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A study of the effects of the war separation from the father on the problem child

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE WAR SEPARATION
FROM THE FATHER ON THE PROBLEM CHILD

A Thesis

Submitted by

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CHAPTER I
CONDITIONS OF THE STUDY

Purpose and Scope

This study will proceed on the assumption that there is a general recognition that the children who were separated from their fathers during World War II suffered more from the effects of the war than those children whose fathers remained at home. The fathers who were in the service brought about a disruption in family life which was abnormal and damaging to the wholesome growth of the children so that they did not have the best possible opportunities for their emotional development. ¹

The purpose of this study is to examine a group of cases in treatment at the Worcester Youth Guidance Center in which there was separation from the father involved to see what relationship the absence of the father has to the underlying problem. The group consists of thirty-five children who have been treated some time between January 1, 1949, and December 31, 1951. It is possible that many of these cases are still in treatment. The effect of the absence of the father on the mother and on the environment would also have some bearing on the problem of the child, so these factors will also be considered.

¹ Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, Young Children in War-Time, George Allen and Urwin, Ltd., London, 1942.

The presenting symptoms will be examined to determine whether there are any common factors among the symptoms.

In addition to determining the relationship of the separation of the father to the underlying problem of the child, it is hoped that this study will be able to offer some constructive conclusions which will prove helpful in future situations similar to those being studied here.

Sources of Data

The case material used in this study was selected from the active case files of Worcester Youth Guidance Center and will concern itself with only treatment cases which have been seen between January 1, 1949, and December 31, 1951.

Method of Procedure

The cases used in this study were all chosen from the active case file of the Worcester Youth Guidance Center. Only cases in treatment were selected for this study. The cases used were selected on the basis of separation from the father and age of the child. Originally the author had intended to use only those cases of children born in 1941 in order to make this a study of the effects of separation as seen in children at the age of ten; however, the number of cases available in this particular age group was inadequate for such a study. The cases of children born in 1941 and 1943 were added, bringing the total number of cases to thirty-five.

It was hoped that the case material in this particular age group would clearly bring out the effects of the separation around the period of birth, as these particular children were born around the time of the separation, and would also bring out the effects of the separation in their pre-school and early school years. The case material and diagnostic findings in each case were studied carefully to determine the effects of the separation from the father as can be seen in these children.

Limitations

The limitations of this study lie in the obvious lack of authenticity of the material in case recording and in the amount of subjectivity in the classification of the material. From case to case there will be found inconsistencies in amount and emphasis of recorded facts which may interfere with the validity of the generalizations. As this study is confined to a selected group of cases in one specific agency, the findings will refer only to the particular cases from which the facts were compiled.

Points Considered

It was hoped that a study of the case material and diagnostic findings in each case would bring an answer to some of the following questions:

What factors other than the absence of the father in the service do these cases have in common?

In what way did the father's absence influence the child's problem directly?

What were the indirect influences of the father's absence on the child's problem?

In what way did the father's return influence the child's problem directly?

What were the indirect effects of the father's return on the problem child?

What conclusions can be reached from the evidence found as to the effects of the separation from the father?

It is hoped that the evidence, as seen in these cases, will prove useful to case workers interested in this particular area.

CHAPTER II

THE AGENCY

This study was undertaken at the Worcester Youth Guidance Center. The Youth Guidance Center diagnoses and treats the behavior and personality disorders of emotionally-disturbed children. It offers diagnostic, treatment and consultation services to the interested parents and agencies in the greater Worcester area.

Diagnostic service involves the study of the child and his environment in order to interpret his behavior and make recommendations as to how he can be helped. The diagnosis includes the child's feelings and viewpoints of life; an evaluation of his intelligence, capacities, skills, physical limitations and abilities; an understanding of his home situation and his relationship in the home; and an evaluation of the information obtained from the family, friends and professional persons acquainted with the child. This information is obtained only with the consent of the family.

Treatment of the child and his problem is based on the diagnosis of the psychiatrist, psychologist, and social worker of the clinic. The treatment plan, and the length and type of treatment differ in each case, depending on the problem of the individual child being treated. Parents are brought into the treatment situation to give them an understanding of the child's disturbance, to acquaint them with

the developments in the treatment process, and to give them a share in the helping process. Plans are worked out with community agencies involved or interested in the case when needed.

The clinic offers consultation services to social agencies dealing with children's problems and the clinic also provides speakers to groups in the community.

All children, regardless of the financial status of the family, are served at the clinic. All families share in the costs of the treatment and pay a fee according to a schedule adapted to their income. The chief source of income is from the Worcester Community Chest. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the U. S. Public Health Service also share the cost of the services.

The staff consists of trained psychiatrists with specialized training in child psychiatry, trained social workers with advanced degrees and experience in psychiatric case work and case work with children, psychologists with specialized training in psychological testing. These professional people make up the clinic teams which are responsible for the diagnostic, treatment and consultation services which are offered at the Worcester Youth Guidance Center.

The services at the clinic are available to children from birth through the age of seventeen. The children are referred through the family physician, clergy, school,

social agency, and parents. The initial interviews (intake process), in which the parent is seen by a social worker, decide the type of service necessary.

The clinic is not able to meet the full demands of the Worcester community and a waiting period is necessary.

The clinic originally started as an out-patient service of the Worcester State Hospital in 1921. In the early years of the clinic, there was a connection between the hospital and the clinic for administrative and financial purposes. Some of the people in the years before World War II shunned the clinic because of their feelings that the clinic was a place for crazy children. The passage of a law in the state of Massachusetts, which required that all children committed to a state institution first be given a psychiatric and psychological examination at a clinic, also added to this feeling in the community. In 1941 this law was revised so that these examinations were no longer mandatory.

