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THE "CASE WORK NOTEBOOK": AN ANALYSIS OF ITS CONTENT

by

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Introduction

Although the contemporary trend of the unionization of both professional and non-professional social service workers merits careful examination of both socio-structural and ideological dimensions, the following study is confined to a historical analysis of the professional, more specifically, casework interests of a group of professional social work unionists in the late 1930s, early 1940s. The method of content analysis is used to examine several major themes within a regular section, "The Case Work Notebook," of the journal, Social Work Today, which was the major theoretical organ of the social work union movement.

Historical Context

As was true of other white-collar unions which were being formed in the early 1930s; for example, those among engineers, office workers, architects, draftsmen, public service employees, newspaper reporters, and writers, social work unionists in both the public and private sectors had a radical political image. For example, the social work unionists endorsed such leftist groups as the Councils of the Unemployed, and such radical legislation as the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill.[1] They were definitely committed to direct, partisan, and leftist political activity. Taken as a whole, the union movement was certainly to the left of the settlement movement of the Progressive Era, which has traditionally held the preeminent position in the history of social work reform. Although the emphases varied, the union movement in voluntary social work always had a three-pronged approach: a basic concern for the traditional union issues of improved wages, hours, and conditions of work; a definite commitment to professional growth and improved service to clients; and a concern for the broader social issues of the day.

It should be stressed that it was professional caseworkers who both spearheaded and formed the largest professional contingent among the social work unionists. This is interesting, particularly in light of the popular line of argument which equates the drive toward professionalization with an automatic inhibition of reform activity. In this popular view, the professional mystique dictates a narrowly clinical, neutralist approach to social work which de-emphasizes social action.[2]

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[1]See Leslie B. Alexander, "Organizing the Professional Social Worker: Union Development in Voluntary Social Work, 1930-1950," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1976, for more examples of the leftist political stance of the social work unionists.

[2]For example, see Roy Lubove, The Professional Altruist, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1965, Chapter 4. An interesting empirical challenge to this assumption is provided by: Irwin Epstein, "Specialization, Professionalization, and Social Worker Radicalism: A Test of the 'Process' Model of the Profession." Applied Social Science 2(1970): 155-63.

However, the unionists who wrote the "Case Work Notebook" articles, analyzed in this study, were strongly identified as professionals: holding membership in the American Association of Social Workers; reading professional journals; graduating from professional schools; and attending professional meetings, such as the National Conference of Social Work and the National Conference of Jewish Social Work. An important justification for analyzing the "Case Work Notebook" articles, then, is to gain some understanding of how or whether professional social work radicals translated their leftist ideological views into daily casework practice.

As noted previously, it was the journal, Social Work Today, launched in April 1934 by social work unionists in New York, which remained the theoretical organ of the social work union movement until the demise of the journal in the spring of 1942. Although never enjoying the financial stability, the large circulation or the current notoriety of the Survey, another progressive, yet less radical journal of the same period,[3] two contemporary quotes about the significance of Social Work Today are instructive. The noted social welfare historian, Clarke Chambers, stated:

> When the rank-and-file movement in 1934 established a journal of its own, Social Work Today, edited by Jacob Fisher of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research and guided by such big names in social work as Gordon Hamilton, Edward C. Lindeman, Ira Reid, Roger Baldwin, and Mary Van Kleeck, the Survey faced competition to the left to which it remained sensitive throughout the rest of the decade until the radical journal folded in the early years of the Second World War.[4]

Bertha Reynolds, a noted social work educator, theoretician and radical, had the following to say about the demise of the journal in 1942: ". . . When it was gone, a light went out of social work which has never been rekindled."[5]

Social Work Today was devoted to the concerns of all workers, whether in the public or private sector. It was published monthly, excluding June, July, and August. Although Social Work Today was a very polished and sophisticated magazine, generally about thirty-two pages in length, finances were always precarious, necessitating a good deal of volunteer effort throughout its history.

Many influential persons in social work and the broader progressive community, such as Roger Baldwin, Gordon Hamilton, Edward Lindeman, Harry Lurie, Marion Hathway, Wayne McMillen, Ira Reid, Bertha Reynolds, Frankwood Williams, and Mary Van Kleeck, were active supporters of and frequent contributors to the journal.

