Radical Social Work:
Current Perspectives in Theory and Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Radical social work is not social work practiced by radicals, nor is it "socialism" espoused by welfare workers. It is, instead, a way of looking at the true aims of social work, how they are being met, and especially how these aims are inhibited by social, economic, and political forces in society. Finally, radical social work proposes methods of practice for transforming the contradictory actions of the profession and society at large into a just society based on human dignity. Theory and practice become interwoven in the challenge to the existing social order.

Many people come to "... a realization that the crisis in (public) welfare reflects ... fundamental crises... (leading to) increasing demands, especially among students in the social sciences, in social administration, and in social work that more structurally informed explanations (of interacting forces) should be developed."¹ The writer, too, is uncertain about the future of social work, and of society, and is curious about the propositions for the future of society from a radical perspective.

The paper begins with a brief overview of the accepted framework of social work, and why a radical perspective developed. The second section examines various theoretical perspectives on radicalism, social policy, and the "pathology of oppression" identified by Cloward and Piven. The final section outlines macro- and micro-cosmic approaches to practice, and integrates these into a generalized model.
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to proceed in a logical manner in this exploration of radical social work, this section begins with the accepted framework for social work. Pincus and Minahan have conceptualized social work's interventive point as the interaction between people and their environment. Thus, problems emerge from this interaction, not solely from within the people or within the environment. In addition, Pincus and Minahan have specified social work practice as fulfillment of five objectives:

1. Help develop new resource systems to meet the needs of people;
2. Establish initial linkage systems between people and resource systems;
3. Facilitate interaction between individuals within resource systems to promote the effective and humane operation of these systems to make them responsive to people's needs;
4. Facilitate on-going interactions between resource systems to enable them to work together effectively; and
5. Help people to develop and use effectively their own internal problem-solving and coping resources.

These objectives, then, form the basis for generalist social work practice.

Another way of looking at social work practice has been developed by a curriculum development project that specified ten competencies to be met by the baccalaureate level social worker. These objectives include: assessment; development and implementation of a planned strategy; enhancement of problem-solving capacities in clients; linkage; promotion of humane-ness in systems; working to create improved service delivery; evaluation of work and professional self; and contribution to the
profession's knowledge base. Thus, social work can be visualized as a set of competencies and objectives in assisting people in their interactions with the environment.

**Radical social work's impetus**

Unfortunately, it has been noted by many observers, social work does not seem to be adequately fulfilling its mission. Pincus and Minahan also identified values which guide the profession, including that "People should have access to the resources they need to accomplish life tasks, alleviate distress, and realize their own aspirations and values," and that "The transactions between people in the course of securing and utilizing resources should enhance their dignity, individuality, and self-determination." Even a casual glance at social conditions today makes it obvious that these goals are not being met.

The goals noted above of promotion of effective, responsive, and humane operation of systems, are in contradiction with current conditions. The contradiction is echoed in Baer and Fredrico's competency which states that the worker should "actively participate with others in creating new, modified or improved service, resource, opportunity programs that are more equitable, just, and responsive to consumers of services and work with others to eliminate those systems that are unjust." It is from recognition of unmet goals like these that radical social work has developed its reason for being: to challenge the social order of a capitalist system based on an unequal distribution of power and resources.

Other learned observers and practitioners are disturbed by social work's changed role and activities. Youngdahl, in an analysis of public welfare, has said he does not believe "that public assistance programs
are the answer to the problem of poverty. They are necessary to pick up the pieces, but I do not believe they are the complete answer. We need programs to prevent the conditions causing poverty, as well as treating the results." Public welfare is seen by many as a "band-aid" approach to a much more serious ailment.

In the education process of social workers, Piven and Cloward have noted that unhealthy patterns of authority are fostered in pressures to preserve the status quo, and unrealistic expectations are presented to students. According to these authors, students are "trained to mistrust their judgement, experience, and feelings, and to submit to authority over them." Furthermore, they contend, "This submissive pattern continues once in the field in order to stay alive and so (practitioners) attempt to regain superiority in dealing with clients." Bailey and Brake are critical of what is omitted from the social work curriculum:

There is no discussion of the creation of social reality by hegemony... there are no real explanations of class struggles and the way in which oppression reflects ruling-class ideology. Social work and client relations are never explored in power terms.