The revision of this law in 1941, the separation of the clinic from the hospital and the efforts of the staff by lectures and discussions through the years following the war have dispelled most of the feeling in the community that the clinic is a place for "crazy" children or bad boys. The changing feeling in the community and the war brought about a decided change in the services of the clinics so that today the Worcester Youth Guidance Center is a treatment center and not only a place for diagnostic service.

CHAPTER III
SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Children flourish in their development under conditions of peace and not of war.² In war-time much is done to protect the health and physical safety of children, but the danger of the war to their emotional lives is neglected.³ Freud and Burlingham, in their war study of children, found that

.....The lack of essential foods, vitamins, etc. in early childhood will cause lasting malformation in later years, even if the harmful consequences are not immediately apparent. What is not yet generally recognized is that the same is true for the mental development of the child. Whenever certain essential needs are not fulfilled, lasting psychological malformations will be the consequence; these essential elements are the need for personal attachment, for emotional stability and for permanency of educational influence.⁴

Most writers have felt that the harmful effects of the war were due, not so much to the physical dangers of war, as to the effects of the changes in family life on the child. War breaks up family life, which is the natural background for the development of the child. This causes some loss in the feeling of security which alone can be

2 Lois Meek Stolz, "The effect of Mobilization and War on Children", Social Casework, April, 1951.

3 Freud and Burlingham, op. cit.

4 Ibid.

traumatic. The war becomes significant in the life of a child the moment that it breaks up family life and disturbs the first emotional attachments of the child within the group.

The effect of the war on a young child would depend on several factors in the child's experience.⁵ It would depend on his own understanding of the war. (Is the war something that he sees and feels, or is it something that he hears about?) The effects of the war on a young child would also depend on what the war does to his family. This would depend on the answers to some questions such as: Where does the family live? Do they move from place to place? Does the father go away to the war? Does the mother work? Is the father injured or killed? Is there any separation for the child involved? The answer to the last question is most important because separation is one of the basic causes of anxieties; and anxiety about his family is a very difficult emotion for a child to live with.

The effects of the war would also depend on the child himself. This would be dependent on the answers to such questions as: How old is he? What sex is the child? Where is he on the developmental path of maturity?

A young child can understand the meaning of war only

⁵ Stelz, op. cit.

from his own experience with war.⁶ It is true that some of what the child hears and sees about war will be incorporated into his play, but, as a whole, he will only be concerned with war only if it becomes a part of his family life.

In discussing the effects of the war on infants, one would have to discuss mothers, as the well-being of the infant is tied to the well-being of the mother.⁷ The infant in the early months of life is very vulnerable, as his anxiety can be easily aroused. His security and well-being depend on the satisfaction of his needs which are met by his mother; therefore, it is the mother who develops emotional strength or weakness in the baby. The mother who is anxious or frustrated transmits this to her baby.

Anxieties which come about in these early months form emotional patterns which are difficult to undo in later years. These emotional tensions usually remain a basic part of the developing personality of the child. These disturbed war babies will develop into fearful, nervous, shy, worried, tense and disturbed children.

The infant's relationship to his father develops along different lines than with the mother. The earliest feelings

6 Stolz, op. cit.

7 Frieda Romalis, "The Impact of the War on Family Life", Part I, "Reactions to Change and Crises", The Family, October, 1942.

toward the father are associated with feelings of admiration for his power and strength. The father becomes the giver of material advantages and is also recognized as the power behind the mother around whom normal family life is centered. He remains a less familiar figure removed from the immediacy of the infant's violent reactions by his big size. The child maintains the wish to imitate him and become like him, or to possess his miraculous qualities.

Two factors disturb this satisfying relationship.⁸ The father, even more than the mother, impersonates for the growing infant the restrictive demands of civilized society. The child has to curb and to transform his sexual and aggressive wishes in order to become a social member of the community. The father reinforces by his presence what the mother does in this respect in minute-to-minute and day-to-day criticizing, praising and guiding. His influences act in the direction of repression and transformation of instinctive wishes. In the case of denial from the mother, the child's secret rage is raised against the father.

The second disturbing factor concerns the sexual development of the child.

From three to five years of age, each child is learning about his own sex and laying the foundation for his

⁸ Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham, Infants Without Families, International University Press, New York, 1944.

sexual life through the resolution of his oedipal conflict. The boy develops a sexual attraction for his mother and a hate for his father who stands between him and his love. The girl develops a sexual attraction for her father and this hatred toward her mother. Gradually the child accepts the fact that he can not possess his adult lover and attempts to identify with the adult instead. The boy identifies with his father and the girl identifies with her mother. This early identification determines the success or failure of all future relationships.

The absence of the father can interfere with the normal psychosexual development of the male child. With the father gone, it is difficult for the male child to learn masculine behavior as he has no father to identify with. The boy, without the presence of his father, is apt to become timid, dependent and "effeminate".

The returning father finds it difficult to establish a relationship with such a son as he is disturbed by this effeminate behavior. Sometimes, the father becomes very punitive with his son before he can establish a bond of relationship with his child. If the father himself leans toward the effeminate side, the relationship formed after his return with his effeminate son would set the pattern for future unsatisfactory relationships with men. One writer states:

When a father returns from war and finds

his boy timid, dependent and effeminate, he is likely to be disturbed. This can bring strong measures of discipline from a father before he has established a bond of affection with his child. If the father himself falls short of his own idea of masculinity, the emotional relations between father and son become further complicated.

War also has an effect in the area of aggressive behavior. Essential restraints in times of war are cast aside and life continues on a more primitive level. In the early years the child is learning to control his primitive aggressive impulses and war confuses the child so that he can not do so. Reports from parents and teachers revealed that aggressive behavior in young children from three to five years of age increased during war-time.