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[3]Note, for example, that Social Work Today's circulation peaked at about 6,000 in 1940. See Frank Bancroft, "Social Work Looks to 1940," Social Work Today 7 (January 1940): 15. In the same year, the Survey had a circulation of over 25,000. See Clarke Chambers, Paul U. Kellogg and the Survey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), pp. 163-73.

[4]Chambers, p. 160.

[5]Bertha C. Reynolds, An Uncharted Journey: Fifty Years of Growth in Social Work (New York: Citadel Press, 1963), p. 240.

In addition to frequent articles on labor, on developments among other white-collar organizations, on various New Deal programs, and on social action, Social Work Today had regular sections devoted to book reviews, correspondence, and trade union news. The latter section, called "Rank and File," was filled with news and tidbits from organizations across the country. An additional section, entitled "Case Work Notebook," devoted to direct practice issues, was added in October 1936.

"Case Work Notebook"

Geared to the caseworker in both the public and private sector, the "Case Work Notebook" was a regular monthly feature of the journal,[6] usually no more than two pages in length. This section dealt with a range of topics: from the casework relationship, to child placement, to intraprofessional relationships (e.g., how to collaborate with psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.), to supervision. Although some of these selections were more theoretical than others,[7] their usual focus was descriptive: to keep readers abreast of the latest advances in technique and theory within the field. In general, they portrayed a staunchly democratic, non-patronizing approach toward clients.

There was a special Committee on Professional Content (later called Committee on Technical Content), responsible for this Department of Social Work Today. If the author of a particular section was not specified, its authorship was attributed to this Committee. Committee membership as of February 1937 included Naomi Colmery, Helen Kepler, Pearl Miller, Clara Rabinowitz, Mary Rittenhouse, Lillian Shapiro, Ella Wallace, Esther Ziv.[8] As of October 1939, Edith Beck was listed as Chairman. Other members were: Herbert Aptekar, Jeanette Axelrode, Naomi Colmery, Jacob Hechler, Elizabeth Hiett, Margaret Kauffman, Rose Max, Helen Harris Pearlman, Callman Rawley, Claire Schwarts, Rebecca Shakow, Lillian Shapiro and Pearl B. Zimmerman.[9]

The majority of the articles (35 of 48), however, were attributable to a single author. Many of these authors, including Dr. Esther Menaker, Clara Rabinowitz, Marcel Kovarsky, Jacob Hechler, Edith Beck, Jeanette Axelrode, Frank Greving, and Robert Gomberg, were connected with various Jewish agencies in Brooklyn and New York City. The only authors representing academic social work were Dorothy Hutchinson and Fern Lowrey, both Instructors at the New York School of Social Work.

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[6]Note that the "Case Work Notebook" appeared in all but the following three issues of Social Work Today: December 1939, June-July 1940, and October 1940. No explanation was given for the omissions.

[7]See, for example, Fern Lowrey, "Case Work Notebook: The Basic Philosophy of Social Case Work," Social Work Today 6 (February 1939): 21-22.

[8]Social Work Today 4 (February 1937): 30.

[9]Social Work Today 7 (October 1939): 23.

Methodology and Theoretical Discussion

Three basic content analysis schemes were developed for this study. The first, which evolved from the data, consisted of using each article as the basic unit of analysis and sorting the articles into general themes. All of the forty-eight articles, except for one, could be sorted according to four major themes. (See Table A.)

Two other schemes were developed by the authors to organize what seemed to be significant concerns in the articles; these rating schemes were then applied to the data. In these instances, the unit of analysis was a phrase rather than the entire article. The first scheme was an authority scheme (see Table B). The second scheme was an equality scheme (see Table C).

The two investigators first rated the articles separately, and then met to decide how well the ratings agreed. When a rough sense of reliability was established, the schemes were used by a third rater, Celeste Davis, on all the material and her ratings were checked in group discussion. No formal reliability study was completed.