Analysis and criticism of current social policy also serve as an indictment for traditional social work. Galper has noted that, "Social policy... is molded in such a way that serving people becomes secondary to maintaining the system." Ideas and proposals for social policy will be presented in a later section.

Since the 1930s and the wide acceptance of the psychological model, social work has taken on a more clinical orientation than what was seen in the settlement house movement. The psychological model is concerned with enabling persons to adjust themselves to their circumstances in
an individualistic way. Bailey and Brake comment that "The influence in particular of psychology has led to an over-emphasis on pathological and clinical orientations to the detriment of structural and political implications."\textsuperscript{12} Locating the problem within the individual has thus inhibited social work's possibilities for large-scale social change.

Traditional social work seems to have many shortcomings—in its training, its educational preparation, and in the institutions and social policies it represents and supports. In the remainder of this paper, this writer will attempt to outline the theoretical base of, and plans for practice of a radical social work.

THEORY

Much of what has been written about radical social work has been theoretical in nature. This section examines some major British and American theorists and reviews their conceptualizations of a radical social work. Ideas about radicalism, social policy, and an "ideology of oppression" are explored in an attempt to form a basis for the final section on radical practice.

Radicalism

Galper explains that "... radicalism... sees social problems as a logical and inevitable consequence of society's basic organizing principles rather than anomalous or unfortunate by-products... the radical view suggests that the realization of a society that fosters human well-being will require fundamental and encompassing changes in our present order."\textsuperscript{13} He sees the present American capitalist system as irreconcilable with humanitarian goals of equality and a just distribution of resources. It is his belief that,
Radicalism is the most viable framework for understanding the problems of society at large and of social policy and social work specifically, and for generating strategies of change that might be successful in dealing with these problems.¹⁰

Rein sees the essence of the radical creed as, "... commitment to reducing inequalities and altering social conditions--political, economic, and social--as a pre-condition for individual change."¹⁵ Thus, radicalism is seen as recognition of the need for change in order to reduce the inequalities that are built into a capitalist structure.

The idea of large socio-economic change at the basic structural levels of society is central to radical thought, and various writers have explored aspects of change. For example, Taylor and Pritchard maintain that change alone is not enough; there must be some measure of understanding by those involved as well. They explain: "If it (social work) is to achieve anything other than a transitory success, it must be motivated both by a desire to achieve socialist, environmental change, and by an understanding of the forces that have brought our society to its present position."¹⁶ The importance of informed action is stressed in order for long term change to be realized, as well as meaningful.

Leonard and Corrigan look at change as it affects the individual and the social structure, and conclude that the two are not altered independently, but that they change together. They state:

Analysis that social workers undertake of individuals and social situations is not then simply a dichotomy between understanding the individual and understanding the social structure. Rather, because individuals are seen as directly related to their social circumstances... we begin to see a clear connection between individual and structural factors.¹⁷

Change, then, affects everyone.

While it may appear from the previous section that the radical view of change and society itself is pessimistic, Galper asserts that this
is not the case: "The radical view is realistic about the requirements for change, and not at all pessimistic about the possibilities for change." This view is echoed throughout the literature, where radical social work is seen as less than optimistic in the short run, but hopeful about the broader view of the welfare of humanity. This attitude contrasts with that of traditional social work which is more optimistic about individual efforts, but is doubtful about the ultimate result.

The role of the social worker in the radical movement has been explored by Taylor and Pritchard. They note, "Social work has, or could have, an important role to play in building this alternative 'socialist consciousness' which is an absolute pre-requisite for the creation of any serious mass socialist movement." Thus, the radical social worker can foster socialist ideals of equality in his or her encounters with the individual and the social structure.

Leonard and Corrigan maintain that "A much longer-term view is necessary if social work practice is to engage in politics at all... action based on a long-term perspective must involve an understanding of the fundamental kinds of social change that will occur." They have a broader view of social work practice that sees social change as a progression of alterations in the social structure.

Finally, Rein challenges that,

This is not an abstract philosophical debate. Most social work practice... must accept the conflict between the individual's needs and the imposed and often arbitrary standards of society... a radical ideal holds that the social worker must choose sides and is obligated to protect the individual against the system.