Many situations in war-time can be responsible for the increase of aggression in young children. Crowded conditions and limited living space, lack of expressions of love and affection due to changes in family life, irregular schedules, and changes in environment and human relationships could easily be responsible for this aggressive change of behavior in young children during the war years. The child may also be quick to sense the lack of restraint on the part of his parents and react to it accordingly.

War is a saboteur of the family. It creates anxiety, often augmented by guilt feelings..... Theoretically it arrests the civilizing redirection of aggression in children, who grow up amid extolled destruction and killing.¹⁰

9 Stolz, op. cit.

10 Marion B. Durfee, "Today's War and Tomorrow's Generation", Smith College Studies in Social Work, March, 1945.

During these war years when a young child is threatened by feelings of anxiety and aggression, he needs love, understanding, patience, and the guidance of adults to come through this period of life and establish emotional maturity. When the young child does not have this protection, he becomes anxious and changes in his behavior take place due to his internal conflicts. These conflicts will carry over into school age, adolescence and adult life.

War is a threat to a child because it deprives the child of the opportunity to develop to the limit of his potentialities. War does not give the child the best possible opportunity for development. Conditions of peace and not of war are ideal for the wholesome development of the child.

It would be profitable before going into this study to examine some of the facts that the English have learned from their studies on the effects of the war on children.

Freud and Burlingham found that essential needs, such as the need for personal attachment, need for emotional stability, and need for permanency of educational influence when not fulfilled, caused lasting psychological malformations.¹¹ They also found that all the children studied in the Hampstead Nurseries in London, including those who knew that their homes had been destroyed, were determined to return home. Separation and evacuation were more traumatic

11 Freud and Burlingham, Children in War-Time.

than bombing.

Isaacs found in her study of sixty-seven hundred children who were evacuated at the beginning of September, 1939, that one-half this number returned to their homes during the first month of separation.¹²

Many studies done after the war found that the disruption of family life, the negative reactions of adults, and the insecurity felt by the child were more detrimental than the dangers of war. Freud and Burlingham sum it up by saying:

The war acquires comparatively little significance for children as long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort or cuts their food ration. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group.¹³

The cases studied in the next chapter are all cases of children where there was separation from the father involved. This study will attempt to point out the effects of the separation as they are seen in the treatment situation.

¹² Susan Isaacs, Editor, The Cambridge Evacuation Survey, Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1941.

¹³ Freud and Burlingham, op. cit.

CHAPTER IV
MATERIAL OF THE STUDY

The children represented in the study represent thirty-five families. The children studied were born between January 1, 1941, and December 31, 1943.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN BY AGE AND SEX
AT START OF TREATMENT

Age	Sex		No. of Children
	Male	Female	
4	1	1	2
5	4	0	4
6	2	5	7
7	9	3	12
8	4	5	9
9	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	21	14	35

Table I shows the age at which problem of child was serious enough to require treatment at the clinic. The six youngest children, ages four and five, had been treated at the center some time before January 1, 1949. Their problems were serious enough to warrant treatment again after January 1, 1949, so that the cases were reopened once again. Twenty-eight of the thirty-five children required treatment between the ages of six and eight, or in the first three years of school life. This period of school life follows the oedipal period of life. All the children were treated after the return of the father from the service.

Table I also shows the sex of the children. Twenty-one of the children were boys while fourteen were girls. This would indicate that in the thirty-five cases studied which involved separation from the father, three boys were treated to every two girls.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS AND GIRLS BY SIZE OF FAMILY

	Size of Family				Total
	1 Chld.	2 Chld.	3 Chld.	4 Chld.	
Boys	6	10	2	3	21
Girls	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>14</u>
Total	6	14	10	5	35

TABLE III
POSITION OF PROBLEM CHILD IN FAMILY

No. of Sib- lings in Family	Problem Child					Total
	Old- est	Next to Oldest	Middle of 3 Chld.	Next to Youngest	Young- est	
1	6	-*	-	-	-	6
2	14	-	-	-	0	14
3	6	-	4	-	0	10
4	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	30	0	4	1	0	35

*Signifies no such classification in that type of family.

Table III shows that thirty of the thirty-five children studied were the oldest siblings in their families. Six of these thirty children had no brothers or sisters. Four of the five remaining children studied were the middle siblings in the families with three children and the last child studied

was the next to the youngest in a family with four children.

The findings in Table III would indicate that in thirty of the thirty-five children studied, it was the oldest child who suffered most from the effects of the war.

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN
ACCORDING TO FAMILY INCOME AND FEE

Approximate Family Income*	No. of Families	Fee
Under \$1200.00	4	None
\$1200.00	0	\$.25
1500.00	1	.35
1800.00	4	.50
2100.00	10	.75
2500.00	4	1.25
3000.00	5	2.00
4000.00	2	3.00
5000.00	0	4.00
Unknown	<u>5</u>	Unknown
Total Families	35	

*According to fee scale used at the Worcester Youth Guidance Center.

Although families of higher income also use the services of the Worcester Youth Guidance Center, it is significant that in the thirty-five families studied involving separation from the father, not one family had an income of more than \$4000.00 per annum. Four families had an income of less than \$1200.00 per annum.

Length of Service and Age of Child at Separation

The length of service ranged from ten months to four and one-half years. Most of the fathers were away between two

and one-half and three and one-half years. Due to inadequacies in case recording, more specific figures are not available. Two fathers were killed in action and three fathers received divorces while in the service and never returned home after the war.

A study of the ages of the children at the time of the father's induction (specific figures are not available in each case) reveals that the older children, at the time of treatment, were also the oldest children at the time of induction. The children studied that were born in 1941 were about two years old at the time of their father's induction. The children that were born in 1942 were about one year old at the time of their father's induction, and the children that were born in 1943 were not yet born at the time of their father's induction. The oldest child studied was two and one-half years old at the time of his father's induction.