The debate in social work over unionism versus professionalism in the 30s can be seen in terms of the effort to define authority for social workers, in the guise, sometimes of power and sometimes of responsibility. Unionism defined authority in terms of collectivity, yet accepted hierarchy, in which management was presumed to have authority, some of which was to be wrested from management by struggle. Unionism defined the social workers as worker over against management, as the recipient of (typically) unjust authority. Professionalism, on the other hand, defined authority in terms of personal responsibility on the part of the caseworker, of sponsorship for that responsibility, social limits to it, training necessary for its allocation, and so on.

Following Kenneth Benne,[10] authority is seen as the fundamental underpinning of human interdependence. Authority consists of mediations which enable community functions. For the achievement of goals in which more than one person must endeavor, authority is necessary.

Democratic authority enables community functions through means which provide freedom and individuality to the members of the community. Authoritarian authority enables community functions through means which dampen the freedom and individuality of members of the community. (We assume, as Benne does, that freedom and individuality can exist only in community. We reject, as he does, the "liberal" view that freedom and individuality are independent of or over against community.)

Equality is a comparable concept to authority in that it is concerned with community. David Gil's analysis of social equality and social inequality parallels Benne's differentiation of democratic authority and authoritarian authority. According to Gil: "The principle of social equality derives from a central value

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[10]Kenneth Benne, A Conception of Authority (New York: Russell and Russell, 1971).

premise, according to which every individual and every social group are considered to be of equal intrinsic worth, and should, therefore, be entitled to equal civil, political, social and economic rights, responsibilities and treatment, as well as subject to equal constraints."[11]

Gil stresses that social equality implies genuine liberty and that it aims at actualization of individual differences in innate potentialities, therefore, at individuality within and through community.

Results and Discussion

1. Thematic Analysis.

TABLE A. ANALYSES OF MAJOR THEMES OF THE ARTICLES

Category	Totals
1. Nature of Casework.	
A. Dynamics of worker-client relationship (indication of scope of casework problems it deals with, techniques, goals of, hostility, resistance, etc.).	23
B. Worker as instrument of agency and larger society.	7
C. Worker and client in alliance against agency and larger society (unions, mass movements, etc.).	1
2. Relationship of casework to other professional services (psychology, teaching, psychoanalysis, medicine, etc.).	8
3. Similarities and differences of casework in the public and private sector.	1
4. Issues in supervision.	7
5. Miscellaneous.	1
Total Number of Articles	48

As enumerated in Table A, almost one-half (48%) of all the articles were classified as describing the dynamics of the worker-client relationship. Although concern with this aspect of casework practice had been elevated to an important position during the 1930s both by the publication of Virginia Robinson's influential book, A Changing Psychology of Social Casework,[12] in 1930, and the influence of developing theories of psychiatry and psychology on casework, it is somewhat surprising that only one article could be classified as dealing with the effects of unions and mass movements on clients (see category 1C).

Given the ideological bent of the union movement, more references to the importance of both mass movements of clients and the unionization of social workers as necessary adjuncts for effective casework would have been expected. As it was, only perfunctory reference was made to such forms of organized activities. One obvious conclusion is that the radical ideological perspective of these unionists was not integrated into their direct practice. Rather, primary concern was with advancing professionalization along more traditional technical lines,

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[11]David G. Gil, The Challenge of Social Equality (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976), p. 3.

[12]Virginia P. Robinson. A Changing Psychology of Social Casework (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1930).

such as through supervision, inter-professional relationships, and the worker-client relationship. Minimal attention was paid to the impact of a leftist political perspective on direct practice implementation. In other words, the "Case Work Notebook" had disappointingly little to say regarding the integration of a wide, leftist political perspective into casework practice.

2. Analysis of Authority

At a first approximation in the study of authority, two issues were most important. First, observations were divided according to whether the caseworkers were described as being guided by authority or were authorities guiding others. Were they subjects of authority, and in this sense subordinate, or were they renderers of authority, superordinates? Second, distinction was made between "just" authority, which would foster individuality and freedom in collective effort, and "unjust" authority, which would diminish these. In effect, democratic authority was compared with authoritarian authority.