Thus radicalism advocates change, within the individual and the social system, for the benefit of those oppressed by that system.
Social policy

Pray suggests that there is an obligation for social workers who claim they are concerned with enhancing human existence to become involved in change. He writes,

As soon as one accepts responsibility, on behalf of the community, to help individuals free themselves from certain hampering and frustrating conditions of their own lives—to help them use their power for more fruitful and satisfying living—one carries, perforce, an obligation to help the community accept and establish the conditions under which and within which the services supported by the community can be made effective, so that the community's objectives in helping and individual objectives in living can actually be attained.22

This obligation for establishing conditions for effective living can be carried out by the development of social policies.

Rein notes that "Social policies have been generated to meet economic aims, but economic policies have not been used to meet social ends ... Thus America lacks a policy of using up its available labor force or redistributing income among poor individuals and resources among low-income communities."23 He frankly states that "The problem of race cannot be solved without a redistribution of authority, resources, and power. The problem of poverty requires a redistribution of income and resources."24 Thus, there is a need for social policy, for a policy geared toward a more just distribution of income and resources.

One idea that has had a significant effect on the formation of social policy is the concept of the "cycle of poverty" or "transmitted deprivation." Leonard and Corrigan explain that, "... it performs an invaluable ideological function in directing the attention toward those experiencing poverty and away from the broader structural questions which might be raised about the effects of fundamental features and contradictions of an advanced capitalist economy."25
poverty" theory sees poverty as being maintained by the poor themselves rather than by economic and political factors.

The idea of the "cycle of poverty" gained support and thereby merited concern in the early 1960s. Marris and Rein contend that it is only "... an exercise in circular reasoning... (that) does not explain so clearly where the institutions of society have failed. The argument seems to leave the responsibility for their poverty with the poor themselves... the theory still seems to assume that the poor must face up to the demands of their society, rather than the other way about."26

In contrast, some social policies of the 1960s provided for the creation of projects to study problems of communities. Some of the projects set up to study the problem of poverty insisted on institutional change. The target of reform in one such project by the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement was to be the institution, not its users. In their 1963 annual report to the Ford Foundation, the group noted that, "The major objective of PCCA is to promote change, through demonstration and research, in the character of human service rendered by governmental, private, and public institutions by making such services as effective and economic as possible."27

Rein proposes a re-assessment of the professional role to enhance the social worker's ability to function effectively in working to change policy. He urges re-examination of the source of legitimacy in a move from society to the client, as well as intervention in larger systems (in addition to work in the micro-cosmic systems).28 Furthermore, he cites the "need to judge by more than market productivity standards."29 Finally, he encourages conforming to established standards that typify the true nature of social work, stating, "The ideal of helping people
reach whatever level of performance they are capable of, that is, self-
actualization without reference to minimum standards, is a radical idea."\textsuperscript{30} Through such a re-assessment, Rein hopes that social workers can work for a society that values all persons "for whatever contributions they can make."\textsuperscript{31}

\textbf{Ideology of oppression}

Bailey and Brake write, "Radical work, we feel, is essentially un-
derstanding the position of the oppressed in the context of the social and economic structure they live in... Our aim is not... to eliminate casework, but to eliminate casework that supports ruling-class hegemony."\textsuperscript{32} This statement identifies an idea that occurs throughout the literature, an idea which Piven and Cloward have called the "ideology of oppression." This oppression can occur within existing structures, and even in attempts to alter these structures. This oppression can be countered by resist-
ance, which can eventually lead to freedom.

The social welfare system is frequently cited for concern with methods over purposes, and for re-inforcing inequalities. Galper notes that, "Social welfare has responded to human needs, but has done so in a way that further strengthens an exploitive economic system... and further integrates individuals into the logic of that system."\textsuperscript{33} By the re-inforcement of such patterns, both worker and client are trapped.

The public welfare system in particular has received harsh criticism, including purposely maintaining high turnover and systematically finding some of the most needy ineligible for benefits. Still, the public acknowledges public assistance; it eases their conscience, while simultaneouly straining their paycheck. Piven and Cloward note that, "Most writers view the (public welfare) system as shaped by morality--by
their good intentions, or by the mistaken intentions of others. Consequently, the economic and political functions of relief-giving are not clearly seen." They imply that social policy-makers need to look at possible ramifications of their decisions, as well as immediate results.

Piven and Cloward note that oppression can and does occur even in organizations committed to change of intolerable situations. They suggest that organizations can become useful to present structures by their emphasis on formal, structured tactics which lead to the loss of support by the very groups they claim to represent. They caution that their main point, however, "... is not simply that efforts to build organizations are futile. The more important is that by endeavoring to do what they cannot do, organizers fail to do what they can do." Instead of escalating the momentum of the protest, the authors maintain, activists attempt to create formal organizations which then crumble and fade because they were not the work of the protesters themselves. The organizations created are then subject to the power of the elites to control resources and thus the continuance of the organization.