Symptoms

Symptoms are indications of underlying disturbances in children. Children are referred to the clinic on the basis of the symptoms that are seen by their parents and the people who come in contact with these children. The presenting symptoms that the children show to their parents and other contacts hinder them in some way from leading a normal life, so the children are referred to the clinic for help with the symptoms. The social worker, in the intake interview, deter-

mines the underlying disturbance of the child from the evidence that the parent presents on the symptoms. Table V shows the presenting problems of the children

TABLE V

CLASSIFICATION OF PRESENTING PROBLEMS AT REFERRAL

Type of Problems	Present in Boys	Present in Girls	Total
Behavior Problems	11	6	17
Physical Problems	8	8	16
Social Maladjustments	13	7	20
Mood Disorders	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>
Totals	43	25	68

Each child that was referred to the clinic came with an average of two problems. The twenty-one boys presented forty-three different problems, and the eleven girls presented twenty-five problems. The number of problems per girl was slightly higher than the number of problems per boy. The total number of problems was the number of symptoms that the source of referral presented at the time of intake. The twenty referrals of social maladjustment came from the teachers, nurses and guidance director. At one time more behavior problems were treated at the clinic than problems of social maladjustment and problems involving physical disorders, but since the education of the public through informal talks of members of the staff of the clinic, the referrals by the school authorities and family physicians have increased.¹⁴ The number of

¹⁴ Muriel Berliner, "The Influence of the War on Child Guidance Patients", Thesis, Smith College of Social Work, 1943.

problems of social maladjustment and social disorders as seen in Table V shows evidence of this increase.

Types of Behavior Problems

The behavior problems in this study include the following:

1. Disobedience
2. Sexual difficulties
3. Hostility toward family
4. Aggressiveness
5. Stealing
6. Destructiveness
7. Fire-setting
8. Excessive demands for attention
9. Running away
10. Stubbornness
11. Miscellaneous behavior problems

Types of Physical Problems

The following problems are included among the physical disorders as shown in the children of this study:

1. Feeding problems
2. Enuresis
3. Nail-biting
4. Speech defects
5. Masturbation
6. Vomiting
7. Retardation
8. Hyperactive
9. Tics

Types of Social Maladjustments

The following problems of social maladjustment appeared among the children of this study:

1. School behavior problem
2. Retardation in school
3. Lack of interest in school work
4. Truancy
5. Poor social relationships especially in own age group

6. Reading disability
7. Jealousy

Types of Mood Disorders

Some of the mood disorders for which the children in this study presented were:

1. Withdrawal
2. Fears
3. Nightmares
4. Nervousness
5. Sensitiveness
6. Temper tantrums
7. Crying and whining

The problems which these children brought into clinic seem no different than the usual run of problems that any group of children bring into the treatment situation. There is also no evidence to indicate that these children, all of whom were separated from their fathers during the war, brought any particular type of problems into treatment which was common only among the members of their group and different from the problems which any group brought into the treatment situation.

Treatment

Treatment in these particular cases for the children and the mothers was no different from the treatment in any other case which is treated at the clinic. It has been necessary for the social worker to spend hours with the mother working through with her how she felt about being left alone during the war period. This has especially been true in

cases where the mother was very dependent or had a great deal of anxiety about her husband's safety or being left alone to care for the children.

As a whole the treatment plans in these cases were no different than treatment plans in any of the other cases. The treatment plan in each particular case was worked out by the clinic depending on the individual problems each mother and each child brought with them into the treatment situation. The chances of success or failure were also no less or no greater in these particular cases than in any other case.

Classification of Problems

Due to the similarities in the case material, the cases are classified as follows:

- I. Child
 - A. Reaction to separation from father
- II. Mother
 - A. Emotionally-disturbed and dependent mother
 - B. Mother separated from child
- III. Father
 - A. Death of father in service
 - B. Injured or emotionally-disturbed father
 - C. Poor father-child relationship
- IV. Marital Difficulties
 - A. Separation before or after father's term of service

V. Environmental Factors

A. Crowded living conditions, lack of money and poor relationships in environment

The cases will be studied as they appear in the above classifications in Chapter V to determine the effects of the separation on the problems.

CHAPTER V

ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

The cases that follow will show the relationship of the separation from the father during the war to the underlying disturbances of the child. An examination of these cases shows that underlying disturbances in these cases can not be attributed to any one major factor. These cases will attempt to show how the separation from the father brought about some of the factors which contributed directly or indirectly to the underlying disturbances. There is overlapping from one classification to another.

Child's Reaction to the Separation from the Father

Three children of the group reacted to the separation from the father immediately at the time of the separation.

Case 1 - Louise

Louise was referred to the clinic at the age of six for help with her behavior. Until she became two years of age, she was very easy to care for. She was very close to her "daddy", who was drafted when she was two years old. The mother seemed like a very adequate person.

During the first few months following the separation, Louise constantly asked for her "daddy" and missed him very much. Then she seemed to forget him. She started to become disobedient at this time. She refused to eat, go to sleep at night, or obey her mother. At the age of three, she and her mother moved in with the maternal grandmother, who took over in caring for her. During this period, neither the mother nor the grandmother could control her.

The father returned three years after the time of his induction. Finding Louise very disobedient, he became

very punitive, whereas before he had worshipped her. Louise's behavior did not improve after the father's return. She became very hostile toward him after his return. One year later she was referred to the clinic for treatment for disobedience.

This case, as do the other two in this group, shows the reaction of the child at the time of the separation. As can be seen in the case, there are other factors which also could be related to the underlying disturbance, such as the change of environment or the dependence of the mother, which is indicated by the fact that the maternal grandmother took over in caring for Louise after the separation from the father.