The rating scheme and frequency of ratings are presented in Table B. The major headings in the scheme stemmed from the general theoretical interest as noted in the preceding paragraph. The subheadings were derived from the materials as the content was rated, much as the themes were inductively decided. In 71 of the 115 instances rated (62%), the caseworker was the authority figure. This figure actually underestimates the concern of the authors of the Case Work Notebook with the superordinate status of the caseworker and the professional use of that status. Ten of the 19 instances rated "Caseworker subjected to higher authority--Just Authority" were descriptions of the functionalist argument that the proper origin of any caseworker's authority derived from the agency. It is ambiguous in this thought whether the caseworker is controlled by the agency or empowered by the agency. Clearly, there was more attention directed toward how to be an authority than how to deal with problematic authority that impinges upon the worker.

Furthermore, the main trend pertained to just authority rather than unjust authority. The modal rating (49) refers to the caseworker as a just authority figure. In addition, most of the instances of caseworkers as unjust authority figures were statements of negation: caseworkers were warned <u>not</u> to use authority in an unjust manner.

Descriptively, the following were representative types of statements concerning the caseworker as a just authority:

> ". . . if public workers can investigate applications for relief on the basis of eligibility with real sympathy for the applicant, and then administer the money, help their clients to use other community resources as needed, encourage them by a show of interest in their expressed and apparent situation, they are performing a kind of casework which is basic to any other."

> "An authoritative role is taken only after careful study by the worker of the client's personality has shown that he is too conflicted to make wise judgments for himself, or for the time being is too upset or confused to take responsibility for his own problem"

Totals

A. Caseworker(s) subjected to higher authority
   1. Just authority. — 19
      a. Just authority impinges upon caseworker (caseworker as receiver). (N=15)
         1) Environmental or social reality as authority force.(3)
         2) Charter of institution (its nature, function, etc.) (10) as authority force.
         3) Administration as authority force. (1)
         4) Expertise as authority force. (1)
      b. Description of caseworker's response to just authority (caseworker as actor). (N=4)
         1) Worker submits to agency function. (1)
         2) Worker chooses higher authority to align with. (1)
         3) Worker deals with authority actively (e.g., uses supervision). (2)
   2. Unjust authority. — 24
      a. Unjust authority impinges upon caseworker (worker as receiver). (N=16)
         1) Environmental or social reality as authority force. (3)
         2) Charter of institution (its nature, function, etc.) as authority force. (6)
         3) Administration as authority force. (5)
         4) Expertise as authority force. (2)
      b. Description of caseworker's response to unjust authority (caseworker as actor). (N=5)
         1) Worker submits to agency function. (1)
         2) Worker chooses higher authority to align with. (2)
         3) Worker deals with authority actively. (1)
         4) Worker circumvents higher authority. (1)
      c. Other (N=3)

B. Caseworker(s) as authority figure
   1. Just authority. — 49
      a. Authority as function of agency or client's problem and needs. (7)
      b. Professional's qualities defining the authority. (15)
      c. As authority, move environmental forces in support of client. (2)
      d. As authority, help client master reality. (11)
      e. As authority, behave in particular ways in caseworker-client transaction. (7)
      f. Other. (7)
   2. Unjust authority. — 23
      a. Authority lacks grounding in function of agency or client's problem and needs. (3)
      b. Non-professional behavior in authority force. (7)
      c. Misuse of lack of expectable use of environment in support of client. (1)
      d. Help client avoid reality (e.g., treat inner life only). (6)
      e. As unjust authority, behave in particular ways in caseworker-client transactions. (6)
      f. Other

Totals 115

"The chiseler is considered in his human motivation rather than in his customary role as scapegoat for assaults upon relief standards."

"Earnest, thoughtful practitioners . . . have shown that they are aware of the importance of realities and have directed their energies toward the fostering of a 'therapeutic' life situation for their clients. They consult with teachers, principals, group-leaders, to encourage better understanding of a particular child, to foster a 'therapeutic approach' for him."

"Finally, we have the worker who, irrespective of her fundamental sympathy with or rejection of the Workers Alliance, has succeeded in resolving her conflicts and has accepted dealing with organized clients as a legitimate part of her total responsibility. . . . She does not take it as a personal affront if her client seeks aid from this outside source. . . ."

"The worker . . . would need to be free from an obscuring identification with his client as well as from an inflexible agency policy."

