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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

Stuart Rees: *Achieving Power: Practice and Policy in Social Welfare*.

London: Allen and Unwin, 1991, \$19.95. (Distributed in the US by Paul & Co., P.O. Box 442, Concord, MA 01742).

The term empowerment is widely used today. Originating in progressive left circles, it has obvious associations with populist thought, particularly in the communitarian sense and it is not surprising that it is frequently mentioned by advocates of community action, local self-help and mutual aid. The term has also been abused. Its appropriation by the political right as an integral part of its project of promoting individualism, cleverly implies that those who cope effectively with the hard world of competition and greed have become 'empowered' to operate in the market. It also offers a convenient evasion of society's responsibility to respond to the poverty which continues to characterize our society. If the poor could only become 'empowered' to solve their own problems, the wealthy and the middle class would not have to pay the taxes required to support social programs that could eradicate deprivation. The perversion of the term was amply revealed during the 1992 presidential election when all three candidates made frequent references to the notion of empowerment. One can only wonder whether the term now has any meaning or usefulness at all.

Rees's thorough and sophisticated account of the idea of empowerment in social work and social policy should dispel doubts about the continued value of the term. Indeed, his book reveals the superficiality of much contemporary usage not only in politics but in social work circles as well. As Rees shows, empowerment is a complex idea which is subject to many qualifications. He also shows how the notion of empowerment can serve as a useful organizing theme for social work practice, which can unite the subjective, individualized elements of social work with communitarian interventions and the more impersonal world of planning, bureaucracy and administration. By attempting to link social work's conventional hierarchy of

practice modalities through one concept, Rees comes close to offering a unified conceptualization of social work.

Rees's articulation of the notion of empowerment in social work provides a basis for further speculative endeavor. In addition, the book offers an erudite overview of the field. Although his is not a textbook for the beginner, it should be read by social work theorists interested in transcending social work's conventional preoccupation with pathology and treatment.

James Midgley
Louisiana State University

M. Fatout: *Models for Change in Social Group Work*. Aldine de Gruyter, 1992. \$39.95 hardcover; \$21.95 papercover.

Work with groups is enjoying a renaissance in social work. The recent "rediscovery" of group work by the profession is reflected in the steadily increasing number of articles and books on group work practice, the many training workshops and institutes on group methods being sponsored by the profession's national associations, as well as in the rapid growth and programmatic richness of the annual meetings of the Association for the Advancement of Social Work With Groups. Most impressive of all, however, are recent efforts within social work to integrate the empirically-derived findings of other social and behavioral small group researchers into contemporary social group work practice.

Fatout's book represents a significant contribution in the emergence of theory-based approaches to clinical group work practice. Firmly anchored in the practice assumptions of Pappel and Rothman's "Mainstream Model," Fatout's volume, given the method's current state of conceptual development in group work, emphasizes the importance of eclectic approaches to contemporary group work practice.

Fatout's volume is divided into three parts. Part I contains an important, and all too rare in the profession, summary of the history and *conceptual* development of group work. Part I also identifies the major ideological assumptions associated with *social* group work practice from its earliest beginnings at the turn

of the century through to the present time. Part I also contains a description of the basic tenets of the "Mainstream Model" of group work practice, Fatout's own base model of group work practice and the one to which she returns repeatedly throughout the volume.

Part II consists of seven chapters each of which details a different theoretical approach to group work: "person-centered" group work (Carl Rodgers); behavioral approaches to social group work (B. F. Skinner, Albert Ellis, Sheldon Rose, et al.); "gestalt therapy" (Fritz Perls); "transactional analysis" (Eric Berne); "reality therapy" (William Glasser); the "positive peer" model in group work (Harry Vorrath and Larry Brendtro); and, the "neurolinguistic" approach to social treatment in groups (Richard Bandler and John Grinder). The chapters are especially fascinating for their lucid discussions of each model's historical development, the personalities most associated with the model's origins, the model's basic practice tenets, its primary change strategies and underlying assumptions regarding the source(s) of motivation for change, as well as Fatout's too brief, but nonetheless useful, summaries of research approaches used to assess each model's relative efficacy. Fatout's discussions are insightful and offer the reader a unique understanding of the context that resulted in the development of each model's approach to group intervention.

