still say no, I think he should remain here for a while. Where else is there for him to go, after all?..."

It is these experiences, and many others, which are burned into us. Homeless young people are no longer statistics, or social problems, or inadequate people to us; they are friends with whom we have shared intolerable experiences and survived, all of us, to another day.

CHAPTER FIVE

"To his patients he gave three-quarters of an hour; and if in this exacting science which has to do with what, after all, we know nothing about — the nervous system, the human brain — a doctor loses his sense of proportion, as a doctor he fails. Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ (a common delusion), and has a message, as they mostly have, and threatens, as they often do, to kill himself, you invoke proportion..."

Virginia Woolf : Mrs. Dalloway

We are not saying that relationships are enough. They do not obviate the need for commitment, consistency, change, revolution, houses, jobs or whatever. They are not a panacea for all ills. We would only assert that they may blunt the edges of some pain for a while, light a candle in the corner of some desolation, or make it a little easier to talk about what one really wants.

In the last chapter we were arguing that it is possible for detached workers to make more than transitory and instrumental relationships with young people. They can reach a point where both partners feel that a worthwhile exchange is taking place: that an encounter that started out on an instrumental basis has developed into an enduring relationship which benefits both. We would maintain that this is possible against the argument that detached workers can only engage in naive middle-class meddling.

To emphasise the importance of these relationships, however, is to raise a host of questions from another quarter. It may be suggested that by over-involvement the detached worker has renegued on his professional responsibilities, lost his objectivity, over-emphasised emotion and overlooked the structural constraints upon young people. Is the worker harming young people by committing himself to a distorted and limited perception of reality? Is he fulfilling personal needs to be liked and needed rather than tackling the practical problems of homelessness? Is he seeing only the individual and ignoring society?

'Professionalism' is about codes of conduct, qualifications and status; it is these which distinguish the professionals from the amateurs. To which camp does the detached youth worker belong? Many detached workers strive continually for acknowledgment as professionals, they feel slighted at not being

consulted by 'the authorities', and pass resolutions deploring this neglect. We would suggest that detached workers must accept that here, too, they are marginal. They must be prepared to lose status, rather than build it up. A hard look at the detached work job may also call into question the kind of qualifications that are relevant. Finally, the explicit and implicit codes of conduct of social workers may need to be stood on their head and shaken about a bit. Codes of conduct are normally about protecting clients and workers; in detached work the emphasis has been far more on the protection of the worker. The detached worker must accept that his job involves risk, and that, in uncharted territory, his 'professionalism' may depend more upon his personal integrity, self-criticism and sense of balance than upon formulated precepts. Upon these too, and upon the management group, depend the protection of the client.

In exploring their role and the kinds of difficulties facing young people, the early workers in the project tried to lose some of the 'professional' ethos surrounding youth and social work. For example, they immersed themselves in the world of homelessness to an extent which would normally be considered dangerous by many social workers. There was a clear feeling that 'professional' helping relationships, apart from alienating young people, were intrinsically opposed to what the workers wanted to achieve.

Having no formal social work qualification I have come into detached youth work at a different angle from most other workers. Because of this I have been able to gauge the effect on myself and other people of the social work machine. One aspect of social work which I have had to fight myself is the depersonalising process involving not only the worker but also the so-called 'clients'... To explain this further, in the first place the 'worker' in meeting the person through the filter of his professional attitudes sees him as a generalised 'client'. This lifts the 'client' from his individual situation and depersonalises him. The 'client' is caught up in this atmosphere and consequently ceases to see the other person as an individual and only as a generalised 'social worker'. Both roles having been established, the only kind of contact available to them is through the social work metaphor. Thus the situation has been taken out of its social context and into the limited framework of standard procedure and response. The perceptions gained via such a framework can only, at best, be approximate..."

This kind of stance, however, was not simply a reaction against the formalising of relationships in many social and youth work situations. Perhaps it was most vividly a response to the feeling that there was no other way of making more than superficial contact with an isolating, tumultuous environment.

"It is a turbulent world of conflicting emotions and needs without any apparent congruity with the more structured world of society. It is a terra incognita not only for the incomer but also for its inhabitants. It is the closest approximation to Hell that I have ever come across... And it is this world that the detached youth worker attempts first of all to deliberately encounter and then to operate in... Increasingly we became accepted and moved deeper and deeper into the turmoil without realising the importance of the barrier we were crossing. We were finding it necessary (in a largely unconscious way) to loosen the constraints of our previously structured existence. In an attempt to equate more totally with this world we opened our homes to differing degrees, preferring the informality of domestic surroundings to the austerity of offices and

restrictions of cafes, pubs, etc. In so doing we were unwittingly dismantling the very structures which had aided our survival up to that point... In a fit of idealism we had divested ourselves of all the trappings designed to protect the professional social worker from the daily horror of his occupation and then walked into the terra incognita of the homeless relying on god knows what to protect us..."

But however far the worker ventures into the world of the homeless, he is not simply lost. If he were lost then his presence would be pointless. He is different from homeless young people. He is a 'worker', with meetings to attend, reports to write, committees to confront, a salary to collect. He retains a bond with more normal society. The two worlds often appear unreal the one to the other. Small wonder that the worker, continually crossing the frontier, often feels confused and bewildered. Can he personally, within himself, ensure that the tension that exists between the two is creative rather than destructive?

"To what extent does the increasing need of the detached youth worker to protect himself cut across the bonds made earlier between himself and the individual with whom he has formed relationships? If he does hover sufficiently on the edge of terra incognita to be recognisable to the inhabitants of that world, to what extent is he being a creative medium between that world and society? And conversely, to what extent is he colouring or filtering that medium through bringing schizophrenic perceptions and reactions to bear on situations?"

The worker is forced into this marginal position simply because he is a worker. Even if he were largely cut loose from more conventional society, his very desire to 'help' would make him different from other inhabitants of the homeless world. Whereas most individuals there are isolated. the worker is inundated by callers. Whereas a young person may have spoken to nobody else for a week, the worker will have done nothing but speak to people. His role forces him to make judgments about other people. As the following extract from a worker's reflections shows, he is forced to make 'professional' judgments — which may in themselves reinforce his desire not to act as a 'professional'.

"Jim and Sarah make very good beginnings but seem unable to sustain the energy. But then that judgmental kind of statement again raises the question of the presence of the worker bringing in his own understanding of how people should operate and express their ability to cope. In many ways Jim and Sarah are a social worker's delight. They describe their life in a series of crises, which immediately arouses the interest of people who thrive on crisis! You feel needed and justified. Jim's keenness to reveal personal hangups feeds this kind of feeling. In this respect the offering of short-term accommodation might well be an unhelpful response. Tends to allow and encourage them to play up their crisis presentation of the situation and force us to operate as social workers. I think I would have taken a firmer line and resisted this earlier in the relationship if it had not been for the pressure of Jane (a worker from another agency) who was also staying with us at the time. She particularly played the social work response — emphasising the crisis nature of their situation and pressurising me to suggest they should stay in the housing scheme. I think that Jim and Sarah will do much better by keeping out of social work situations as much as they can..."

The worker finds himself forced to mediate perceptions — to choose and reject

not only society's but also the young person's. Whilst the project has committed itself to accepting a young person's perception of what is happening and helping him to achieve the kind of life he says he wants, this is not a naive or passive process. The worker is not neutral or value-free: it would be dishonest to pretend that he is. In his dealings with young people he must retain his own values and stance and communicate these. Thus one woman worker notes the problems caused for her by a young person's treatment of his wife:

"The question of Sally and the way he treated her... He beats her. There were reports of fights and things. He really treats her like muck and she has to ask his permission to do anything and this brought out all sorts of feelings, particularly in us women. We had terrible problems trying to relate to him in any way. I mean, I can't understand the guy. As soon as he walks in I feel myself tensing up and its particularly associated with all this."

To avoid denying either the worker's or the young person's idea of reality, there must be some form of dialogue, rather than the imposition of one view. So the question of what kind of relationship develops again becomes important.

"Barry's depression continued and at my invitation he came round to our house at every opportunity. For a spell we went just about everywhere together on his time off... Then we moved from our old address and so he couldn't drop in quite so easily and we began to drift apart. He suspected part of our reason for moving was to get away from him. I began to adopt a tougher approach with him and he began to lament the end of our relationship. I reached the stage where I couldn't respond to his talk of suicide any more and told him so. I said that one couldn't have a friendly relationship with someone who continually thought in terms of suicide as a way out if things got bad — it made a mockery of the relationship and made all communication not specifically about suicide seem superficial... He will not adapt himself to conversation in which he is not interested and allows his gloom to pervade the atmosphere. This made for some sticky moments when our friends dropped in. He is extremely aware and occasionally over-interprets reasons, i.e. has accused me of strategic withdrawals when no such thoughts have been in my mind. Because of this awareness the only way of relating to him is in a totally honest fashion."

The worker makes judgments about young people not only because he is a person with certain values and perceptions, but also because he does not want to reinforce negative aspects of their situation. To continually react to crisis may simply make a young person feel that he can only gain attention by emphasising crises, and this encourages a 'client mentality'.

"Pat and Bobby started off again on the same path and I began to get calls late at night about emergencies out there, with Bobby smashing the place up, or 'come and get me I'm leaving him' from Pat. I know now that the emergencies are usually exaggerations, Pat having got into the habit of phoning one of us when things go wrong. I plan in future to reduce my White Knight or Don Quixote type rushings out there to only those of real necessity."

If the worker's only interaction with young people is during crises, this can be a harmful thing. However, if he can establish a more broadly based friendly relationship then crises can be put in context, and the young person need not define himself as in trouble in order to get in touch. Workers, therefore, were keen to avoid 'client dependence'. But we are all dependent upon others, husband,

wife, friend, parent — and to deny the homeless a close relationship with workers on the grounds that it encourages an undue dependence is to cut them off from the kind of help and support that most of us receive as a right. The workers, therefore, were not unaware of the possibly negative results for the young person of encouraging him to develop friendly relationships with them, but felt this could be counteracted by thoughtful responses and by emphasising the positive aspects of the situation. Moreover, such were the demands on workers that young people could not do more than compete for scarce resources — most, therefore, soon came to a realistic assessment of their isolated position, and along with dependence on workers they had to develop their own toughness, resilience and independence if they were to survive.

In order to be effective in helping young people survive the worker must find how to be in the world but not of it. Only by such means can he offer help to young people. But there are his own needs to consider, which also affect his usefulness. On the one hand he makes a judgment that only by close involvement can he get near enough to overcome suspicion and understand need. On the other, such involvement can become so demanding that it threatens his ability to be consistent.

