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experienced cycles of popularity and demise. Rothman's book may not meet this expectation but it offers fascinating insights into the views of those who have helped shape the field over the last thirty or so years. Explicitly designed to provide an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences, this collection makes for engaging reading. In addition, the book invites comments from a few more contemporary writers on the subject. The core contributors are a veritable galaxy of notables in the field. Their personal observations on diverse aspects of community practice document for posterity the perspectives, beliefs and activities of a generation of scholars who made a vital contribution to the development of community social work practice.

David Denny, *Social Policy and Social Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. \$75.00 hardcover.

Although social work has traditionally sought to apply professional knowledge, values and skills to deal directly with the needs of individuals, families and communities, it has also been engaged in wider social issues. Today, many social workers accept that attempts to deal with the personal problems of individuals cannot be detached from wider social policies that address their needs through services, resource allocations and other interventions that transcend social work's preoccupation with direct practice.

In Britain and several other European nations, the majority of professional social workers are employed in statutory agencies where their direct practice skills are applied in a larger context of legislation, policies and procedures. In this milieu, social work practice is largely shaped by procedural routines emanating from the wider social policy framework. In the United States, the numbers of social workers employed in the public sector has declined steady over the years but here too, social work practice is contingent on the requirements of the wider policy environment.

David Denny's book is written for social work students in Britain. It seeks to show how social work and social policy are linked, and how social work practice in fields as diverse as child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, family treatment and disability interacts with wider social policy concerns. However, the book is not merely descriptive but encourages students to

think critically about these issues. For this reason, it stresses the role of ideology in social policy and emphasizes social work's role in addressing the needs and concerns of diverse groups in society. It also includes a substantial dose of historical analysis stressing the need for student to understand the various forces that gave rise to particular policy decisions. Although the book deals exclusively with social work and social policy in Britain, it will be of interest to social workers in the United States who also need to understand the way social policy interacts with social work practice.