In Part III Fatout provides the reader with general guidelines concerning combinations of different models that are best suited to the service needs of different client groups. In framing these guidelines, Fatout is careful to point out that, prior to selecting a particular approach to intervention, the worker must undertake a systematic analysis of each model so as to determine "the fit first with the client system and then with the practitioner." Though somewhat more mechanical in her application of these guidelines than this reviewer would have preferred, Fatout's overall discussion does convince the reader of the added change possibilities inherent in a mixed model approach to group intervention.

Fatout's well written volume should serve as a valuable supplementary text in group work courses with a clinical orientation. The volume should also be regarded as essential reading

by practitioners seeking a more conceptually integrated, albeit eclectic, approach to their group work practice.

Richard J. Estes

University of Pennsylvania

Cultural Diversity and Social Work Practice. Dianne F. Harrison, John S. Wodarski and Bruce A. Thyer (Eds.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1992, \$44.75 hardcover.

Working with oppressed, disenfranchised, unserved and underserved groups in our society has been a hallmark of the social work profession. The National Association of Social Work and the Council on Social Work Education have both adopted policies which mandate that social workers be knowledgeable about cultural diversity to include ethnic minorities and other special populations (women, the elderly, the handicapped, gay men, lesbians and bisexuals). While enormous gains have been made, there continues to be evidence that persons from diverse backgrounds receive inadequate and inappropriate mental health services from insensitive and poorly-trained practitioners. The profession has been shocked at how deeply entrenched prejudice and discrimination are internalized in the psyche of this country and therefore by members of the social work profession. The profession has been jolted by the realization that our humanistic values have not made us immune to certain negative attitudes about people who are different. This realization has been sobering and has increased commitment by our professional organizations and schools of social work to more effective, ethical and culturally sensitive social work practice.

The editors of *Cultural Diversity and Social Work Practice* have engaged in an ambitious effort to provide a much needed contribution to the social work literature on social work practice with diverse groups. The text employs a group-oriented format. Chapter one provides an overview of the history of social work practice with diverse groups. This is followed by a discussion of four racial/ethnic groups: Afro-Americans (Chapter 2), Asian Americans (Chapter 3), Hispanic Americans (Chapter 4), and Native Americans (Chapter 4). Sexual orientation, gender and

aging are each discussed in separate chapters and the final chapter, chapter 9, focuses on future directions for social work practice, research and education as regards cultural diversity.

The authors do a very good job providing data on historical and demographic trends, group characteristics, and cultural patterns for the four ethnic groups and for the special populations. They carefully delineate the varying sub-groups within a given ethnic or special population group. They also examine varying viewpoints that may account for specific behaviors or patterns by a particular group. For example, in discussing how Black families have adapted to the dehumanizing effects of slavery, oppression, segregation and racism, the response one chooses clearly rests on the particular theoretical perspective one uses. Two theorists, analyzing the same U. S. census data, offer very different conclusions. One saw the black family as deteriorating and recommended social policies that encouraged changes in black family structure and values; the second theoretician observed the resilience of black families and recommended social policies that could build on the strengths of black family values and structure. The provision of different perspectives for explaining the same behavior or patterns reflects a real strength of this book as it allows the reader to examine each of the viewpoints and to draw his/her own conclusions. One's conclusion might support one perspective or integrate several.

In addition to detailing the issues related to each of the racial/ethnic and special population groups that one must take into account in working with a particular client, the authors also identify the deficits in research, policy, theory and practice that require further elaboration, refinement, and research. Each chapter concludes with a section: "Implications for Practice". This chapter section offers important information for agencies and workers to consider and examine as they plan programs and services for a diverse client population.