"A dilemma I am facing at present is how to reconcile the opposing forces of the professional versus the personal relationship. In striving to start and maintain relationships on the personal basis of friendship one runs up against the escalation process whereby the relationship is continually being developed by the other person beyond 'the bound which the worker might define as reasonable and practical in terms of the project'."

The problem becomes one of efficiency. How can the worker harbour his resources so that they can be used in the best possible way? This, of course, is the basic argument behind all attempts to construct a modus operandi. The detached worker exposes himself in various ways. He may be open in terms of time and availability:

"2 a.m. Bob knocks us up, in a bad state. Says he is being chased round Moss Side by two men. Can he stay the night? He is too afraid to return to his flat. We talk for a while — he is on the edge of tears. He has been having an affair with one of the men, who then discovered he had slept with a girl. Hewas furious, and threatened to kill Bob. Bob is really frightened by this."

The extent to which this kind of incident happens may become overwhelming. In itself it is trivial and undemanding, but the build-up of demand may lead to the feeling that there is no escape, no remaining haven, either for oneself or one's family.

"I think the main problem about crashers is the lack of privacy especially when you have been involved with the same problems all day. There is the feeling that you are on the job 24 hours a day, that the only way you can actually escape, is to go to bed (and even then you can't really escape, because even if, for instance, you want to ignore the phone, one of the damn crashers is sure to answer it and wake you up to come downstairs)... You begin to feel that you are a transit camp or refugee depot, or that you have inadvertently set up house on the railway line between Glasgow and London."

The worker may be physically vulnerable, either by being threatened personally or by having local feeling aroused against him.

"I helped to move Pete and Sue. A difficult situation. They have accused the

lads downstairs of pinching their stuff. The two black boys were very angry about this. Pete and Sue had also apparently written something abusive on the TV. They are prejudiced. I did not want to be associated with this, particularly as I only live round the corner. The two lads clearly do involve me with the couple and mildly threaten me as I carry down some of the gear. Sue and Pete were terrified and asked the policeman to stay around until we had driven off."

The worker may be threatened in other senses: he may find his own personal relationships being attacked.

"The reason for this unwillingness to commit myself to this relationship springs at least in part from the reputation that follows Sara around, e.g. the destructive nature of her involvement with individuals. Mary is particularly expressive of this attitude — early on she warned me that Sara was intent on destroying my marriage."

How does the worker cope with these various kinds of threats? There is no textbook answer to such a problem. No one worker can prescribe for another the boundaries of action. It is to a large extent a question of personal examination: constructing one's own limits, deciding one's own priorities and needs, making judgments about how to use one's own personal resources most effectively. It is no use squandering one's love, if by so doing one kills the source of the supply. It is no use opening one's door if such intimate contact leaves one prostrate for a week.

"The detached youth worker is in one helluva position. He has to temper purist ideals and theory with practice under the burden of his own inadequacies with only his sensitivity to guide him."

Each worker on the project, therefore, has found his own particular solution to the degree of involvement, or the nature of contact, he was prepared to make.

"Detached work exposes the worker, that's the basic thing it does, and it is determined by the kind of individual that he is the degree to which it exposes him. We all put our defences up, and all put our limits up at a certain point. I think this varies. With some people it is early on, with other people it is quite far on... It has influenced us and affected our life quite a lot really. It has cut off certain areas; not completely, but to a large degree. It is very difficult now to communicate with relations and family friends. But is has opened up other areas..."

A worker has to balance the need to protect himself and the needs of young people, and find a position which is satisfactory to himself. Thus he jealously guards his day off:

"Colin has wanted to talk with me for a while now but something always got in the way. He then came to my house late on Saturday night but I didn't feel able to invite him in. I felt pretty bad about this but just didn't dare break up my day off, which had been a good one. I suggested we should meet on Monday."

However, in imposing limits he may find himself over-reacting, and thus need to maintain a self-conscious awareness of what is happening to a relationship.

"Because they ring up so often I find myself always making excuses to get away from the phone. This means that I haven't had a decent talk with them for weeks. Must bear this in mind. The dangers of drawing limits too stringently."

We would suggest that 'professional' responsibility lies not in under- or over-

involvement, but in responsible judgment about what each individual worker can achieve. This does not mean everyone has found an immediately satisfactory solution, or a permanent one. Judgments change about what can or cannot be achieved. Early defences may be abandoned.

"I have done the job so far totally wrongly. I've done the job how I've felt I should do it. I've distanced myself because I've thought of my role. It's been my hang up, to think that we have discussions about how to keep our distance, how to stop people becoming too dependent on us, and talk together about how we should react towards an individual. That feels so wrong... The whole dilemma with me has always been — who am I to the people I've been working with? What does a social worker mean? I feel I've been in the most ridiculous situations with people — projecting myself as a different person, just as a person who helps... The thing that put me off about (another project) was how it was all divided up into helper and helped all the time. The workers never talked about their problems, they walked round all day, rushed round with their pens in hand and sweet smiles on their faces, all day. But it wasn't real, I felt that if I didn't smile I'd be stared at till I did. It all seems, feels, wrong somehow, it all feels like a game — hospitals — have I been playing hospitals?"

We would suggest that what detached workers need perhaps more than anything is help in working out their own personal parameters of endurance. To insist upon retreat behind a rigid role conception or specific behavioural rules may be to underestimate a worker's potential and to create considerable job frustration. It may be as dangerous and potentially worthless as an over-enthusiastic and thoughtless headlong rush into intense relationships with demanding people.

This is, of course, highly complex. We are not arguing that a worker should find just the stance which prevents him from feeling any strain and stress. Strain and stress are hallmarks of detached work. He may undergo periods of acute anxiety: what will be the next crisis? He may feel pushed to intolerable limits: if anyone else rings on the door at 2.30 in the morning I'll go berserk. He may have a succession of extremely draining encounters: isn't life hell and what's it all about anyway? But such stress must be countered by periods of hopefulness, relative peace, 'success', or some other commodity he values. The worker must work out his own rate of exchange. What makes it all worthwhile? Do I purchase enough of whatever I consider of worth to justify the price I pay? No detached work project can ask of its workers that they do more than a limited job during limited hours. It would be a tragedy, however, if projects did not offer workers considerably more scope if they have the courage and imagination to take it up. Those who are responsible for setting up projects, however, do need to ensure that they build in the kind of critical yet committed support for workers which can make such freedom tolerable. Responsibility for finding support for workers should neither rest entirely with the worker, nor entirely with 'the management'. It is a corporate responsibility, dependent both upon the worker articulating his needs and accepting the limits of support, and the management both foreseeing and responding to problems that arise. We believe that viable support can only spring from a group which shares objectives and commitment with workers.

Perhaps to offer workers contact with a maelstrom of suffering and degradation is to be unprofessional. Does objectivity mean lack of pain and, if so, how valuable is it? Is the subjective/objective dichotomy a meaningful one anyway:

are we not all just trading perceptions and prejudices? We come back to the question of whose perceptions and prejudices carry most weight — who has the power in society, or in the social work relationship? Perhaps the concern with professionalism is concern that the social worker may lose his power (is not his 'integrity' another name for power, in the final analysis?).

"There is a prevailing image of social workers, amongst the people with whom I am involved, as perpetuators of the status quo in society, i.e. maintained by society in the interests of its own preservation. It seems obvious to me that perceiving the situation surrounding the individual would involve not only the individual's domestic relationship but also the individual's social relationship, i.e. the full social context of society as it impinges on the individual. Thus to effect a change in the situation, and the situations of people as a whole, the worker must see himself in a political context as an innovator or catalyst of change. In this way the real needs of all the people comprising society could be satisfied."

To speak of the detached worker as a 'catalyst for change' is, of course, naive. Many have sought this role for themselves, often with little or no success. It is a truism to say that what is needed is social change — virtually nobody would disagree. But where do you locate the areas of change, how do you judge what areas are amenable to change, how do you assess your own potential as an agent of change, how do you choose between long term and short term ends, between reform and revolution?

Emphasis on the importance of developing individual relationships need not commit the worker simply to binding a few wounds, whilst ignoring the monstrous blunderbuss which inflicts them. The fostering of relationships with young people, rather than blinding workers to wider social dimensions, exposes the inadequacies of our present society yet more vividly. If young people are no longer simply social statistics, then the horror of their plight is not just a matter for moral concern but becomes a situation which is personally painful to the worker.

It is, therefore, easy to react with anger against society's constraints. Yet the detached worker needs to beware of falling into the trap of simply designating young people as 'victims'. This is as unhelpful and debilitating to them as it is to stereotype them as 'problem people'. Neither definition gives one much credit as a human being with will, purpose, ambition and dreams.

If the detached worker has a perspective on social change then, logically, it should be an 'anti-professional' one. The recognition of the young person as 'person' implies a rejection of the concept that he is a 'problem' to be legislated away, or a 'victim' to be rescued from the moils of society. Social workers, or any others who see themselves as agents of change, cannot be the sole actors in the drama (whatever scenario one chooses), with 'clients' remaining the passive onlookers.

This is not to deny that City Centre Project workers, for example, have resources which are not always available to young people. By the nature of their job, salaries, education, articulateness, and a host of other attributes, they are generally more powerful than homeless young people. But to possess power does not mean that one also possess wisdom, insight, infallibility, or anything more than a very limited perception of the world. By emphasising involvement with young people detached workers can, however, enlarge perceptions and

emphasise and encourage the participation of young people in the dialogue about the meaning of social change. They therefore find themselves once more sharing dilemmas with community workers.

'Professionalism' in social work is the antithesis of this kind of outlook, since it reifies the worker as the one with knowledge and power. Moreover, in so far as it institutionalises and bureaucratises the helping relationship it actively inhibits the growth of a sense of communal responsibility for each other and for what happens in our society.

CHAPTER SIX

Seeing before him an enormously high and elaborately constructed scaffolding, while the building itself only just shows above its foundations, man is apt to make the mistake of attaching more importance to the scaffolding than to the building for the sake of which alone this temporary scaffolding has been put up."

Leo Tolstoy

"The worker should not be in a position whereby he can exercise authority over another individual or where he can be linked to any identity other than his own naked personality."

How realistic is such an outlook, which sees the detached worker simply as one person amidst the crowd? Detached workers are often characterised as working without structures: they do not have clubs with programmes of activities, they are not based in offices, they are 'free' to respond to the needs of young people in a fluid situation. Yet this characterisation can be misleading — it ignores the many unseen structures within which the worker operates.