"A worker, therefore, who consciously uses her ability to stand away from the client psychologically, to be detached to the point of being quite different from the client, or even to be for the client a sounding board against which he tests his ambivalence or indecision,--has found an invaluable tool in a controlled objectivity. In similar manner, identification, with its content of warmth and acceptance, has tremendous technical possibilities."

Knowing that social work was institutionalizing its professionalism during this period, it is not surprising that the Case Work Notebook emphasized the caseworker as a just authority. From the descriptive material it can be seen that democratic interests were expressed; and their assessments can be recognized as relevant today. Indeed, the students who worked on this research found these documents quite contemporary and relevant.

But it is true, also, that the Case Work Notebook appeared in a journal that was started by those endeavoring to change society and to deal with the working conditions of social workers themselves. Given this context, it is reasonable to expect more instances in which caseworkers were advised about the nature of unjust authority commonly faced and the best kinds of actions for handling these pressures. The materials and services allocated by society were very limited, and the institutions for administering social services were hardly democratic. Few caseworkers were setting the policies in the agencies where they worked, or even were participating in policy discussions. Most caseworkers were being asked to do impossible tasks, as they are asked to do today. Yet, of the 115 instances of authority rated, only 25 (22%) referred at all to the unjust authority that impinges on caseworkers.

Of these relatively few instances where attention was directed to unjust authority, the larger proportion can be seen as basically complaints. That is, they are descriptions of the way in which society or the agency allocates little and asks much (too little money, too large a caseload or too little authority given). There are only five occasions in which caseworkers are advised about actively dealing with unjust authority (A_2b ratings).

Every caseworker, as caseworker, is subordinate as well as superordinate for significant proportions of daily life. The failure to provide guidance to caseworkers in respect to their subordinate functioning represented a conservatizing trend: not only was professionalism with its presumed autonomy seemingly favored over unionism in the Case Work Notebook, but a buying into the system was promoted by implicitly causing caseworkers to privately absorb the influences of unjust authority.

Not only the infrequent reference to dealing with unjust authority carried this bias. In about a third of all the unjust authority statements, the idea was implicit that caseworkers, in their non-casework lives, as citizens, as political people off the job, could struggle for a better society as a means for handling the unjust authority impinging on them. Yet the authority forces were impeding the casework activity itself. A self-administered powerlessness, adopted through depoliticizing of the casework task, is manifested through these statements.

The findings on authority can be summarized thusly:

> The progressive aspect of the Case Work Notebook resided in its analyses of caseworkers as authorities who function in a democratic manner.
>
> The conservatizing aspect of the Case Work Notebook lay in its failure to positively instruct caseworkers in dealing with unjust authority and in its politically demobilizing thrust.

3. Analysis of Equality

In the first approximation of the study of equality, two major issues and their interaction were of interest. First, observations were divided according to whether caseworkers and clients were equal or unequal with respect to being affected by larger social forces. A second major consideration was whether or not caseworkers and clients were equal in terms of acting upon larger social forces. These two issues were joined together in a variety of combinations for each rating.

Table C presents the basic rating scheme developed and the results of its application to the material. As compared with the authority scheme, where there were a total of <u>115 ratings</u>, there were only a total of 73 <u>equality ratings</u>. Equality, then, while an important preoccupation, was somewhat less important to the unionists than authority.

In over one-half of the instances (combination of Rating Numbers 1, 2 and 3 = 42 or 50%), caseworkers and clients were seen as equally affected by larger social forces. This is a strong equalitarian thrust, which represents a radical political orientation being incorporated into direct practice to some degree.

TABLE C: CASEWORKERS, CLIENTS, AND EQUALITY

	Category	Totals
1.	Equality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces and in respect to acting upon larger social forces.	14
2a.	Equality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but no reference is made to acting upon larger social forces.	17
2b.	No reference is made to caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but equality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to acting upon larger social forces.	1
3a.	Equality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but inequality in respect to acting upon larger social forces.	11
3b.	Inequality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but equality in respect to acting upon larger social forces.	4
4a.	Inequality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but no reference is made to acting upon larger social forces.	1
4b.	No reference is made to caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to being affected by larger social forces, but inequality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect to acting upon larger social forces.	2
5.	Inequality of caseworker(s) and client(s) in respect both to being affected by larger social forces and in acting upon larger social forces.	17
6.	No decision on equality or inequality is possible.	6
	Totals	73

The modal responses (17 in each case) were represented by 2a (equality of caseworkers and clients with regard to being affected by larger social forces) and 5 (inequality of caseworkers both as affected by and in acting upon larger social forces). These results seem contradictory and, in fact, can be interpreted as representing the debate over whether or not professionalization renders workers and clients unequal.