The authors acknowledge limitations of the group-oriented approach offered by the book. One difficulty is in aggregating the data from a number of sub-groups to represent a typical profile of the total group. A second is that certain groups were selected for discussion and other groups excluded. The selection of specific groups was based on space limitations with

full recognition that issues faced by other groups are indeed important. A third issue relates to the fact that the selected groups are not mutually exclusive and that an individual may hold membership in several groups. A limitation not listed by the authors is the absence of case material to demonstrate how the ideas provided are indeed applied in practice. I consider the absence of case materials to be an important omission since many students and professionals have an intellectual knowledge base, but lack the ability to translate this knowledge into its practice application.

Cultural Diversity and Social Work Practice: An Overview is a very good book for social workers and other mental health professionals who are seriously interested in expanding their skills in working with cultural and racial diversity. It is an excellent teaching text that can be used differentially by professors in human behavior, practice, research and policy.

Dorcas D. Bowles
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Eileen Gambrill and Robert Pruger (editors), *Controversial Issues in Social Work*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Beacon, 1992, \$21.00 papercover.

Controversial Issues in Social Work, edited by Eileen Gambrill and Robert Pruger, is the first volume in a new series, edited by Robert Pruger, that argues the case for and against issues of interest in social work. The series uses an open-ended approach to the often thorny problem of distinguishing between what is fact and what is opinion: an approach that allows readers to assess arguments on both sides concerning specific issues in social work. This approach is also indicative of a trend in the literature in which social work issues are being presented within the context of "Yes-No" debate, as in the recent discussion of publication productivity as a primary criterion for tenure decisions (*Journal of Social Work education*, Vol. 28, No. 2).

The format that Gambrill and Pruger use in *Controversial Issues in Social Work* will, no doubt be repeated in forthcoming volumes in the series which will include such topics as direct

practice, macro practice, social administration, and social work research. The editors first select a list of topical issues which seem controversial and they then recruit colleagues to write a pro and con position statements to these issues. The specific format of the volume is as follows. The editors introduce each issue with a short introductory statement. They then present the issue in the form of a debate, in which contributors argue the pro's and con's of the issue and rebut the other's position. Following each position statement is a short, and in many cases annotated, bibliography.

The way in which the editors have structured these debates—presenting the Yes position and a rebuttal first, followed by No position and its rebuttal—can be confusing. In fact the two positions are written more or less simultaneously and the two rebuttals are added later. At times, readers will find that the rebuttal to the pro position will refer to issues mentioned in the con statement: a statement they have not yet read.

By presenting opposing viewpoints, with rebuttals, on specific issues, *Controversial Issues in Social Work* is able to demonstrate that pronouncements of right and wrong often turn out to be merely matters of opinion. Editors Gambrill and Pruger give readers the opportunity to assess for themselves for and against 24 specific issues. Obviously, intellectual discussion of controversial issues cannot be boiled down to a simple yes-or-no, yet discussions presented in this book do open the door to more clarity, critical thinking, and identification of political and ideological stances versus empirical findings. The presentation of opposing views to what many may take as "truth" is a timely challenge for a world that tends to be populist and simplistic. It presents reality in a somewhat more complex manner and thus acknowledges ambiguity and doubts.

Controversial Issues in Social Work presents 24 issues under the following categories: social work as a profession, social work knowledge, social work practice, and special client populations. Yet, interesting as many of the topics are, there is no clear common bond among them. Take for example the debates on maternal preference in child custody cases, training in behavioral principles for social workers, and union membership for professional social workers. These debates share little common

ground, yet each is an interesting and relevant debate in its own right.

The many contributors to this book made for great variability in style and tone. Some debates (such as the one on whistle-blowing) are even-tempered and amicable; others (such as those on training in behavioral principles and basing community organizing on grassroots strategy) are quite hostile, especially in their rebuttals. Those who read the text as a whole, however, may well find that this variability in style is, in fact, entertaining and adds to their interest.

The format per se requires limited space and concise ideas. One drawback is that the format sometimes causes key issues to be neglected. This can be seen, for example, in the debate on licensure in social work. The No position views this issue almost exclusively as an attack on Afro-American interests. The reader is thus deprived of other arguments against licensure such as the threat of establishing a unified and "correct" perspective of the profession (a notion which this volume is trying to tackle). Similarly the debate on use of volunteers as direct service providers omits many relevant issues such as malpractice insurance or the increased use of paraprofessionals (e.g., case managers in community mental health).