The kind of structural constraints which operate upon workers are not merely those which are bound up with office hours, buildings, equipment, or whatever. However minimally constrained a worker may appear to be, however 'unstructured' his day, he still has structures with which to contend: worker-worker relationships, worker-management relationships, worker-management-sponsor relationships. There may be patterns of interaction with colleagues and management laid down before he starts work. The aims of the project, the resources available, the directions about the young people with whom he is to work, the closeness and nature of supervision, the decision-making process, forbidden areas or modes of work — all these create a structure within which the worker has to operate.

These structures are often overlooked when considering how 'detached' a detached worker really is. A worker who simply floats around on the streets and in cafes, making contact with young people solely in their own environment (in an apparently unstructured way), may in reality be less 'free' to respond to their needs than a worker who uses an old house as a base for informal groups of young people. The first worker may appear to correspond more closely to the

'pure' model of detached work, since he is free from concern with buildings and thus any kind of authority role. Yet his system of management structures and expectations may be so rigid and constraining that his 'freedom' is far more curtailed than the second worker, who may have the kind of system of accountability which allows him to choose between a host of alternatives.

The importance of the detached worker lies in the degree to which he is 'detached from authority structures'. What does this mean? It cannot mean that he must always avoid any structure which involves the use of authority — it is possible to conceive of a structure being set up at the instigation of young people and authority given to the worker to protect it by the young people themselves. The term 'authority structures', therefore, must represent 'Them' — the many-headed monster of institutionalised power, represented for so many young people by the school, the police, the probation officer, the DHSS official. The 'detachedness' of the detached worker really inheres in the extent to which he does not represent or align himself with these power blocks, and the extent to which he is allowed to represent and align himself with particular young people.

In so doing he may well become involved in the creation of other structures. Workers cannot expect to remain at the initial level of contact. To do so may inhibit the aims of the project. 'Streetwork' is only one element in detached work. Many projects, for instance, progress to the involvement of young people in groups for various purposes, sometimes involving the use of premises. Is such a development inimical to detached work principles? The greater the structure, the more likely the degree of formalisation. The use of buildings involves the use of authority to protect them. Once structures are created they tend to be resistant to change. Does the gain compensate for the loss?

That question, of course, has different answers in different situations. For some projects the gain may justify the loss (for loss there undoubtedly is), and for others it may not. What is important is that the process of weighing the two should take place, not just initially but constantly, and that the detached worker should not identify himself and his project with the structures he creates to the extent that he cannot abandon them if necessary. His perspective should remain the perspective of the outsider.

The development of further structures beyond those already surrounding the detached worker may seem almost inevitable — particularly structures which are to be used by young people. If, for example, you are not bent upon changing the individual, but in helping him to cope with a hostile environment and making small attempts to counter that environment, then structures may be necessary and important. They may be more powerful than the individual, and a greater resource. Yet young people on the fringe of society, isolated and apprehensive, may fight shy of anything except the most informal structures. A high-powered 'pressure group', for example, might be totally ineffective in the sense that it alienated those it was trying to help. It may therefore be necessary to be content with the confused, the partial, the fragmentary, the 'inefficient'. We are often far too concerned with making everything clear-cut, decisive, logical and 'productive'. The problem about using certain structures to further one's aims may be that the structures become regarded as the essence of the work, and one's criteria begin to change, so that the 'success' of the structures becomes paramount, and the original aims of the project become diluted. Our own experience showed us how quickly structures can take over in importance.

In October 1972 two further workers were appointed to the project. They were both women, one of whom was appointed as research worker, and the other as liaison worker with other cities, particularly London. A year later, due to the complexities of the funding process, the research worker also took on a partial liaison role, in this case particularly with agencies in Glasgow. The new workers brought varied perceptions and expectations to bear upon the work of the project, and the tasks of the project were considerably expanded to encompass the functions of research and liaison with other cities.

It was clear that the project could not retain the very simple worker relationships which had hitherto operated, whereby the two workers met informally, usually at home at odd hours of night and day, to hammer out problems and approaches. There began a system of weekly meetings between workers to discuss what was happening and make decisions about aspects of the project's work.

Shortly after the two new workers joined the project discussion became centred on the need for an information service specifically related to the needs of homeless young people. The alternative information service in which the first two workers had invested a lot of their time and through which they had met numbers of homeless young people, was having difficulties in maintaining its service, dependent as it was upon the efforts and interest of volunteers. Whereas its style and philosophy were important to City Centre Project workers, there were some disadvantages:

"The price one has to pay, however, for working in such an amorphous way consists of spending a lot of time doing things that seem to have little relevance to Project work, e.g. collecting jumble to finance the info service. Other influences started to become more dominant as the Alternative Movement passed from being a pioneering outwardly-oriented movement to a more bureaucratic phase, i.e. as structures were created the types of individuals involved in them changed from being people who were stimulated by development to those who either wished to preserve what had been created or those who wanted to burrow into what now existed for purposes of their own. Disputes by rival factions became more dominant in the maintenance of such structures and the consequent refinement of ideals underlying them probably caused even more withdrawals by the original creators. Since the Project now felt it had established itself in Manchester and could claim a certain pedigree in activist terms it was decided to acquire our own premises and set up our own centre. The advantages being that we would no longer have to dilute the service we offered for we now were sufficiently well known not to need personal involvement in a wide variety of groups as a way of making contact. Such groups could now act as referral agencies in that respect. We would also, because of our commitment and financial security, be able to provide a service without diluting any of its energy towards resolving internal crises."

This analysis, apart from pointing to some of the reasons why the Project branched out on its own, is also an interesting account of what happens to structures, and certainly this particular worker would contend that the City Centre Project has in a similar way altered as structures developed. We will look at this point later.

At the time it seemed a natural progression to set up an independent information service in the basement of a city centre office building. The implications of

such a move, however, were far-reaching. Perhaps they did not appear so at first to the two early workers, who saw the service within a wide context of activity. However, for the new workers, such a structure was perhaps inevitably seen as a major part of the project's work, thus subtly altering the emphasis which had previously prevailed. Whereas earlier the workers had seen the alternative info service as an adjunct to their diverse, individualistic and often intense involvement with young people, the new Project information service tended to become seen as the core of the Project's work, to which all else was appended.

Yet the development of an information service seemed a logical outcome of several strands within the Project: it was an open and honest avowal of the intentions of the workers, and thus allowed the concept of 'consumer choice'; by stating clear objectives it helped to limit demands to those from young people who fell within the interest of the Project, thus helping to resolve the problem of the continual escalation of demands from numerous people and where to place the boundaries upon contact; by its emphasis upon rights, resources and information it tried to avoid the 'problem person' definition and to align workers' resources in a relevant way alongside young people. In all these ways it seemed consistent with the detached work values which the early workers had chosen to embrace.

The danger in the creation of structures is not that structures are inherently bad or inherently contradictory to a detached work approach. But they can subtly erode former values. The City Centre Project, for instance, came to be seen as an agency, not only by other agencies, but also by new workers. The amorphous is much harder to grasp than the concrete: the structure is easy to understand, the lack of structure is much more difficult to handle. The Basement was open every weekday afternoon, when it was manned by one of the four workers. In terms of time, therefore, the weekly commitment of each worker to the info service itself was unlikely to be more than two afternoons a week, more often only one. However, it was the one shared activity of all workers, and for this reason it seemed to assume importance as a cohesive element in the project.

Then other factors came into operation and seemed to increase the already formalising tendencies within the Project. A couple of months after the Basement began, an accommodation scheme for homeless young people opened. Although it was run by another body, it had close links with the Project. Both early workers had been involved in discussions at its initial stages, and one was a member of the Management Committee, whilst the other volunteered to act as caretaker for the scheme when it opened. This involved living in one house alongside two others which were being let out as bedsitters to young people who had experienced problems in getting accommodation on the open market.

Because of his experience, and the strong views he held on the development of the scheme, the caretaker was given freedom to run the houses as he thought fit. Thus he selected tenants, collected rent, and acted as a resource person for those tenants who wanted someone to turn to for advice. At this time the caretaker felt strongly that he should carefully monitor who was allowed into the houses. This meant that he had to know the young people fairly well before he could judge their suitability for the scheme. He was also keen to use the houses to help young people who had experienced severe difficulties in other forms of accommodation. Both these aims came to be seen as self-defeating. The criterion of knowing a young person well before allowing him admittance led, in

fact, to a limitation of the range of choice of potential tenants. At the same time, the grouping together of young people who had all had prolonged housing difficulties led to the feeling that these houses were for 'problem' people.

A number of young people were dropping into the Basement regularly — partly because they had recurring problems with accommodation, partly because it was a useful contact point with workers, and partly because they came to see it as an informal social centre. It was mainly from these young people, therefore, that the tenants of the housing scheme were drawn. A group of 'clients' began to emerge, using both the housing scheme and the Basement, and by their cohesiveness and demands tending to overshadow the isolated newcomers seeking accommodation advice for the first time. The caretaker found his role as rent-collector in the houses one which conflicted with his role as a worker for the Project, and impeded his relationships with young people. He tended to discuss his housing scheme problems with fellow workers on the Project, rather than the management body, and the young people themselves tended to see all the workers as being involved in the running of the housing scheme.

Thus, within a few months of these structures being formed, the workers found themselves in a situation contrary to their stated values. They had gathered a group of young people around them who tended to identify themselves as 'clients' and who saw the workers as having power over vital resources such as accommodation.

This posed a dilemma for the workers. They still believed in the importance of the information service and the accommodation scheme, particularly as it became clear that the accommodation market was becoming more and more restrictive and competitive. There were thus conflicting demands upon them.

"We have experienced the ways in which the formation of structures by the Project alone have impersonalised the 'workers'. Yet the Basement was a resource providing a service for young people. We have experienced how being seen as a member of a group, i.e. the City Centre Project, has raised each worker to being a member of a powerful elite, again leading to depersonalisation of the 'workers' as individuals. Yet the City Centre Project as a group is a resource; it can comment on the public issues affecting the lot of the homeless individual and can operate in an advocacy role. We have experienced how the acquisition of property can help certain individuals with their accommodation difficulties. But the installation of a 'worker' as 'caretaker', whilst effectively safeguarding the survival of the property, has diluted his relationships with its residents. Yet the houses were a resource for the Project."