The Emotionally-Disturbed and Dependent Mother

Twenty-seven children showed evidences of being disturbed at their mothers' inabilities to give to them because their mothers focused on their own losses of their husbands.

Case 2 - John

John was born twelve months after his father and mother were married. John's father left for the service when he was eight months old and returned when he was four and one-half years old. During the period that the father was home, the mother was able to care for John, and John seemed happy and healthy.

After the father left, the mother found house work and caring for John very difficult. She continually longed for her husband. The mother had what she termed a "nervous breakdown" and required psychiatric treatment. John began to cry very easily and his crying upset his mother. A short time later, the mother became a bed patient at home.

At the age of two, John was boarded out, as the mother could no longer care for him. In the foster home, John

was extremely difficult to control. He was very destructive and cried easily.

After the father returned, John returned to live at home. The mother improved somewhat and was able to care for John once again. John's behavior improved. When he entered school, he became difficult to handle and didn't care to learn or go to school. At this time, the mother brought him in for treatment for these problems.

A study of this case shows that John's mother was a very dependent person, although before the separation she was able to function with the help of her husband. Three other mothers also suffered what they termed "nervous breakdowns". The children of these mothers sensed their mothers' disturbances and reacted unfavorably to them. In two of these cases, the Red Cross eventually was able to arrange for the discharge of the father.

Although these mothers were all dependent persons, they were able to function in their roles as mothers with the help of their husbands. These mothers were able to readjust somewhat after their husbands' return from the service; however, this readjustment was not as easy for the children.

Five other mothers in this group functioned in their roles as mothers, but it was difficult for them to give to the children as they focused on their own losses of their husbands and became somewhat disturbed during their absence. During this period, these children became more difficult to care for. They refused to eat and developed sickness which can be considered reactions to this rejection and the

mothers' disturbances.

Eighteen of the mothers in the cases studied were very dependent persons. Their own dependency needs, which previously had been met by their husbands, had to be met by other persons in the family. The dependency needs of their children also had to be met to some degree by these other persons.

It was necessary for these eighteen mothers and their children to move in with other relatives for one reason or another. These mothers explained that they returned to their parents due to poor financial circumstances or sickness. The evidence shows that these mothers also had dependency needs which had to be met and turned to other persons for the fulfillment of these needs. In most cases, they returned to their own parents.

Four of these eighteen mothers were sick and their parents took over caring for both the mother and the child. Six of the mothers more or less gave up the care of themselves and their children to their parents. The eight remaining cared for their children, but were under the influence of their parents at this time. Many of these mothers relived some of their earlier unpleasant childhood experiences once again.

The Working Mother

Eighteen mothers went to work during the period that

their husbands were in the service.

Case 3 - Arthur

Arthur spent the first six months of his life with his mother and father. When he was six months old, his father went into the service for a three and one-half year period. Arthur was placed in a foster home at the age of six months where he made a very poor adjustment. The foster parents found him difficult to care for as he refused to eat, vomited, became sickly, and cried easily. He stayed in this home for one and one-half years and then returned home for a four month period. During this time, he adjusted well.

He was placed again for a two year period in another home, as the mother found it necessary to work to provide for Arthur and had no one to leave him with during this time. He made a fairly good adjustment in this foster home.

He returned home after his second placement. His behavior at home was poor after his return. At the age of eight, he was treated for failure in school, behavior at home, and stealing from his mother.

Due to the necessity of the mothers' having to work, twelve children in these families were without their mothers during the daytime. Some of these children were with other relatives or with strangers during the day. Except for weekends or holidays, the children only spent one or two hours daily with their working mothers. Three children showed signs of being disturbed at these daily separations.

As these children became older, these daily separations, which had continued, seemed to have affected the behavior patterns of these children. It became necessary for these children to conform to the rules set down by both their own mothers and the mother substitutes. As the rules set down

by the mother were different than those laid down by the mother substitutes, these children were confused as to their own behavior patterns.

These children showed signs of being disturbed at their mothers' absences during the day, and also showed some signs of being disturbed due to the necessity of adjusting to two mothers and not one.

The working mother returned home from work and found it difficult to focus on the care of the child. She also found it necessary to do many household tasks which she had not been able to do during the daytime.

The children of the working mothers showed less evidences of being disturbed than the children of the dependent mothers during the period of the separation from the fathers.

Six of the children were separated from the mothers and placed in foster homes or with relatives.

Separation from the mothers during the early years of life is a traumatic experience. Two of these children were placed a second time because of the fact that these children made very poor adjustments the first time.

No one would disagree that the underlying disturbances in these six cases were directly related to the separation. These six children resented the separation from their mothers. Long after their returns to their own homes, they acted out some of their hostilities, especially toward their mothers. These six children were all very insecure children.

Four of these children could not adjust to school life because of their insecurity. Two of these children, long after their returns to their own homes, showed fears of losing their mothers.

It is interesting to note that Arthur's behavior was much more disturbing in the presence of his mother. His stealing was confined to stealing only things that belonged to his mother. Part of his difficulties in school were due to the fact that he did not like school and wanted to remain at home with his mother.

The behavior of these children in these six cases resembles very much the behavior of the rejected children.

Death of the Father in the Service.

The death of the father is a very traumatic experience for the mother. There were two children who lost their fathers in the war.

Case 4 - George

George was six months old when his father was inducted into the service. When he was one year old, his father was reported missing in action. At this time, George seemed normal and could say such words as "ma" and "pa". The mother, during the period that the father was reported missing, was afraid of a breakdown.

George was noticeably retarded at the age of two and one-half, shortly after the notification that the father was dead.