In general, the extent to which the editors matched the contributors had a bearing on the quality of the specific debates: the better the match, the better the debate. This is clearly evident in the discussion on the relationships of international social work to American social work: the same person wrote both the pro and con statements (and their rebuttals) under different names. . . and understandingly, most of relevant issues in this topic were covered.

In some instances, contributors agreed beforehand to use the same case examples. For the most part, this added to the clarity and good fit of their presentations. Selecting case studies, however, can be tricky business. For example, the debate on confidentiality and responsibility focused its attention on whether a social worker who knows an HIV-positive client is engaging in sex with an *unknown* partner should attempt to find out the identity of that unknown person and warn her. The

discussion is too much on the aspect of detecting the identity of that unknown person, rather than focusing on the key legal and moral issues of protecting a third party from a potentially fatal relationship. With this exception, I found the case studies useful in bringing focus and symmetry to the opposing viewpoints.

I do feel that either the editors or the publisher was a bit too eager to see this volume in print. The text has far too many copyediting mistakes which raises the issue of editorial control. There are references that do not coincide with the text, page references that relates to original manuscripts and not the final edition, as well as unevenness in terminologies and style. In some debates, contributors discussed different topics and their rebuttals were inappropriate. Had the editors called for a second round of rebuttals or asked some contributors to revise their statements, the debates, overall, would have been more focused and balanced. I also think that debates on similar or overlapping issues should have been placed closer to one other in the book. Some examples include the debates on behavioral training (debate 6) and practice decisions based on empirical research (debate 8); the debates on practice evaluation based on clearly defined objectives (debate 13) and linking social workers' salaries to outcomes (debate 18); and the debates relating to AIDS (debates 21 and 23).

In sum, *Controversial Issues in Social Work* serves social work by acknowledging and demonstrating that many issues are matters of opinion not fact. In addressing these issues, editors Gambrill and Pruger and their many contributors allow practitioners and students to become acquainted with opposing views in a non-threatening and constructive manner. This initial volume, in what promises to be an important series, despite the inconsistency in topics, the uneven quality of the presentations, and somewhat sloppy copyediting, is a very good text that should be used both in undergraduate introductory courses in social work and on reading lists for first-year students enrolled in master's programs in social work.

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Ruth Hutchinson Crocker. *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992. \$39.95 hardcover.

In the past few decades a small but influential body of literature has emerged on the history of the settlement house movement. Much of this historiography can be classified into three categories. In the first category are authors such as Allen Davis (*Spearheads for Reform*) who view settlement houses as bastions of progressive social reform. For these authors, the settlement house movement represents the best of social reform tendencies found in the progressive movement of late 19th and early 20th century America. In the second category are authors such as Howard Karger (*The Sentinels of Order*) and others who stress the social control function of the settlement house movement. In the third category are authors such as Judith Trolander and others who view the settlement movement as reflecting both social control and humanitarian impulses.

In *Social Work and Social Order*, Crocker correctly observes that not all settlement houses replicated the social mission of the more prominent settlements such as Hull House and Henry Street Settlement. In fact, the hundreds of settlement houses that comprised the second tier of settlement activity differed dramatically from the more publicized and larger settlements in Chicago and New York. In that sense, Crocker has attempted to find the "real heart" of the settlement movement by researching a sample of second tier settlement houses in Gary and Indianapolis, Indiana.

To Crocker's credit, she does not simply enumerate the activities of each settlement house in these two cities; instead, she organizes their activities and mission in terms of thematic content. Thus, Crocker focuses on issues such as how feminist beliefs were reflected in the Christamore Settlement House; how Americanization was important to the Foreign Settlement House; how the race issue was handled by the Flanner House; how the religious impulse was expressed in the Campbell Friendship House; and how big business was strongly connected to the Neighborhood House. Given that goal, Crocker does a credible

job in illustrating how those important themes affected both the mission and activities of the second tier settlement houses. Crocker also does a good job of highlighting the diversity that made up the agenda in each of these settlements.