There were a number of further paradoxes: in spite of the development of what the workers saw as an us/them situation, there was a strong feeling of camaraderie and solidarity about the Basement; whilst the workers had the explicit power, as part of the worker elite, much implicit power was with the young people, whose demands and pressure had a powerful effect upon how the workers spent their time. Many young people look back on that time with considerable nostalgia, and regret the passing of 'the Basement'; yet in spite of these feelings the workers decided that the situation was not creative. Whereas it provided some kind of friendship in an isolating environment, it was also insular and inbred. It catered for the needs of a few young people at the expense of new comers, who often felt excluded and awkward.

The workers, therefore, felt that the situation must change. They quite explicitly took a 'we know what's best' kind of decision — surely the ultimate negation of what the Project was supposed to stand for? Yet the decision was in support of other values: less 'client mentality', less dependence on workers, more emphasis on 'unstructured' contact and personal relationships, more time and concern being offered to a wider number of young people. Thus again we see the kind of tensions and contradictions that arise, and how decisions can never be wholly pure or wholly right.

Whilst the need to change the situation was felt by all workers, the kind of change that was required was a matter of debate.

One stance was to reiterate that despite the apparent failure to retain 'detached' values in a structured situation, such a thing was still possible. The rights and information side of the Project were still important, but needed to be placed within the context of more personal contact with young people.

"I still think the practical, laborious accommodation-finding aspect of the Project is very important since this does dominate what happens to a person, and our willingness to take trouble over this does distinguish us from other agencies... The Basement shift no longer represents in my mind the right kind of flexibility. I feel it is potentially valuable but that we are not making the right kind of use of it. I tend to feel that we now see the Basement shift as too central, almost the total job. I still see, however, the idea of being available at a certain part of each day as useful, otherwise we could easily end up with rather an incestuous group which resents new arrivals. But the development of a relationship with a young person needs to take place elsewhere or it inevitably becomes structured and formalised — we start by protecting the building or acting authoritatively."

A contrasting viewpoint was to dilute the structure of the Project even more perhaps than in the earliest phase.

"I see the development of the Project as not only becoming more individual oriented, but also in becoming more dispersed as a group. Instead of a close-knit team sharing each other's experiences I see each member going his own way as an individual with only occasional contact with the team leader in terms of accountability, etc. Thus each member could justly claim his right as an individual and not as a representative of a structure."

This could be termed the 'anarchic' solution to the problem of structure, culminating in "embracing the concept of paying people a wage in order that they can express themselves all the time in whatever way they think will benefit people".

Perhaps it was the wrong time for such a viewpoint. The Project was in the middle of a dispute with the local authority, through whom its Urban Aid funds came, about authority representation on the Project Management Committee (partly, it was felt, as a result of criticisms made by the Project about proposed local provision for homeless single people). It was thus highly conscious both of the need to retain its independence and yet prove its responsibility in terms of accountability. We shall look in more detail in the next chapter at management structure, yet at this stage it is important to say that the concept of power and accountability resting with workers and a group of lay people was one which the Trust and certain workers and Project Management Committee members were fighting to establish as viable and relevant. A 'democratic' method of participat-

ion and control requires more structure than the 'anarchic' vision considers desirable.

This is, we believe, a highly important point. We would not wish to argue that the individual detached worker automatically embodies wisdom and understanding, and that if set free from all constraints he will do a good job. For the sake of 'clients' there must be control and accountability. What is important is that the system of control and accountability is itself aligned with the needs and interests of young people. It must also be democratic — involving workers and other interests in jointly reaching decisions. Autocracy — either the autocracy of the dictatorial employer or the autocracy of the worker who insists on going it alone — fundamentally destroys the delicate balance upon which detached work rests.

The 'anarchic' view, therefore, was not upheld, and it was decided to continue to attempt to operate an info service whilst maintaining relationships with young people outside this structure. For one worker, who left around this time, this was a disappointment, and he felt that this signified a deterioration in the project.

"It must be stated, however, that in the experience of this Project's work the freedom of manoeuvre successively diminished as the Project became more agency orientated. Obviously this can be seen in a multitude of ways: as a safeguard; as beneficial; as stifling; as stabilising; as decaying; as being consistent; as a defined commitment; as a cop out; as a response to exhaustion, staleness, poverty of imagination, grant aiding bodies, orientation of new workers, ability, lack of ability, and so on. It is obvious that I feel that the Project's development followed the pattern of creation, evolution, establishment, maintenance, and withdrawal or decay common to most structures. To have avoided this pattern the Project would have had to avoid a structural transformation. In other words, the Project would have continued to spread out into the community rather than contracting and becoming inbred, isolated, etc."

In contrast, another worker claims that this is too philosophical and abstract a viewpoint:

"Bernard has analysed this period in generally negative terms. But he talks in terms of purity of form, i.e. what is aesthetically pleasing to the workers (or to the observer). I feel flexibility and adaptability are crucial, but not in isolation or for their own sake, but only as relates to the concrete situation. What is missing from Bernard's analysis is any comment on how the young person perceives this. Clearly many of the Basement users wanted it that way — it was the workers who objected. And clearly a strong case can now be made for young people needing an information and rights centre at this point of time (even if this isn't very 'exciting'). One thing that has been overlooked rather in talking of the time the project formed its own structures is the effect this had on certain young people who were drifting round the country. With the Project 'coming out into the open', they began to relate to it quite strongly, and Manchester increasingly became a focus of activity, rather than just another stopping off place (compare our first report, where we said we had very limited contact with 'drifters'). Some have now made Manchester a base, almost their 'home', and this is quite a significant process which the Project has initiated (whether for good or ill must be a matter of judgment)."

The Basement was to be demolished, and with their removal to a top floor office in the centre of town the workers decided to emphasise the rights and inform-

ation side of the office and discourage its use as a social centre where people congregated. Workers were to use the office as a contact point, but not their sole meeting place with young people. The emphasis on relationships using workers' homes was reiterated, and the need to keep the information service in its place as a servant of the work of the Project, rather than its master.

At the same time, Community Actions Projects Limited, the charity which ran the housing scheme, took over all the management functions of the houses, releasing the caretaker to pursue a mainly supportive role to the tenants. This was not a wholly satisfactory division of labour, mainly because the Secretary of Community Action Projects (and thus the person who undertook the selection of tenants, rent collecting and general management functions) was also the wife of the project leader of the City Centre Project. (Such problems often arise in the field of the voluntary agencies, where the small number of committed people available to undertake tasks means that ideal notions of how things should be done have to fall before the hard force of necessity. Detached workers, too, find that if they are to get things done then they have to do them themselves, and the purity of their approach, technique, style or values may suffer as a consequence. Pragmatism is often the only apparently possible response in areas where one is confronted by continual need and neglect.) However, from this time tenants were selected from a wide variety of referrals and the caretaker, who throughout was always one of the workers on the City Centre Project, found less conflict between his two roles. He still often found internal inconsistencies in the actual caretaker role, but far less problems relating to the work of the City Centre Project.

About this time two workers left the Project, and the view of their replacements reflect the major problem that arises in creating structures. More than any previous workers these new workers saw the work of the Project in terms of the structures it had created or supported. Thus the debate in the Project swung from concern about whether there was too much structure to whether there was too little. The new workers found it hard to reconcile the two aspects of the Project's work — the info service and 'the rest'. Or, rather, they found it difficult to grasp the complex and varied nature of 'the rest', particularly the network of relationships which had surrounded previous workers, and thus they tended to look to the info service to provide the rationale for the project. From this perspective, they felt that having set up an information service it should be more efficiently run and should attempt to attractas many young people as possible.

"I think it a cop out of our responsibilities if having got a certain amount of resources we do not concentrate a bit more on improving the quality and quantity of information on offer and publicising the service so it is more widely available. If with more publicity and more efficient information files there is a big increase in demand/usage then with some of the young people we could then start asking if the establishment of a longer term service would lead to institutionalised duties or if it would be something worth working for... I hope it doesn't seem as if I'm arguing for an over-structured situation, but for me a certain amount of structure is necessary — not a strict inflexible structure but a flexible framework based on immediate and long-term objectives, periodically reviewed."

Thus began the quality v. quantity debate amongst workers. Was the information service the raison d'etre of the Project, and as such should it not be attempting to

disseminate information as widely as possible? Or was it only an element in the Project, a resource and a contact point with young people who required a deeper involvement if they were to overcome the hurdles society placed in their way? If it were the former then we should be concentrating more resources on the information service, advertising widely, and trying to reach as many young people as possible. If it were the latter than an overwhelming number of young people would destroy the ethos of the Project, and reduce workers to giving out lists of possible addresses. In many ways the argument was resolved not internally but by pressure of external forces. The constantly deteriorating state of the accommodation market made the quantitative argument a bit hollow — it was almost worse than useless to offer information, unless there was a lot of worker commitment and time to back up the initial contact. At the same time it emphasised the need to have up-to-date and comprehensive information in order to increase the competitiveness of young people in the accommodation race. Thus the two arguments gradually became synthesised into accepting limited numbers with intense involvement, and at the same time making sure workers were well informed and had access to a very wide pool of possible accommodation.

"The information service is useful as an instrumental thing; but it is at least equally useful as a place where we can express genuine concern about what happens to those we meet, so that they feel free to approach us in other areas of their lives. This concern is partly expressed by the willingness to take trouble over queries."

After several months of confusion, the Project gradually settled down over the structure argument. The information service became far less dominant an aspect of work, and each worker had several independent areas of interest which he was able to pursue. For instance, the worker acting as caretaker to the housing scheme, in addition to his involvement with individual tenants, became very involved in the implications of particular housing policies as they affected a range of people (including single young people) living in the area around the houses. He participated in a number of housing action/pressure groups, and in the creation of a local residents' association. Thus to some extent the dispersal of workers hoped for at an early stage did take place, though within a more limited and defined area of concern, and with considerable worker discussion and group accountability.

"I believe there should be two factors which both give direction to the Project and provide the workers with a central point of contact and cohesion. The first should be a real commitment to homeless young people as people; the second should be a commitment to the values embodied in the statements of stance made early in the life of the Project. Within such a framework we should adopt flexible forms of working which enable us to respond to changing situations and to the needs of individual young people."

The project to some may appear to have sold its soul by continuing to uphold certain structures. Certainly these structures are highly dangerous in the way they can pervert our perceptions about our purpose, and the criteria we use to judge ourselves. The longer structures persist and the more new workers become involved, the more inevitably a project becomes identified with those structures. On the other hand there are many pulls away from too formalised an approach: continual contact with harassed and unhappy young people, the midnight crisis of eviction, the use of crashpads, the continued expectations of friendship from

young people who have known the workers over years — all such help to balance the structured approach. Most of all, some of the harrowing encounters between young people and workers have kept us from forgetting that we are alongside not 'clients' but fellow human beings.

