



September 1996

The Legal Environment of Social Work. Leila O. Schroeder.

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Recommended Citation

(1996) "*The Legal Environment of Social Work.* Leila O. Schroeder," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 23 : Iss. 3 , Article 21.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol23/iss3/21>

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BOOK NOTES

John E. Tropman, John L. Erlich and Jack Rothman (Eds.), *Tactics and Techniques of Community Intervention*. (Third Edition). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1995. \$36.50 papercover.

Jack Rothman, John L. Erlich and John E. Tropman (Eds.), *Strategies of Community Intervention*. (Fifth Edition). Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock, 1995. \$36.50 papercover.

In view of the overwhelming demand for instruction in clinical practice, it often appears that social work students are disinterested in community social work. It is encouraging, therefore, that a new journal in the field has recently been launched and that books on the subject continue to be published. It is also encouraging that demand for standard community organization textbooks, such as the two reviewed here, remains buoyant. Indeed, the publication of the 5th edition of *Strategies* and the 3rd edition of *Tactics* (both in 1995) suggests that community social practice remains a vital part of social work today.

Rothman, Erlich and Tropman's two books are now standard reference works in the field and will continue to serve as such for many years to come. Their major strength are the comprehensiveness of the topics covered and the way previously published material is made accessible to readers. Both books are augmented by original material and by the inclusion of new, up to date content. They are an excellent resource for students and practitioners alike.

Leila O. Schroeder, *The Legal Environment of Social Work*, Washington, DC: NASW Press, 1995. \$34.95.

This important book shows once again that social work practice does not take place in a vacuum. The idea that social work involves no more than counseling people with personal problems has, of course, previously been challenged. But Leila Schroeder effectively restates this point by showing the extent to which social workers operate in a legal environment which impinges on daily practice. As she demonstrates, social workers cannot ignore

this environment. Indeed, her chapter dealing with the impact of law on social work practice reveals that those who ignore the legal context of professional practice do so at their peril.

Schroeder has written an extremely useful book which should be consulted by every social worker. It is comprehensive, easy to read and informative. It begins by introducing readers to basic legal concepts, and proceeds to cover the legal dimensions of many diverse fields of social work. As was noted earlier, the book contains a particularly useful chapter on the legal implications of social work practice. The book also contains specialist sections on the legal aspects of child welfare, social security, family life and the criminal justice system. It deserves to be the standard reference work on the subject and should be widely prescribed not only for social work students but practitioners as well.

David Gladstone (Ed.), *British Social Welfare: Past Present and Future*. Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1995. \$24.95 papercover.

The belief that governments should provide universal social services for the whole population is central to the welfare state ideal. Although this ideal has found expression in many countries, it was perhaps most thoroughly embraced in Britain where the principles laid down by Lord William Beveridge and his colleagues in 1942 were widely implemented.

However, as this useful collection of papers about the British welfare state reveals, these principles are no longer universally endorsed. Mrs. Thatcher may not have demolished the welfare state, but her regime successfully undermined its basic tenets. Gladstone's book reflects the new and depressing realities of social policy in Britain. Although written as a textbook for British undergraduates, it will be of interest to readers in other countries. By analyzing the new realities facing social welfare, it transcends the purely descriptive approach which has been so widely used in many other textbooks on British social policy. Although it is characterized by mood of resignation, it is highly informative. It should be widely consulted by those who seek current information about the state of the welfare state.