Given the continuum in the settlement house literature around the issue of altruism versus social control, Crocker's book falls somewhere between the "heroic account" (e.g., Allen Davis) of the settlement movement and the social control perspective. Despite Crocker's attempts to locate the book within this range of settlement house literature, her position on the issue of social control is unclear. For example, on the one hand she states that "I early abandoned my initial assumption that the settlement workers sought social control." (p. 9). On the other hand, she states in the conclusion that "The settlement workers of this study were not cultural pluralists, but missionaries for the American Way" (p. 213). Moreover, given the general thrust of the book and its conclusion (i.e., the emphasis of the settlement houses on Americanization, evangelical Christianity, bifurcated race relations, inherent antifeminism, and the pressure exerted by big business toward creating programs geared toward enforcing industrial discipline), it is surprising that Crocker repudiates the role of social control in settlement life. While there are obviously gray areas in the historiography of the settlement movement, one cannot have it both ways. Either they were agents of social control or they were not. The objective role played by settlement houses has little to do with the *intentions* of their leaders.

Any historiography must be ultimately judged by the contribution it makes to the existing literature. While Crocker's book is interesting and well-written, it does little to advance what we already know about the settlement house movement. For example, Crocker's ideas about Americanization and the settlement movement have already been discussed by Oscar Handlin, Raymond Mohl and Neil Betten, Rivka Lissak, and others. Her ideas about feminism and the settlements, the relationship of big business to the settlements, and the role of race in the settlement movement were also explored by other writers. Despite these weaknesses, the book does provide a glimpse into

one of the more interesting social movements that marked turn of the century life in America.

Howard Jacob Karger
Louisiana State University

P. Nelson Reid and Philip R. Popple, *The Moral Purposes of Social Work*. Chicago: Nelson Hall Publishers, 1992, \$18.95 papercover.

This volume is a compilation of ten essays that trace the professional social work history of conflicts, dichotomies, and dilemmas in formation of a moral vision. It encompasses themes of social control versus social justice; individual treatment versus collective action; individual rights versus social welfare; and proprietary interests versus commitment to serving the poor and oppressed. In general, the essays advocate for revitalizing traditional commitment to working with vulnerable populations. Many of the contributors are well known in the field of social work ethics and moral philosophy. The book helps to invigorate moral discourse by providing a foundation in professional moral history and a synopsis of salient moral issues.

Reid characterizes social work's social role as the normative control of dependence and deviance. He seems to advocate for benign forms of control, such as rehabilitation of individuals and preservation of stable social order. While acknowledging the question of whether the social order thus being maintained is just, he does not answer this extremely important question. Nor does he explore the inherent tendency toward political conservatism of deviance theory and functionalism. In contrast, Billups proposes that the solution to strengthening professional commitment to uphold *both* individual helping *and* social system changing is a radical connection of individual critical reflection, consciousness change, and collective action.

Popple suggests that it is natural for social workers to experience moral tension, because we are often caught between an "objective necessity" (social mandate) to control deviance and a "subjective necessity" (personal commitment) to change unjust aspects of society. Hutchinson addresses this ambiguity

by discussing conflict between moral principles in work with involuntary clients, viz, individual liberty, duty to aid the vulnerable, and protection of the common good.

Several contributions decry the defection of many social workers from social change efforts on behalf of the poor and oppressed. O'Neil McMahon proposes strategies to help social work schools strengthen commitment to public welfare and social change activity. Keith-Lucas goes so far as to wish that either social workers who confine themselves to the practice of psychotherapy cease calling themselves social workers, or, that those workers who continue to commitment to the poor find another name for themselves besides "social worker," if that term has been coopted.

Claims of moral imperative rest upon ontological and spiritual assumptions and experiences. However, despite frequent references to social work's religious roots, the ontological and spiritual foundations of morality are slightly addressed in this book. For example, Reamer traces the historical shift from early professional religious conceptions of divine calling for charity and justice work to current secular careerism. He advocates for a secular sense of calling toward altruistic service for the disadvantaged. Yet, the term "calling," connotes that a God or trans-human source issues the call. Reamer does not explain how a secular framework would provide a calling in order than loose metaphoric terms.