To others we seem to have too little structure and appear woolly, inefficient, paradoxical, idealistic or crazy. To the extent that we do appear to be insufficiently structured, we hope that this means we have retained some of the values we believe to be important.

"The City Centre Project can never be a tidy, coherent project. There are so many diverse spin offs from it, so many different pulls on us as workers. It would be unhelpful, I feel, to attempt to tidy it up too much, to reduce the complexity or confusion, because this is a reasonable reflection of the environment in which we work."

CHAPTER SEVEN

"The unintelligibility of the experience and behaviour of the diagnosed person is created by the person diagnosing him, as well as by the person diagnosed. This stratagem seems to serve specific functions within the structure of the system in which it occurs."

R.D. Laing : The Obvious

Once the Project set up a structure it became seen as an agency like all the rest. The expectations were that it would behave like other agencies. There is a cosiness about the agency world: it fosters the us/them stereotype in an alarming way. "We workers" refer "clients" to each other, discussing their idiosyncrasies and inadequacies as we go, and freely putting in our own perceptions and prejudices as well. In spite of the ethic of confidentiality, social workers are prepared to an alarming degree to disclose confidences about their clients. In a recent survey by David Brandon* researchers rang 16 different social workers and probation officers and were given full information over the phone about 12 clients. There was no check on the identity of the person telephoning with the query. The author remarked:

"My main feeling is that the confidentiality debate does not arise from a great respect for people's privacy. Confidentiality is much more of a banner for increased power and status. Social workers will give information quite freely unless their own position and decisions are undermined and then the confidentiality portcullis is conveniently pulled down."

The workers have felt it important to avoid becoming involved in the kind of gossipy paternalism which prevails, as they explained in their 1974 Report:

"In order to obtain the confidence of young people, detached workers try to avoid association with any authority structure which might be regarded with suspicion by the young people themselves. Rather than a technique, *project workers have felt this to be an important* principle. *They see the usefulness of detached work as the alignment of resources alongside young people, rather than as another method of social work. This has been an ongoing dilemma, since there is continual pressure for the project to become merely an extension of the social work machine. The workers have often had to adopt a somewhat isolationist stance — refusing to share information in the accepted social work*

*David Brandon: "Clients have a right to hope for better privacy than this", Community Care, 23.4.75.

sense — in order to safeguard this principle. It means, too, that workers are keen to draw out and understand how young people themselves perceive situations, rather than to participate in social work analyses of individuals and groups."

It may be highly important to meet with other groups to discuss issues related to homelessness. How does one avoid this becoming an analysis of the shortcomings of individuals?

"There was one meeting where this was raised. It was really quite explicit. The next item on the agenda was a discussion of shared problem people and how we could ensure that they weren't allowed to do the round of the agencies represented at the meeting. Conning was to be discussed, and individuals allocated to a single group for help. I felt very strongly at that time that it was wrong, that I wouldn't get involved in this, wouldn't have gone if I had known... I have always felt particularly strongly about people who are homeless, they are so disorganised and unorganised, that they have little or no power to say no to this, because its going on over their heads, whereas in community work there are many more checks — articulate groups who ask what the hell are you doing as a community worker. But with single homeless people — they are isolated themselves, and they are of course so much more easily exploited."

This is not always an easy stance to adopt: workers become exposed to criticisms of being isolationist or morally pompous. Neither is easy to handle, particularly when one may be feeling exposed and uncertain anyway because of the nature of the happenings around one.

"The things which are important to me now and which encourage me to call myself a detached worker are the ways in which I see myself relating to particular social work and other institutional authorities. The attempt, not always successful, to resist colluding with them and drawing in on a close social work network. I want to avoid that network and not take part in the sharing of information about people which is such a prevalent feature of it. Often when the phone rings or a social worker drops in (whom I may know and like) I feel intensely pressurised to be co-operative and helpful, yet the ideal still remains. I was talking to Mary the other day, a worker from another agency, and she was vary confused about our position. She says' and rightly, that she feels that we are not very happy with her agency, and that she dosen't understand why at all, when it is in a practical way very useful. She says she thinks we are isolationist, and I said that Ithought this was a value. This had come the day after her boss had rung me to say she wanted to set up a group that co-ordinated the activities of people working with homeless single young people, to which I reacted badly, said I wasn't very interested really. I think Mary had heard of this, was wondering why, so I started talking about how I see isolationism as something of a virtue, not being seen as colluding, not wanting to share information, not worrying if kids are conning the agencies (because of the reverse pressure, amongst agencies, to manipulate their clients and make sure they are not conned). But there is an awful lot of pressure to move away from that position, because it is quite isolated. Anyway, I guess that I would like to be closer to people like Mary, whom I like personally."

It is much easier to succumb to the temptation to join the 'agency' world, to accept the assumption that what one is doing is right, useful and good. Indeed,

there is a trend among some detached workers, as with some youth workers, to emphasise that they are 'professionals' and should be accepted as such. Some detached workers complain that their status vis a vis the police or some other bodies is not as great as that of social workers, that their judgments are not accepted as valid, and that they are considered inferior to other 'professionals'. Such a stance aims for increased contact and liaison with other bodies in order to enhance the prestige of the worker and guarantee his credibility and authority. To hold out against the 'network' is an implicit judgment of that system, and thus arouses much hostility and suspicion. It is hard for workers to maintain such a fringe position when they also find themselves coping with problems of isolation and marginality within the world of the homeless too.

However, if you are to continue to try and align your resources alongside young people to help them achieve what they perceive to be important, then you must treat them as responsible individuals and risk the wrath of 'colleagues' at your apparently unsophisticated and unprofessional championing of the client, sometimes against the explicit policy of another agency or institution.

The London worker, for example, took up the case of a girl who was sentenced to spend an indefinite time in the locked ward of a mental hospital as a result of being brought before a court on a soliciting charge. Other workers shared her alarm about the implications of this sentence, and this involved her in working against the objectives of another established agency.

"We talked a lot today about Doreen's position in hospital. Her situation really seems to me to exemplify the things Szasz says about the transition in thinking from seeing people as criminal to seeing them as mentally ill. This apparent and much heralded example of progress is accompanied by a drastic reduction of the individual's rights in a situation. So Doreen has relatively little power over her position in the hospital. She will be released when she is able to 'behave' acceptably. In contrast, a prison sentence is at least explicitly punitive and clearly limited, certainly in cases like Doreen's (perhaps a few months at most?). In terms of her own self image I really feel that she would be less harmed by continuing her life as an occasional prostitute than by being confined in this grim, locked hospital ward. The sense of depression really hits you when you enter the place. I don't know what they see themselves as trying to achieve. There is no apparent 'therapy' except being locked in the ward itself. At the moment, until Doreen can prove she is 'trustworthy' she is not allowed to leave the ward at all. What is the purpose of this kind of restriction?"

"In this case I think the view of P (another agency) became more open to me, and I tend to feel that sometimes their own feelings about attempting to prevent people from getting into and stagnating in the West End network are carried too far... The initial reaction of Kate (a worker there) was to say 'I think she's lucky she got into hospital, she could have got a lengthy prison sentence; and even if you help her and she's discharged, she'll only come back to the same old scene all over again.' I feel angry at this kind of reasoning. I have no faith in the hospital to help Doreen except to give her a bigger chip and make her a further outcast in trying to get her to conform to all the rules and regulations of their own definition of normality, without responding to and feeding her basic needs and instincts. She wants love and security and in trying to get that she's called a criminal. Not only that but she's put into a

hospital for an indefinite period where the decision to discharge her is completely arbitrary and rests on one man. I don't have any faith in Kate to fight for Doreen's rights to make her own choices both in her life-style and in the way which she requests help. For I don't believe that detaining someone where the old habits are forcibly inaccessible solves any problems for that person. I think they have to make that choice themselves, otherwise the forces of prevention can make the attraction even stronger. Doreen spends all day wondering when she'll be discharged or transferred so can't use the time there creatively and resents everyone there and the group sessions they do occasionally have. I think that maybe the need to protect a person, in this case Kate's, overrides Doreen's need for assistance in making her own real choice. For I can see, and have found this myself, that it's sometimes incredibly difficult to see a person continually getting into trouble without wanting to protect them from it, but how far can you protect someone, and is that protection only putting your own views onto someone else and in so doing defining what they should and shouldn't experience?"

The freedom given to two workers to move around the country has enabled the Project to see young people in more than one geographical/social context. We have been frightened by the way in which doctors, social workers and helping agencies of various kinds will often make far-reaching judgments and diagnoses about young people on the basis of one or two meetings.

"A probation officer phoned me today about Kim, who had been picked up on a minor stealing charge in a town a couple of hundred miles away. He had been asked to do a report on her, and had met her whilst she was in custody. I was amazed to find that because she was technically 'of no fixed abode' he was recommending that she should serve a prison sentence rather than probation. This, he felt, would enable him to get to know her better and perhaps help her on release. She had insisted that he phone me, but he had clearly got an impression of her as a vagrant of some kind, and was unwilling to be swayed by anything I said. The fact that she has been resident in Manchester for a couple of years now, and was homeless because she had just left a living-in job, plus my assurances that we could help her get a flat here where she has friends, made no difference to him: he had made up his mind... (Eventually she went to prison, not because her offence justified it, but because a man who didn't even know her had chosen to see her in a particular way.)"

Although contact is transitory and fragmentary, nevertheless there is a marked tendency for agencies to assume that because a young person asks for help, or has got into temporary difficulties, he is therefore basically inadequate. The implications of this are taken to be that his perceptions of life are unrealistic, his description of his past and present situation is suspect, and his ability to make decisions is almost non-existent.

Why should seeking help mean that a young person must give up his rights over himself or his self-image? In theory he is free to make choices, yet in practice, faced by a passive client, professional workers will often arrogate to themselves the power to make crucial decisions on his behalf. This passivity may arise from a number of causes: the client may have an exaggerated faith in the worker's professional skills; he may be depressed and tired; he may be unpractised in handling the dynamics of the social work situation; he may be merely timid and unassertive. None of these is a reason why he should be deemed unfit to make

valid choices or express realistic opinions about his future. Yet workers will often make unfair, and no doubt unconscious, use of their social, verbal and personal skills (as well as their professional 'knowledge' and status) to bulldoze clients into courses of action which are often unacceptable and damaging to them. A cry for help is not an abnegation of personal responsibility; indeed, it is frequently the very opposite — a plea for support and acknowledgment of eroding self-esteem.