The mother remarried when George was four. George had a good relationship with his stepfather. During the next few years, he was fearful of losing his mother and noticeably retarded.

At the age of seven, he was treated at the clinic for retardation.

The two children in this group were too young to be disturbed by the deaths of their fathers. For both mothers, these deaths were very traumatic. Both of these mothers were emotionally disturbed. The two children sensed the disturbances and reacted to them. George's mother was emotionally disturbed for a longer period of time, due to the year of uncertainty of her husband's death. Both mothers later remarried and successfully adjusted to married life once again.

The Injured and the Emotionally-Disturbed Father

Five fathers returned from the service emotionally disturbed or injured.

Case 5 - Warren

Warren's father went into the service when Warren was one and one-half years old, and returned when he was three years old. The mother worked during the period of separation and Warren lived with strangers. He set fires during this period of separation.

The father was injured while in the service and also suffered a "breakdown". At his return from the service, he received a disability pension and treatment for his stomach disorder, from which he suffered for three years after his return from the service.

The father was unusually cross and punitive toward Warren after his term of service. Warren hated and feared him.

At the age of eight, Warren was referred to the clinic because of poor school work, truancy, setting fires, stealing and poor relationships with other children.

It is interesting to note that the children involved in these five cases were all boys. All these boys also evidenced unsolved conflicts on the oedipal level. This would indicate that they had some difficulties in identification with their fathers due to their fathers' injuries or emotional disorders. One could easily see that the problem of identification for a boy would be complicated if the father was a sick or emotionally-disturbed person. These injuries and emotional disorders also brought about financial difficulties for the families.

Poor Father-Child Relationship after Father's Return from the Service

Sixteen cases showed evidences of a poor father-child relationship after the father's return from the service.

Case 6 - Sydney

Sydney's father went into the service when Sydney was four months old and returned when he was three and one-half years old. During this time, Sydney lived with his mother and maternal grandparents. He was very close to his mother and had been overprotected during the father's absence. He had been spoiled by both his grandparents, but he had had a good relationship with his grandfather.

Sydney took an immediate dislike to his father upon his return. The father was very strict with him at that time, due to his having been spoiled.

Sydney was treated at the age of six and one-half for being quarrelsome and uncooperative. The diagnosis of the problem points to a slow father-and-son adjustment after the father's return from the service.

There are indications that nine of the sixteen children

would have had difficulty in forming a relationship from what is known about the father's personality. The father-child relationship in the remaining six cases might have been more positive had the father remained at home during the war.

Seven of the sixteen children had established positive relationships with father substitutes during the father's absence, which made the adjustment to the father, upon his return, more difficult and fearful for the child. Seven of the fathers found it difficult to accept their children, especially those boys who had been over-protected and seemed very effeminate.

Seven of these children were hostile to their fathers on their return and resented these intruders who now took away some of their mothers' attention which they had been receiving in their fathers' absence. There is evidence that the reverse of this was true in the case of three fathers in this group.

Three of the fathers had difficulty in realizing that these children belonged to them, and the adjustments were poor and slow in these cases.

The mothers in these cases also had to make adjustments both to the returning husband and to the child after the husband's return. The father's return in all these cases brought new changes for each member of the family, and sometimes these changes were difficult. It was much more diffi-

cult for the children to accept these changes and adjustments as they had not been old enough to know their fathers before the period of service.

Evidence of Jealousy of Siblings Born after the Father's Return

Seventeen children in the cases studied showed evidences of being disturbed more than normally by the presence of siblings born after the father's return from the service.

Case 7 - Sam

Sam was born while his father was in the service. During the period that the father was away, Sam lived alone with his mother. He had a very good relationship with his grandfather, who used to visit each day. He was very close to his mother during this period and very much over-protected. His mother did not work and spent most of her time with Sam and seldom left him for even a few hours.

The father returned when Sam was three years old. For a few months, Sam seemed to resent his mother's attention toward his father and was very shy and withdrawn. About a year after the father's return, there seemed to have been a fairly good father-son relationship established.

When Sam was five years old, a younger brother was born. Sam was very jealous of his younger brother in the two years that followed. He cried very easily, snatched the baby's bottle, and became enuretic.

At the age of seven, he was referred to the clinic by the school for being retarded in his studies.

It must be mentioned here once again that thirty of the thirty-five children studied were the oldest siblings in their families. The fathers in this group of seventeen cases had not had the opportunity of seeing these children grow up and

had some difficulty in realizing that these children were part of them.

In all of these cases, other siblings were born after the father's return and were observed by the father as they grew up; in that respect, the fathers very easily could accept them as their own.

These cases clearly show evidences of sibling rivalry, which is related to the underlying disturbances in these seventeen children. These children had to share their mothers with their strange fathers and also with the new siblings in the family. As these seventeen children were the oldest siblings in their families, there was a possibility that even without the father's absence during the war, there may have been sibling rivalry in some of these cases.

Parents Divorced after the Father's Return

In five of the cases studied, the parents were divorced either during the father's term of service or after his return from the service.

Case 8 - Gerald

Gerald's parents married at an early age. His mother was eighteen and his father was twenty-one at the time of marriage. In the two years before Gerald was born, they lived in one room in a boarding house. The father was a truck driver and sometimes left his wife for two or three days at a time. The mother was very lonely during this two year period.

Gerald was born two years after the marriage. The father had just entered the service. Gerald and his mother moved in with the maternal grandparents. Gerald

was very over-protected during this period. His mother was very upset because she seldom heard from the father who was in England.

Gerald's father returned when Gerald was three years old. On his return, the family moved into their own apartment and the father went back to his old job.

The father was very dissatisfied with this job. For the next year he went from job to job. The mother was very unhappy during this time. The father began to drink and the mother divorced him two years after his return from the service.