Siporin explores the religious and spiritual implications of moral philosophy for social work in the most detail. He believes that the individualistic, narcissistic trend of the 1960s and 1970s has reversed, due to the influence of New Age popular thought, existential philosophy, humanistic critique of scientific positivism, and diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives. Peebles-Wilkins and Koerin provide an all-too-rare account of the history of the black mutual aid tradition, linked to African communalism, resistance to slavery and oppression, and Christian morals.

These essays indicate that our moral vision must transcend the constraints of narcissism, proprietary motive, sectarianism and ethnocentrism—but none of them specify what can or should supply such a transcendent vision. This book provides

a valuable service in stimulating further discussion to deepen philosophical and spiritual reflection upon our profession's moral purposes.

Edward R. Canada
University of Kansas

J. W. Murphy, and J. T. Pardeck. *The Computerization of Human Service Agencies*. New York: Auburn House, 1991. \$39.95 hardback.

Science, as embodied by computers cannot substitute for human reasonableness. Murphy and Pardeck make this assertion in this thin book which reviews philosophical and logistical implications of computerizing social service agencies. From a discussion of the epistemology of computerized knowledge to analyzing the promises of management information systems, Murphy and Pardeck provide a literate essay on how people interact with computers in social service agencies.

Because the authors are knowledgeable about computer applications, social service agencies, and philosophies of science, readers will find themselves agreeing with the book's thesis: the human cost of computerizing social service agencies has seldom been recognized and frequently ignored in modern information processing. The authors believe, with good reason, that social service agency administrators implement computerized clinical data collection and storage with an eye towards short term gains. The authors argue that the promises of routinized data collection, of expert systems, of "paperless" information storage, and increased efficiency have seduced managers and administrators into routine use of computers. In many cases, the seductive promises have not materialized; in other cases, the side-effects nearly outweigh the original concern. Take, for example, expert systems. In developing computerized systems that include impressive clinical decision-trees, the goal was to gain precision and to eliminate egregious errors. The authors state that in expert systems, reasonableness has been replaced by reason. Perfectly reasoned decisions can be entirely unreasonable. In abandoning common sense, expert systems have

eliminated imprecision, but entered into the realm of clinical irrelevance.

The authors also note that computerized MIS have impressive abilities to store and calculate quantitative data. However, the other side of the coin is that MIS are capable of little else. If information cannot be quantified then it is not collected and reported. Unreported data are then dismissed as intangible phenomena or as unimportant. The question that remains is how much harm such information may cause if crucial policy decisions are made solely on such inputs.

The authors further contend that the reductionism that is inherent in computerized data lead to dehumanization. Because computerized data from social service agencies reduce their workplace culture into a matrix of easily quantified variables, contextual variables are ignored, dismissed, or given crude approximations. With the loss of contextual variables comes increasing focus on the "bottom line", and social service agencies become "people services factories." Computers in social service agencies may unfortunately lead administrators to pursue short-sighted campaigns to increase efficiency and profits. When spreadsheets dominate clinical decision making, then Detroit's failures are replayed in social service agencies.

Murphy and Pardeck, however, do not end with a simple condemnation of computers. As with many technological advances, machines should not be blamed for the failings of their operators. The authors argue that managers should include workers in setting policy and especially in implementing a MIS. Such participatory management, especially be committed and seasoned social service workers, helps temper the limitations of computerized information systems.

The authors conclude with a chapter on ethical considerations that should be given serious considerations in using computerized systems. In developing a socially responsible technology, the authors advocate epistemological pluralism. What values we advocate and how we collect knowledge to judge our efforts are critical to effective social work practice. Administrators need to look beyond spreadsheets into contextual variables. By seeking out multiple data sources and by avoiding repressive management styles, humane technologies (even those with

computers) are possible. The authors have written a thought-provoking text to get people started in the right direction.