Given this kind of experience, therefore, is it any wonder that young people steer clear of social workers? This reinforces the need for the detached worker at all costs to try and preserve his grounding in the world of the young people, in order to use his sensitivity and knowledge to help them counter manipulations to which they are mutely opposed.

"I'd just like to be left alone", Paul muttered as he sat like a collapsed paper bag in one of those futuristic green swivel chairs. There was a nervous laugh as we surveyed the vista of the city from his probation officer's office. 'Left alone', — such a response was clearly out of order, not an answer to the question at all... Paul simply wilts in a torrent of well intentioned advice and concern. But, though he says hardly a word and sits with his head buried, he nonetheless even wilts defiantly, and will not agree to a suggested change of residence. What do I do if I am to abide by the adage 'I am here only to help you achieve what you define as important and acceptable'? Put like that it sounds flippant and somewhat trite — is it anything more than naive? And what does it mean in this concrete situation? To ask to be left alone could be the ultimate cop out, the final refusal to take any responsibility for oneself. And yet, I'm still not convinced. Anyway, in the here and now I react spontaneously and pick up the only comment that Paul makes with any feeling throughout the whole discussion. I see the task in simplistic terms — how do I help Paul resist the move to the therapeutic community (which the court requires) without seeing him fall foul of the thinly disguised threat of some penal alternative if he refuses? I push the need for his move to be a voluntary one: a forced decision would be detrimental not only to Paul but also the community itself. Paul picks up the drift of the argument: of course he will consider the move, he will visit the house, and if he feels it is the right thing for him of course he will move there. But all this exploration he will do from the security of his flat. The probation officer, though not happy, sees he can get no further, and the compromise is reached... But is Paul's desire to be left alone a cop out rather than a struggle? The temptation to shake him by the shoulders, to bully him, to bribe him to take a greater care for himself is compelling. Ultimately, however, I tentatively conclude that Paul still justifies the view of detached work as some kind of guarantee of the right of an individual to be left alone. I see the pressure on him from various bodies working in all good faith to destroy the quality which in fact holds him together and ensures him a future — his stubborn, unreasonable pride. It can be shown, I think, in Paul's situation that all these agencies in fact overlook the almost imperceptible, yet nonetheless vital, progress to some intensely felt personal goals that motivates his day to day experience. Potentially, the detached work idea — with its commitment to 'helping you (the 'client') to achieve what you define as important and acceptable' - is a valuable corrective to other evangelising brands of social intervention - be they political, religious, or alternative in their ultimate commitment."

There are other seductive features about the agency world; features which make you feel needed and which seem to justify your existence. If you once accept the legitimacy of the close agency network immediately you find yourself pressurised to act as an intermediary between your client and other agencies.

"There seems to be a two-tier hierarchy in that many agencies are now the middle and negotiating factor between claimant and government office and the claimant seems to have little contact, groundwork, himself to do to get what he's entitled to. This may be all right on one level but he's still being used on another. Consequently I'm unhappy with the way that the homeless single person has little, if any, say or contribution to make to what is being done in his name — both in contact with government departments, and in the whole field of pressure groups/agencies campaigning for different facilities for the single homeless person."

This is often justified on the grounds of the 'client's inadequacy' to handle these matters himself, yet such a system increases inadequacy, encourages the proliferation of agencies which 'process' clients and reduces the pressure on other bodies, with resources to dispose of, to actually confront and grapple with the living needs of those whom they are supposed to be helping. The Project, therefore, has had to face the dilemma of how to respond to this situation and how the values it claims to embrace should determine its response.

"It has meant the rejection of attempts to use the Project as a 'filter' between young people and statutory agencies. Key agencies often rely upon other agencies to select or approve 'deserving' clients for assistance. In the case of an agency like Social Security it is clearly extremely tempting to accept this role, because of the short term benefits. Yet ultimately such 'behind the counter' approaches mean that young people receive differential treatment on the basis of their backing or lack of backing from some other agency. The Project strongly argues against social work practices of this kind, since they encourage dependence rather than independence on the part of 'clients' and, perhaps more importantly, blur the distinction between 'rights' and 'favours'."

One way of trying to avoid the power/agency/dependence problem is to involve young people themselves in the work of the project. This seems an obvious corollary of the Project's basic values, and yet it has had surprisingly little importance in the way the Project has operated. Informally the concepts of self-help and mutual help have been very potent, particularly in the area of worker/young people relationships and in some of the groups with which workers became involved and where they met young people on common ground (e.g. People Not Psychiatry). Yet in formal terms the project has done little to incorporate young people into decision-making processes. Why is this? A classic case of double-think, perhaps?

"E: Do you remember the meeting when I asked Bernard a really naive question deliberately. I said, "Why don't we let the people who come down here run the Basement then we could be free to go off and do things" and at first he just laughed and said "That's a silly question", but then in the end he answered and said what I wanted him to say, what I expected he'd say, which was that there were always emergencies arising and we don't know that they would be capable of handling them — there are only certain people who can be trusted to deal with an emergency.

K: Yes — well, I think that's being responsible.

E: Yes. So there's the basic difference — we think, or assume, that we ourselves are responsible; if an emergency arises we will drop everything else and get on with it, and we are also assuming that the others will not. But the thing is that it is a sort of dialectical thing because if we assume people have not got responsibility, we don't give it to them, so they don't get responsibility...

K: Yet we are as imperfect as anybody else who goes down to the Basement, and I think we've got to record that..."

The issue was further raised soon after the Project moved from the Basement to new offices and had acquired two new workers, one of whom particularly wanted to involve young people in the running of the information service. She felt this to be an important concept which was fundamental to the ethos of such a service, not only from the point of view of values but also in terms of usefulness and resources. It was also tied, however, to the quality v. quantity debate, and the argument over the importance of the information service within the work of the Project as a whole.

"Often in discussion with young people in the office they have criticised its restricted publicity and therefore availability and sometimes the quality of info on tap — and how they'd be better at some aspects... At first we should consider having two of us on duty at a time to be prepared to cope should there be a big increase in enquiries — and think of enlisting volunteers (the young people themselves) so that we could then withdraw from that level of commitment to sitting in the office."

The experiment, however, was not a success. Two young people volunteered to help in the office, but within a few weeks one was banned (an unprecedented and alien procedure) for using his position to exploit his fellow volunteer and others who used the office. Indeed, these incidents precipitated a crisis for workers in the Project: never before had such an extreme situation arisen within the office, in which there were so many conflicting loyalties and responsibilities, and which even involved the painful (and, to one worker at least, traumatic) sanction of threatening to involve the police. Nor was the situation quickly resolved, and in the months that followed the idea of using young people as volunteers died an almost unnoticed death.

The major reason for this was the unfortunate aftermath of the first attempt; but that in itself cannot be regarded as the sole reason. An important argument in the initial discussion had been that there was no identifiable 'client' group, with particular interests and loyalties, and that to try and create one would be contrary to the principles of the Project.

"How does one embody self-help principles in an environment which is essentially isolationist, and made up of extremely diverse individuals who might see themselves as having little in common?"

In this situation a few forceful and articulate individuals may come to the fore and be highly resented by other young people, whom they may even alienate. This is a problem if one is trying to contact and help young people who are distrustful and vulnerable. How do you form a core of committed and trustworthy volunteers when most of the young people are erratically homeless, constantly moving, subject to extreme pressure and harassment from a number of quarters, personally insecure, sometimes lacking in basic skills such as literacy, and finding personal survival a ceaseless day to day battle? The use of people who have been

through this experience may be vital, but to involve those in the midst of the tumult may be unrealistic.

How does one involve consumers responsibly in the working of such a project? The sanction upon workers is that they are required to do a particular job and account for the way they do it. Failure to satisfy the requirements would lead to loss of job and possible inability to find another similar one. What kind of sanctions operate to ensure a volunteer does the job satisfactorily? If he is a member of a strong group or community then the fear of losing status and favour with his fellows is probably the most important; he may well see himself as a representative of that group, fighting to ensure a better deal for them. But this kind of sanction does not operate in the kind of field in which the City Centre Project operates. There are no 'representative' young people, no strong groups with common feeling, few ties. This does not mean that there are not young people who are responsible and who are prepared to put in hours of routine work at the office purely on an altruistic basis. What it does mean is that workers, who feel (and officially are) ultimately responsible for what goes on, must face the difficulty of ensuring that someone does not exploit the situation and then wander off. And there is no clear answer to that dilemma.

This is a problem which is again arising as the Project at present is using a wide range of volunteers (including young people who have been consumers) to maintain its service. There must be a point at which some effort is made to 'vet' potential volunteers — to ensure that their contribution will be positive and not harmful. Perhaps this means undertaking a course of training, and spending some time doing a shift with a worker. The tension then arises again: the element of 'professionalism', of 'us' and 'them' seems inevitable as a safeguard to protect young people using the service.

Yet, whilst emphasising that anyone who undertakes a 'worker' role must be prepared to see that there are demands and constraints associated with that role, it is important to ensure that young people who do this are not encouraged simply to "ape the professionals". We need to recognise the particular and different qualities, experience and wisdom which young people who have been homeless themselves can bring to the helping relationship, and to work *from that basis* to an understanding of their role. This should not be an inferior or second-class role, but one which stands alongside the role of the trained outsider and enters into dialogue with it.

The Manpower Services Commission Job Creation scheme is one way of introducing this kind of dialectic into youth, community and social work settings. It falls beyond the time-scale of this report, but the City Centre Project has now employed three young people under this scheme, and hopefully this will provide another perspective upon the work of the project. There is always the danger that such appointments result simply in a process of 'bourgeouisification'; on the other hand, such is the structure of the Trust, they could give some real power into the hands of these young people and avoid the elements of 'tokenism' potentially present in the use of volunteers.

The Youth Development Trust has a structure which gives considerable responsibility to workers. At one time decision-making was in the hands of the Trust, informed by Advisory Committees which were set up for individual projects. During the lifetime of the City Centre Project, however, this structure was altered. As the number of projects operated by the Trust grew, it became

clear that Trust members could not expect to be sufficiently informed on all of them to be able to make relevant decisions.

After lengthy discussions the Trust decided to devolve most of its decision-making functions to Project Management Committees, made up of all the workers and several 'lay' members, plus a Trust representative. This had two important effects: for the first time workers became part of the decision-making process (they also became at this time eligible for Trust membership); and the potential for grass roots involvement became greater. Indeed, the Trust made it clear that it expected projects to investigate the feasibility of client representation on the Project Management Committees, though the form of this was never laid down, since projects differed radically.