Gerald and his mother moved back in with the maternal grandparents. A year and a half after the divorce, the mother brought Gerald in for treatment for enuresis and nail-biting.

There was evidence of the marital problems prior to the time that these fathers went into the service, such as in the case of Gerald.

The disturbances of the children in these cases can be attributed to some extent to the marital difficulties in these cases. As the marital difficulties in these cases are not related to the father's absence, it must be said that there is no relationship between the separation of the father during the war and the underlying disturbances of the children.

Crowded Living Conditions, Lack of Money, and Poor Relationships in the Environment

Eighteen of these children showed evidences of being disturbed due to environmental factors. The living conditions were crowded. There was a lack of money due to the father's absence. The relationship that the children formed

in these environments were not positive ones.

Case 9 - Joan

Joan's father was in the service when she was born and did not return until she was three and one-half years old. She spent this time with her mother in the home of her maternal grandparents and in the home of an aunt. The mother worked this three and one-half year period to support Joan.

After a year and a half, Joan and her mother moved in with an aunt, as living with the grandparents was unbearable. They were very strict and both Joan and her mother were made to conform.

In the home of the aunt, things were not much better. There were three other children, much older than Joan, who continually picked on her. The aunt was very punitive toward Joan.

On the father's return, the family moved into a three-room flat in a crowded tenement district. Joan had difficulty in getting along with the older children in the neighborhood.

A year later the family moved into their own home, where Joan was very happy, until she entered school. She made a poor adjustment here and was referred to the clinic for treatment.

In fifteen of these cases, the environmental factors were somewhat improved after the father's return from the service. These children were removed from their poor environments as soon as a new home could be found. The father was able to provide for the child much more easily than the mother. The living conditions were improved, and proved helpful to the children. All eighteen children showed evidences of being disturbed during the period they were exposed to the poor environmental factors, and for a short time after this until the father was able to again take over

as head of the family and provide for them.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Thirty-five cases in which there was separation from the father were examined to see what relationship the absence of the father had to the underlying problem. All the thirty-five children studied in this group were born between January 1, 1941, and December 31, 1943. They all required treatment at the Worcester Youth Guidance Center between the ages of six and nine. Twenty-one of these children were boys and the other fourteen were girls.

Twenty-eight of these children required treatment during the first three years of school life, which was also the period following the oedipal period.

Thirty of these thirty-five children were the oldest siblings in their families. This would indicate that it was the oldest child who suffered most from the effects of the war.

These children also came from families with an income of less than \$4000.00 a year. Four families had an income of less than \$1200.00 a year. The median in family income in this group was between \$1800.00 and \$2500.00 a year.

The oldest children were two years old when their fathers went into the service. The rest were too young to really know their fathers or miss them, as the mothers were the important figures in their lives at this time. Many of

these children were born during the father's absence.

The presenting problems in these cases studied showed no common factors among them, even though in all the cases the fathers went into the service. These children presented sixty-eight problems which required treatment at the clinic. Each child in this group averaged approximately two problems. The average per girl was slightly higher than the average per boy.

Twenty of the problems were problems of social maladjustment. These problems were referred to the clinic by the teachers, nurses and guidance directors. Seventeen of the problems were behavior problems; sixteen problems were physical problems with underlying emotional disturbances; and the remaining fifteen problems were mood disorders with underlying emotional disturbances. The problems which these children brought into the clinic were no different from the usual run of problems that any other group of children brought into the treatment situation.

These cases fall into different categories. There were cases of children who reacted to the separation from the father. There were mothers who were emotionally disturbed or dependent, and mothers who worked. There were fathers who died in the service or were emotionally disturbed or injured. There were cases where there was a poor father-child relationship. There were cases involving divorce and

separation, and cases involving crowded living conditions, lack of money, and poor relationships in the environment. The cases overlap and some cases appear in more than one category.

Three children showed evidences of being disturbed as a result of their immediate reactions to the separation from the father.

Nine children showed evidences of being disturbed at the mother's inability to give to them, as these mothers focused on their own losses of their husbands. These nine children were the children of emotionally-disturbed mothers.

Eighteen children had very dependent mothers who had difficulty in caring for them in the absence of their fathers. These mothers turned to other relatives to have their own dependency needs met. These children of both the dependent mother and the emotionally-disturbed mother sensed their mothers' losses of their husbands and also were disturbed as were their mothers.

The twelve children of the working mothers were disturbed by the part-time separation from their mothers. These children were cared for by other people during the hours the mother worked. This meant that they had two mother figures in their lives, which complicated their patterns of behavior. The working mother returned home after a hard day of work and could not always give to their children the attention they required.

Six of the children were separated from their mothers and were placed in foster homes or with relatives. These children were disturbed at the separation from their mothers and made poor adjustments to their new homes. Their behavior resembled very much the behavior of rejected children. These separations from their mothers were very traumatic experiences for the children. They could have been avoided if it had not been necessary for the fathers to go to war and leave their wives and children behind.

The fathers of two of these children were killed during the war. The deaths of the fathers were very traumatic for the mothers, who were emotionally disturbed as a result of these deaths. These two children evidenced problems which were related to the mothers' disturbances.

Five of the fathers returned from the service emotionally disturbed or injured. The five children in these cases were boys. They all evidenced unsolved conflicts on the oedipal level which would indicate that the oedipal conflicts in the lives of these boys were not positively resolved because of the emotional disturbances and injuries of their fathers. The five families in their group also faced financial difficulties due to the emotional disturbances and injuries of the fathers.

Sixteen cases showed evidences of poor father-child relationships after the father's return from the service. There are indications that nine of the sixteen children would

have had difficulties in forming relationships from what is known about the father's personalities in these cases. The father-child relationships in the remaining six cases might have been more positive ones had the fathers remained at home. The return of the fathers in all of the cases studied meant adjustments of relationships in all of the families.