Thomas Edward Smith
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Karen S. Haynes and James Mickelson. *Affecting Change: Social Workers in the Political Arena*. New York: Longman, 1991 (second edition). \$19.95 papercover.

Functionaries concerned with setting standards in professional organizations have interminable discussion about whether it is ethical to conduct political activity in the name of the profession. These debates offer little clarity about the nature of politics. On the one hand, factional activity is said to be unacceptable. On the other hand, it is treated as a sacred obligation. Neither position does justice to a process which is vital in a sound democracy. In this undergraduate text Haynes and Mickelson deal with this problem by expanding professional activity to include political behaviors.

The volume begins with a historical overview of social work's activism, the value controversies involved, and the models for advocacy. This is followed by discussing the practitioner's influence on policy. Then there are tactics chapters on lobbying, organizing others, monitoring the bureaucracy, political action committees, and campaigning. It ends by reviewing what is involved when social workers enter politics and exhorts social workers to "jump in." Throughout, vignettes by social work politicians, some of them extensive, enliven the presentation.

This book gathers strength as it goes along. For the most part the text objectively reviews a range of standard social work advocacy intervention techniques. Policy analysis and evaluation research are used interchangeably. This is a little confusing. The implications of their models for political analysis are not well spelled out and the presentation of the models is superficial. For example, Charles Lindblom is described only as an incrementalist. His major idea is that of 'disjointed incrementalism' which he uses to make a powerful attack on rational planning. The

strongest chapters are on the practitioners, influence on policy and on social workers as politicians.

Some of the initial weakness is inevitable. It is difficult to cover a lot of history in a few pages. Some of it, however, stems from the authors' attempt to be popular rather than highlight social work's long history of effective social activism. They tend to deny this history by making frequent references to social work values as supporting the status quo. No evidence for these statements is provided. They do note that there is little agreement about how to operationalize these values. The unfortunate student is thus presented with a judgment about supporting the status quo that can't be refuted; or truisms, such as Nancy Amidei's statement in the Foreword that social workers must get involved with politics because, "That's how our side is going to win." (p. xii) The presumption seems to be that everyone knows what our side is.

They choose to illustrate social work political activity with Jeannette Rankin, a Republican child welfare and peace advocate who is best known for being the first woman elected to Congress and voting against America's participation in World War I and II. She was not a major figure in the great human welfare struggles social workers have participated in.

Contrast this with a history provided in 1930 by Jane Addams. In a speech to the National Conference on Social Work she said that social work had led the way for medicine and law in tuberculosis control, industrial safety, venereal disease control, maternal and child health, the juvenile court, legal aid and several other major problem areas. She felt it was time for social work to claim its activist heritage rather than initiate things and leave it to others to take over and get the credit.

In the material on political action committees the authors depart from their objectivity and come out strongly for the National Association of Social Worker's position. This is so even though the data that is presented shows that social work PAC's are small, raise little money, and don't influence elections.

They scarcely mention opposing arguments. In particular, the important difference between taking stands on issues and the holistic choice of supporting politicians and parties. The diversity of America is such that there is a right and left wing

in every party. Parties seldom uniformly split on issues. Most major social reforms in America have been achieved with bipartisan support. But, if you support a given politician or party the nature of the world in politics is that you don't have much influence or share in the spoils when your side isn't in.

Finally, while the authors allude to the reality of politics, such as vote trading, they give almost no indication of the extent to which America's underlife influences the political process. Many public hearings go through the motions for an issue that is already decided. Testimony before public bodies only influences the vote 15%; to 20% of the time. There is a high rate of criminal indictment and imprisonment among elected officials. Bribery is widespread. Our present system of political action committees has contributed to having inactive incumbents who are always for the right thing but don't get anything done.

In sum, this reviewer's questions concern the superficiality of much of the early material and its partisanship around political action committees. In effect, for the sake of showing that they are relevant to organized social work's current political views the authors impugn social work's past and neglect the principles which made activism successful. Beyond that this book substantially achieves its goals. It is useful as supplementary reading for an undergraduate course in social policy or community organization.

Harris Chaiklin
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