"This structure offers considerable flexibility to the Trust in terms of both the range and number of projects it can attempt; and it has several advantages in the actual working situation of a project. Of prime importance is that it locates decision-making close to the actual area of operation — amongst people already committed to the solution of the particular problems posed, either through their employment, their interests, or their actual life situation as 'clients'. This is also a potentially more supportive situation for workers than within the Trust as a whole... The form in which the interests of 'clients' can be put forward must vary according to projects — in some cases an actual 'client' could be invited, in another someone who has experienced the same situation as 'clients' at some earlier stage in his life, in another a representative of the community from which 'clients' are drawn."

The City Centre Project Management Committee was comprised of a number of people with interests and knowledge which were seen to be relevant to the task of guiding the Project; the director of courses in youth and community work, a Welfare Rights officer, a worker from a voluntary group which had close contact with older single homeless people, a 'client representative' who had experienced a period of homelessness and drifting within the West End of London, and an experienced detached worker, as well as the project workers themselves.

This was the group which was responsible for deciding the appropriate courses of action for the project, guiding and supporting the workers.

"The Project Management Committee should be seen not as a body designed to curb and control the actions of the workers, but as a group taking collective responsibility for the process of defining problem areas and applying resources to maximum effect within this area."

The City Centre Project workers felt this to be a particularly important emphasis. They should not be masquerading as friends of young people if they were in reality puppets of the authority structures which young people felt to be alien, hostile and oppressive. The Trust gave the responsibility for selecting PMC members to the Project Leader, with the proviso that it should vet these members to ensure that a viable support and accountability group had been formed. So long as the group could be seen to be representative and responsible, the Trust was satisfied. This meant there was no imposition of members from outside. PMC members could therefore be selected on the basis of their understanding of the needs of homeless young people, their sympathy with the objectives of the project, and their knowledge of areas relevant to its work.

The importance which the PMC placed upon its independence can be seen in one particular issue which arose halfway through the life of the Project. The local

Social Services Department requested representation upon the PMC, in addition to representation upon the Trust Main Committee which had already been agreed. This was a move which the PMC strongly resisted, in spite of the problems it caused for the Trust as a whole. A representative of Social Services on the PMC was seen to threaten the whole way in which the Project worked and the relationship and trust it had struggled to establish.

"The Project Management Committee and workers evolved a style of operation which enabled workers to make contact with clients in a way that did not preclude the possibility of continuing relationships. This style has become the kingpin of the project and has involved workers in personal relationships with clients with the expressed aim of avoiding any similarity with the more authoritative approaches of counsellor, caseworker, voluntary helper, etc. (A crucial observation of the target group is its universal rejection of more established institutions of social aid, which though reflecting to some extent the inadequacies of these institutions far more illuminates a deeply entrenched distrust of officialdom to the point of active avoidance, however appropriate the proffered help might be.) In order to anticipate rejection, workers have chosen where possible to avoid all the existing agencies to which particular clients might conceivably have been referred for specific assistance (viz. hospital service, mental welfare, penal and probation, accommodation agencies, etc.) with a view to understanding the clients' abhorrence of structures which are ostensibly appropriate to their needs... After considerable discussion throughout numerous meetings the PMC has concluded that representation would create intense difficulties from which it is felt the work of the project and in particular the delicate relationships on which the project hinges could suffer."

Moreover, it was a backward step — away from client representation towards more control by established institutions.

"Issues like Social Services representation on the PMC are not simply a political game. They are all about questions of power and control. Who, for instance, controls what goes on in the project — the usual power blocks or the consumers? The trend I hope will be towards increasing the strength of the voice of the consumer on the PMC rather than the voice of authority. If we lose the fight over Social Services representation I think it will be perhaps a final blow to the detached work approach and that it will have a direct effect on the relationships we make with young people. It is a fight to be able to continue to operate in a structural sense outside the established power blocks."

It was a fight which the City Centre Project eventually won, when it agreed to the establishment of a liaison contact located in one of the Social Services Department's area offices. Through meeting with this official — outside regular PMC meetings — it was felt that the Department would be kept informed of the work of the Project and this would enable the Department to receive and comment upon the Project's experience of issues relating to Social Services work.

Would such representation have threatened fundamentally the stance of the Project? It could be argued that it is the worker's own personal integrity which is of prime importance to the young person, and certainly this is a vital element in the relationships he makes. But can he retain that integrity if his loyalties are torn in a dozen different directions? How can he operate if meaningful power lies with

a committee which is aeons away from the young people who are his concern (such as the member of a Drug Liaison Committee who had never met a drug-dependent young person)? How can he counter the allegation that he is merely some kind of subversive, manipulative infiltrator from the other side, if not merely his money comes from 'them' but he is actually directly responsible to 'them'? We cannot ask detached workers to fragment themselves yet more. Either their job is explicitly one of social control, or else we tell them they should be concerned with meeting the needs of young people and then give the money and the power into the hands of people who will help them do just that.

What is required is a group who are willing to take risks and who are willing to carry the can if things go wrong (not a notable feature of bureaucrats). The Trust structure is of this kind, and such a structure gives considerable freedom to workers.

As the truism goes, with freedom goes responsibility. Workers can no longer pass the buck, or expect their decisions to be made for them. Nobody should imagine that this degree of worker power is a very enviable one. It allows workers to do the job as they really believe it should be done, but it exposes them still further in the process. If your job is not strictly laid down, letter by letter, but is open to negotiation with other workers and the Project Management Committee then the pressure to justify what you do becomes even more intense. In a sense you cannot win, for you can never expect to be perfect, to always do the right things, to make the right decisions, to respond in the right way. Yet most people can accept the limited nature of their 'success' by blaming 'the system'. If the decisions are as much yours as anybody else's and there is no external 'system', then you must learn to live with the partial, the fragmentary, and the incomplete; you must come to terms with your fallibility and 'less than success' and not in the process become defeatist and nihilistic.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"At worst, one is in motion; and at best,
Reaching no absolute, in which to rest,
One is always nearer by not keeping still."

Thom Gunn : On the Move

This brief description of particular issues which have arisen in the course of working with homeless young people has by no means been exhaustive. We have attempted to distil some essential points out of a complex and untidy situation. In so doing we have necessarily simplified arguments and processes, though we hope this has not been to the extent of rendering them meaninglessly simplistic.

We are aware, too, that issues cannot be contained in neat frameworks: they overlap upon each other. We are also aware that the detached worker may, in the midst of the complexity of daily incidents, feel that his pragmatic, practical response is light years away from some of the general principles we have discussed. How, for example, does violence affect the relationship between worker and young person? What does his alignment with young people imply for the worker's situation vis a vis the law?

These kinds of issues are the sort of practical ones which hit detached workers hard. It could be argued that it is all very well to have airy-fairy views about relationships, but what relevance have these to the day to day experience of the worker? The level of abstraction at which we have handled many of our arguments should not be taken to mean that we have not had to face these practical difficulties. Indeed, it was the very multiplicity of these problems which reinforced the feeling that workers could not react in an ad hoc, pragmatic fashion, but needed general principles around which they could organise their reflections on what was happening.

How, therefore, does the worker react to violence? If his perspective is essentially non-violent, how does he cope with the aggressive young person? Does he withdraw behind certain barriers, knowing that to do so may emphasise the isolation which may lie at the root of the young person's anger? Is it justified to feel angry oneself, or to allow a fight to break out?

"The point I am trying to make is that sometimes a fight clears the air and is the quickest solution, with even some creative effects to that kind of situation. The other point I am making is a feeling one. When Frank came for me in the office I felt real anger that this person whom I'd tried to help for so long and who had just shit on me in return had the nerve to take out his hangups on me in such a public fashion. It was the final straw. I suppose I'd been helping Frank for so long whilst really wanting to shake him up and return in kind the type of aggressive bullying he had been handing out to other people. One never knew with Frank whether he was going to hit you for what you did or not. It seemed so unnecessarily exhausting living with this tension whilst in his company. What right had he to threaten people in such a fashion? The irritation must have built up over the months and chosen that moment to explode. This underlines the failure of my type of contact with Frank. I should have faced the violence right at the beginning instead of trying to bypass it and await its outbreak like an animal slowly proceeding to the slaughter house. I should have taken the initiative and evolved a different style of relationship. I suppose cowardice played its part in this relationship because I am not normally a fighting person and feel mostly disgust as well as fear where violence occurs."

Indeed, the direction of violence towards a worker can provoke very primitive feelings, which threaten the whole basis of his relationship with a young person. The demand for 'gratitude for what I have done for you', for instance, is the kind of gut reaction which is understandable and perhaps inevitable, but which ought to bring the worker up short. As a studied viewpoint it is indefensible: it smells of "crumbs from the rich man's table", of charity, rather than a genuine acceptance of the young person. But violence does that kind of thing to you, and calls into question all you are trying to be and do. The worker's position as 'marginal man' makes him ripe for attack.

Violence, therefore, may be less important as a physical happening than in the way it affects relationships and responses. If the worker can remain rooted in his understanding of the young person as person, and of the pressures of the environment in which he lives, then he stands a chance of positively countering the destructive elements within the situation. By saying this we are not trying to sidestep the issue of violence, but simply to reiterate that in exploring its day to day implications a framework of values is crucial.

Similarly, problems of legality press hard upon the detached worker. Inevitably he finds himself alongside some young people who are 'outside the law' — if he cannot accept this as a fact of life then he will have severe problems. The detached worker clearly cannot act as a representative of law and order — to do so would totally invalidate what he is trying to do. He cannot worry over every case of petty shoplifting which he hears about: his job, after all, is concerned with issues more fundamental than minor infringements of the law. He is more likely to be concerned about the way in which society tempts young people into illegality by its own materialistic emphases, and then polarises the situation by labelling them criminal. He will be trying to discourage young people from illegal acts, knowing that they jeopardise their own futures; he will perhaps give the runaway a bed for the night so that he can talk seriously about what he is going to do; he may have to use his own personal resources to prevent crimes of violence.

We would suggest that if the detached worker is serious about his commit-

ment to young people then he has to grapple with the problems of illegality largely outside the structures of society which have been set up to deal with them. He cannot ignore or condone acts outside the law — the consequences for the young person are too serious. Yet our experience is that homeless young people are 'outside the law' in a more fundamental sense than simply that some of them may sometimes contravene the law. They are also outside its protection. In facing the issue of illegality the detached worker has to add this fact to the analysis of what he should do. We have found that not only do 'fringe' young people not enjoy the kind of protection the law is supposed to afford, e.g. from eviction, from harassment, but they are also easy targets for police corruption and police brutality. In a very real sense they do not benefit from the system of law and order which is supposed to prevail in this country: is it really so surprising that that system is regarded by them with some cynicism? The force with which this has struck us, and the incontrovertible evidence we have had of the partiality of the law, reinforce for us the need for the detached worker to find his values and stick to them, rather than looking for externally imposed rules about what he should do.