Seventeen children showed evidences of being disturbed by the presence of siblings born after the father's return from the service. These seventeen children were the oldest in their families and there is a possibility that sibling rivalry, which was related to the underlying disturbances in these cases, may have existed even without the father's absence during the war. The separations were far from helpful in these cases.

In five of the cases studied, the parents were divorced either during the father's term of service or after their return from the service. The disturbances of the children in these cases can be attributed to some extent to the marital difficulties. There are evidences of the existence of these marital difficulties prior to the time that these fathers went into the service and therefore, the separations from the fathers during the war were not related to the underlying disturbances.

Eighteen of the children studied showed evidences of being disturbed due to environmental factors, such as lack

of money, crowded living conditions, and poor relationships in the environment. These conditions were attributed to the absence of the fathers from their homes. These conditions were also somewhat improved after the father's return from the service.

Treatment in these particular cases was no different than treatment in any other group of cases at the clinic. The social workers found it necessary to spend some time with the mothers in the areas of the war separation around their feelings of being left alone with their children and the difficulties that they faced during this period.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The problems and disturbances of the children who were separated from their fathers during the war are comparable and similar to the problems and disturbances of other children studied at the clinic. The children in this study did not present any problems or disturbances which were common only among the members of their group.

The separation from the fathers during the war affected only a few children directly, to be exact, three in number. In the five cases where there were evidences of marital difficulties, the underlying disturbances of the children were related to the marital difficulties. As these difficulties existed prior to the war separation from the fathers, it must be said that in these five cases the separation from the fathers did not affect the underlying disturbances of these children.

In the cases where the mothers were very dependent or emotionally disturbed, the children evidenced problems which were related to the mothers' inadequacies or disturbances. The separation from the fathers indirectly contributed to the underlying disturbances of the children in these particular cases.

Indirectly the separation from the fathers also contributed to the underlying disturbances in the children who

were separated from their mothers. They were disturbed by the separation from the mothers which would not have been necessary had the fathers remained at home.

The death of the father or the injury of the father both directly and indirectly contributed to the underlying disturbance of the child. The infant sensed this loss through the mother, and later this loss would have had more direct an effect around the oedipal period, especially for the boy. This is also true in the cases where the father became emotionally disturbed through his war experiences.

In the cases where there were poor father-child relationships, an intensive study of the personalities of the fathers would be necessary to determine the effect of the separation from the fathers on the underlying disturbances. This would also be true in the cases where there were siblings born after the return of the fathers. The effects of the separation did contribute to the underlying disturbances in these cases.

The separation from the fathers created problems for all the families and contributed to the underlying disturbances in the children. It was necessary for some of the mothers to work. The crowded living conditions, lack of money, poor relationships in the environment were in most cases due to absence of the fathers with very few exceptions. All these factors contributed in some way to the underlying disturbances in these children.

Studies in the same area reveal many of the factors which this study has revealed. Young, in a study of one hundred twenty children, found that the separation from the fathers was the immediate cause of the children's disturbances.¹⁵ Wartime shortages, inconveniences, war talk, movies, inadequate housing, and the absence of the mothers due to war employment, and the pending induction also contributed to the underlying disturbances in these children.

A study at the Payne Whitney Nursery School in New York City revealed that the children who were disturbed around the time of the separation from the fathers had evidenced disturbances prior to the separation from the fathers.¹⁶ In the cases where the children were disturbed as a result of the separation, the most security was given to the children by the fathers, as the mothers in these cases were inadequate or reacted severely to the separation from their husbands.

Dr. Stolz found that the infants reacted to the anxiety and frustrations of the mothers during the wartime.¹⁷ It was a particularly traumatic experience for the infants who were separated from their mothers during the war. The young

¹⁵ Florence M. Young, "Psychological Effects of War on Young Children", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, July, 1947.

¹⁶ Amelia Igel, "The Effect of War Separation on Father-Child Relations", The Family, March, 1945.

¹⁷ Stolz, op. cit.

children during the war suffered many frustrations which created problems for them. There was a carry-over from these war frustrations which had an effect on the children through school age and adolescence.

Berliner concluded that the war had an influence on children by affecting the content of the problems in children who had been previously maladjusted.¹⁸

Warden concluded that the induction of the father was not responsible for the disturbances of the children, but that the father's induction contributed to the underlying disturbances in the children.¹⁹

All the studies and literature in this particular area and this study show that there is a need of certain preventive measures and programs in case of another war. They all agree that the infants should not be evacuated from danger areas, and that the mothers should not be employed in war work unless absolutely necessary. Provisions for substitute care, which are conducive to good mental health, should be provided for the babies whose mothers are employed. A counseling service should be provided to help the mothers with their own problems and the problems of their children. Nursery schools with trained personnel would be helpful for

¹⁸ Berliner, op. cit.

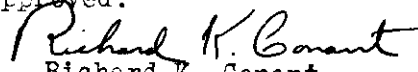
¹⁹ Elizabeth Warden, "A Study of Thirty-Five Disturbed Pre-School Children of Fathers in Service", Thesis, Boston University School of Social Work, 1948.

the young children whose mothers find it necessary to work in wartime.

Guidance clinics should be expanded during the war to provide help for both the mothers and the fathers. The mothers could bring their wartime problems here and the fathers could learn about father-child relationships at these clinics. This would be necessary after they returned from the service.

Children should have the opportunity to develop their personalities in healthy environments even under war conditions. The preventive measures taken to protect the children during war should include all the necessary steps which are needed to give children the best possible opportunity for developing their personalities.

Approved:



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Dean

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