The transition point in such an interpretation between No. 2a and No. 5 is 3a (equality of caseworker and client in being affected by larger social forces, but inequality in terms of acting upon them. This category received 11 ratings.

Although caseworkers and clients are considered equal in being affected by larger social forces (42 ratings), other ratings (combination of No. 3a, 4b, and 5 = 30) reveal considerable belief in the inequality of workers and clients in terms of their ability to act upon larger forces. The assumption is that workers are superior or more powerful in relation to affecting the outside world. Such a response represents the failure of the workers to deal with their own

relative impotence, which is verified by their union participation and played out in their ideology generally. This result explains to some degree the lack of a sense of affinity with clients in social movement activity, noted in the Thematic Analysis. This result also provides another instance where professionalization serves to segregate workers and clients, providing workers with the illusion that they are more powerful than they, in fact, are.

Some examples of equality ratings are the following:

> ". . . caseworkers are more comfortable in discussing this program in terms of family preservation than in openly accepting it as an undesirable measure of economy. Why are caseworkers so adept in finding good professional reasons for these rejections? Is it our fear that relief clients would benefit from advantages usually denied other young people? . . . Are we afraid to face the fact that given such an opportunity . . . we would find family life a much more disintegrating function than we would like to think?" (Rating: 2a)

> "It is her heightened awareness of the destructiveness of the influences in her client's life that has often lead the caseworker to fight fiercely for his rights, to plead, cajole, to "casework" the people with whom the client comes in contact . . ." (Rating: 5)

> "Social workers can obtain help for themselves in watching and meeting the pain of others through a recognition that the service they represent may be the way out for the client . . . ." (Rating: 3a)

Conclusions

It would seem that the findings document a basic ambivalence within the unionists in the 1930s and 40s, an ambivalence tied to the union-professional debate and to the political aspects of social work practice. The unionists were progressive, as manifested by their attention to democratic authority and to caseworker-client equality. Yet they were also conservative, and the conservative trend came to increasingly dominate their writings in the practice area, as outspoken political radicalism dominated their other writings.

The following can be placed on the progressive side:

1. The unionists emphasized that caseworkers must take on responsibility and must work with craftsmanship and pride in worker-client relationships, not as ancillary personnel but as important, primary helping figures.

2. They began to define caseworkers as democratic authority figures, and they spelled out how democratic authority looks in practice.

3. To some degree, they described the equal buffeting society gives to workers and clients alike; the basic control that the system exerts over all its members.

On the conservative side are countervailing factors:

1. These caseworkers justified their responsibility as doing the work of society, as legitimated by conventional society, and as empowered by forces dominant in the system.

2. Although they alluded to unjust authority and to struggle against it, they failed to explore this issue, to share their wisdom, or to mobilize this kind of endeavor as part of casework practice.

3. They reflected a tendency to divorce themselves from clients by a sense of superior capability in dealing with the larger world. It was not that caseworker and client together could think through solutions more adequately than either could do alone, but that caseworkers alone held the keys to insights and solutions.

Maybe all this is contained in the fact that most of the journal concerned policy and politics, while only this small section and a few articles over the years attended to the social work practice of the members. Casework was considered to be segregated from political action.

What was true for the authors of the "Case Work Notebook" is true of many social workers today too: they are also attached to the status quo and yet eager to bring a new system into existence. The ambivalence in these writings is paralleled by the ambivalence in the field today. Through critical appraisal of the authoritarian and inequalitarian side of the Case Work Notebook writings, lessons are to be learned for current application. It is possible for young social workers to know and to build upon the positive contributions from these vital professional unionists. It is also possible that new times permit the rectification of the omissions, compromises and false directions that undermined their promise of achievement.