Such issues, and others like them, spring from the kind of view of detached work which the project has developed. We have tried to show how this concept of detached work — seen as a value stance rather than a technique of working — has developed in the particular setting of homeless young people. This situation has been an extreme one, and therefore it has heightened some of the detached work dilemmas. Nevertheless, we believe our experience has relevance for others who call themselves detached workers, or who are concerned with helping young people who do not readily accept help from statutory sources. Moreover, we hope we have something to say to people who are working within conventional frameworks, in particular about their relationship with homeless and other 'marginal' people. The frustration/ambivalence we feel towards 'straight' bodies is, after all, only an echo of that felt by young people themselves.

We would not wish to imply that we have lived up to all the ideals we have set ourselves. The project has been littered with short-sighted reactions, impulsive gestures, partial responses. Nevertheless, these values have remained an irritant, a talking point, a thermometer with which we have tested our reactions.

As we have tried to show, there are no clear answers to many of the problems faced by detached workers. The worker is often in the position where the best he can do is choose the lesser evil. Just as detached work has great potential as a means of becoming creatively involved with young people, so it has commensurate dangers. We do not believe these dangers undermine the concept of detached work, but we do believe that the worker cannot operate without a highly critical and sensitive awareness of them. To demand of a worker that he be self-conscious and restive about what he is doing may appear to be adding yet another burden to someone who is already overstretched. Yet this must be part of the detached work role: indeed, the worker who is complacent about his role, values and actions is probably evading the core of the detached work problem.

Detached work cannot be seen as simply another job along the professional spectrum. If detached work practitioners approach it in that light then they will do great disservice to the concept. To be effective and creative, rather than subversive and dishonest, it demands of the worker a degree of commitment which is beyond that of a normal job. It becomes a way of life. The worker will

find it difficult to compartmentalise his life so that work and leisure are distinct entities. Nor can he imagine that his experience alongside young people can be kept apart from his experience as citizen, parent, human being, or whatever. If he is to allow himself to be at the point of conflict between young people and society then the values and attitudes from both worlds will battle for his attention and require some kind of resolution from him.

We are not suggesting that the detached worker's task is world-shattering or of mythic proportions. Nevertheless, for him personally, the dimensions of his task and its impact upon his life may appear immense.

"On the credit side it has broadened my outlook considerably. I have been baptised in fire, as it were, and learned my strengths and weaknesses in testing situations. It has shown the hollow nature of theory in human situations, for it is intuitive, pure, uncomplicated love that saves the day. It has left me high and dry in a world where few concepts still exist. It has shown me the universality of suffering whether it be social worker or client — I fail to see the distinction any more. It has taught me the value of shared experience, of laughter, and of the dangers of misguided intervention in another person's life no matter how well intentioned. On the debit side (but in my case who can say what is credit or debit for it is all experience) it has brought me depression and incalculable sadness. It has emotionally and physically exhausted me to such an extent that I am still bearing the wounds... On balance, however, it is an experience I wouldn't have missed for the world."

Moreover, if the worker is to undertake a job which has such effects, then he must see those effects as worthwhile for him personally, rather than as some kind of threat.

"I can't really speak for anyone else and I'm only just beginning myself to understand a little clearer just what I have gained as a result and development from that short time. Somehow I would like to draw the incredibly positive aspects for both workers and clients from the experience as it happened."

With such demands, the most relevant question about detached work may be — is it worth doing? It may appear from previous chapters that we somehow regard detached work as a universal panacea. We would very hastily wish to correct such an impression. We are not interested in saturating the world with detached workers, nor are we interested in arguing about definitions of the label detached work. We have used the theme of detached work in this booklet for a number of reasons: firstly, because our project was grounded in the tradition of detached work; secondly, because we felt some of the assumptions underlying detached work required explanation; and thirdly, because such elucidation offered challenges to us about what we were doing.

Detached work is about people on the fringes of society, and in so far as it directs commitment and resources towards those people we believe it has validity. It is difficult for that validity to be externally verified — the concept of success is almost meaningless since essentially we are talking about some qualitative process which it is hard to evaluate. The term 'success' is one we find impossible to apply to any of the situations in which we have been involved, mainly because we have never been satisfied with the outcome for the young person. One could relatively easily quantify the number of flats we have found, yet how can one count as success the finding of a dirty, ill-furnished and exorbitantly priced attic for a young person? Failure, on the other hand, is all too apparent.

Intellectually you can appreciate that it is the economic situation, or the housing market, which is to blame, but emotionally the feeling of failure can become a personal one. Perhaps that is why relationships are so important — in a world of failure both workers and young people need to grasp something which they can recognise as intrinsically worthwhile.

To say, however, that detached work is worth doing is insufficient. What we would wish to defend are the values about which we have been talking, rather than a species of youth worker called 'detached'. The danger of enthusiastically embracing the idea of detached work is that it becomes institutionalised as a means of dealing with/doing our duty towards the marginal people in our society. Our response towards the awkward and alienated people can then be 'appoint a detached worker': this relieves us both of the duty of personal care and of dealing with the problem at its roots, namely in the way we organise ourselves in society.

Until, however, we show more willingness to shoulder both these duties, the detached worker may remain an important irritant.

"Detached work is the area lying between, on the one hand, traditional social work and, on the other hand, ordinary community-conscious social contact."

The detached worker's contact with fringe young people makes him aware of the inadequacies of many of our institutions and structures. There is a real need for government intervention to remedy some of the appalling conditions which face young people, particularly in the areas of housing and employment. Yet, whilst emphasising the need for governmental initiatives, we would not wish to see ordinary people placing upon the state the total responsibility for caring for homeless young people. Our perspective is that the institutionalisation of care is something which reduces the humanity not only of those involved in the process, but also of the society which allows it to happen. Our experience of detached work is that it has revealed the need for more 'community-conscious social contact', rather than throwing upon professionals the duty of care which rests upon us all. Hopefully, detached workers can help to temper the 'professional' approach, and to keep alive the recognition that we cannot substitute diplomas for friendship, or bureaucracy for love.

FOOTNOTE

To produce a relevant and comprehensive bibliography for this book would be difficult. If you asked each worker on the Project to compile one then you would get an immense range of material, from great works of philosophy on one hand to specific articles on social work practice on the other. So we have chosen instead to point readers to a few books which we have found relevant and/or stimulating, and to suggest readily accessible sources of more general information.

The detached work 'classics' are, of course,

MORSE, M (1965) The Unattached, *Penguin Books*

GOETSCHIUS, G and TASH, J (1967) Working with Unattached Youth, *Routledge and Kegan Paul*

The Youth Development Trust has been associated with three publications which specifically look at the practice of detached work. The first two are accounts of action-research projects mounted by the Trust, while the third discusses particular problems associated with detached work.

SMITH, C.S., FARRANT, M.R. and MARCHANT, H.J. (1972) The Wincroft Youth Project, *Tavistock Publications*

MARCHANT, H.J. and SMITH, H.C. (1977) Adolescent Girls at Risk, *Pergamon Press*

FARRANT, M.R. and MARCHANT, H.J. (1971) Making Contact with Unreached Youth, *Youth Development Trust.* Now republished as: Making Contact; a stage in the detached work process *(Youth Aid, 31a Torridon Road, Catford, London, S.E.6.*

Two accounts of work with young people in Liverpool are worth comparing and contrasting:

INCE, D. (1971) Contact, *Y.S.I.C. (now N.Y.B.)*

PARKER, H.J. (1974) View from the Boys, *David and Charles*

While there may be few examples of published accounts of detached work projects in Britain, there are innumerable annual reports, final write-ups, etc. which amply illustrate some of the dilemmas we have discussed. The majority of these are lodged with the National Youth Bureau in Leicester, which itself is involved (with Ken Marks) in a survey of detached work practice across the country.

As a basic text for those interested in the concept of role within the social work relationship we would recommend
RUDDOCK, R. (1969) Roles and Relationships, *Routledge and Kegan Paul*
(Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway *includes a fascinating literary view of the professional helping relationship.)*
Anyone interested in homelessness must be indebted to David Brandon for his numerous works on the subject, including
BRANDON, D. (1969) The Treadmill, *Christian Action Publications*
BRANDON, D. (1971) Selected Bibliography on Homelessness, *Christian Action Publications*
BRANDON, D. (1974) Guidelines to Research in Homelessness, *Christian Action Publications*
BRANDON, D. (1974) Homeless, *Sheldon Press*

An interesting account of an early project in the field of young homelessness is
TIMMS, N. (1968) Rootless in the City, *Bedford Square Press*

For up to date information on projects and issues within the field of homelessness contact (better still, become a member of) CHAR (The Campaign for the Homeless and Rootless), 27 Endell Street, London, W.C.2.

More parochially...
City Centre Project Annual Report *(1975/76) contains a selection of articles on issues raised by the project, an account of work with young people on the move between Glasgow/Manchester/London, and some personal accounts of young people in the fields of housing and employment (obtainable from the Youth Development Trust).*
The Youth Development Trust publishes Occasional Papers *on aspects of youth work. Annual subscription for statutory organisations is £3.50 and for voluntary organisations or individuals £3.00. Obtainable from the Youth Development Trust, 402 Moss Lane East, Manchester M14 4PX.*
One controversial issue throughout the life of the project has been the relationship between action and research. Elinor Kelly has written about this from her perspective as research worker (DAVIES, M. and KELLY, E. (1976) The Social Worker, the Client and the Social Anthropologist, *British Journal of Social Work, 6,2.) and other accounts will no doubt emerge in the future as this is a particular concern of the Youth Development Trust in all its projects.*
The whole subject of subjectivity v. objectivity which this inevitably involves is nicely written about in
HUDSON , L. (1974) The Cult of the Fact, *Jonathan Cape*

Community Action Projects Limited will shortly be publishing an account of two experimental housing schemes for homeless young people (reference to which was made in the text). Anyone interested should contact us at the address below.

Finally, we in no way see our writing as a final, dogmatic statement about detached work or the issues it raises. We expect our own views and ideas will develop through future experience. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to enter into communication with any readers of Borderlines *who would like to contact us. Our address is 38 Salisbury Street, Moss Side, Manchester 14.*