Piven and Cloward propose a posture of resistance to would-be oppressors. They state,

If we believe that the maintenance of wealth and power in the United States depends in part upon the exploitation, isolation, and stigmatization of the victims of capitalism by the agency of the welfare state, then our role is to resist these processes... because we understand that the practice of these agencies are not accidental, but are central to the operation of capitalist society.

One way Piven and Cloward suggest to resist is for the social worker to free himself or herself from unexamined adherence to the status quo. They propose that the radical social worker become 1) free from unexamined belief in the benign nature of social agencies; 2) free from
the belief that the interests of the agency and the client are identical; and 3) free from the doctrine which explains virtually all problems in a client's experience in terms of personality defects. They conclude with an admonition to listen to the client: "...in thinking we know a great deal, we often ignore what clients say they need." Ultimately, Piven and Cloward support activism for and with the oppressed, but they caution against confusing means and ends, targets and allies.

Neither social work theory without action, nor activism without a knowledge base is sufficient for a radical approach to social work. The two must be integrated and work together, as Leonard has noted:

...if dominant and influential theory in social work is to be combated and radical activity to become more than unreflected activism, then developments in theory and practice must go side by side...where theory and practice are unified through the binding together of reflection on the world and action to transform it.

The next section will demonstrate some practice approaches on various levels in terms of social, political, and economic influences.

PRACTICE

Radical social work practice is perhaps easiest visualized on a macro level and it is with this that the discussion begins. Young Dahl proposes a question of emphasis, and responds to it:

Should a major emphasis be placed on effecting change in our socio-economic environment relating to causes of human problems? ...Change by preventive action through group programs, as distinguished from remedial through an individual approach, implies social action...those activities which have for their purpose an end result in social policy, including efforts to improve conditions within the present structure, as well as attempts to effect basic changes in the socio-economic-political status quo.

He maintains that overall preventive measures are the way to alter the current social situation.
Revolutionary change

A model of revolutionary change is presented by Galper which has as its basis "commitment to small collectives...at work on a variety of different projects in a variety of locations, and writing at some future time for larger efforts." These collectives will have a critical role in developing a radical analysis of society and specific social issues. Galper then proposes that the movement will work up from these collectives to a national and even international level.

Galper and others have discussed radical work in groups, agencies, and organizations. The group model is seen by Galper as an effective avenue for radical activity:

For the client and worker to analyze the political determinants of a problem and to assess the extent to which the problem is widely shared will not be as real or as powerful an experience as if the commonality emerges from the interaction of people who had previously seen their problems as idiosyncratic. Nor will it set the stage, in itself, for collective activity toward solution.

In addition, he notes that, "...given a political perspective, a group framework can enhance practice since it brings the power of a collectivity immediately to bear on the lives of individuals." Thus the group can be a powerful force in radical work.

Resistance

"Resistance is necessary in every social service setting," assert Piven and Cloward. They believe that there is much work that can and must be done within the agency itself in order to maintain humane-ness. They suggest that the worker:

...become familiar with rules and regulations, rituals and jargon and their effect on living. Learn not to serve agencies, but to penetrate them, manipulate them defy them and expose them...understand how agencies work in order to fight them in the client's interest."
In addition, they advise the worker "to challenge or evade regulations: read manuals, visit intake offices, harass staff and invoke the appeal process." They see the radical workers' role as constantly challenging and resisting the "powers that be" on behalf of the client.

Patti and Resnick offer a number of resistance strategies in staff and client relationships through the use of collaborative or adversary strategies, or a combination. They suggest activities such as petition, confrontation, bringing sanction and non-compliance.

In addition, Galper presents the perspective that "Radical social work practice can take place within agencies where social workers refuse to accept the repressive tasks assigned them, i.e. refusing to conduct 'man-in-the-house' searches." Galper sees radical work as possible and necessary on a number of levels. He notes that social workers can organize other workers in and out of the agency (i.e., unions) to begin to pressure the organization into changes, and the worker can organize outside the agency to effect even broader change.

For example, development of a "Bill of Rights for Users of Social Services" by a project in Philadelphia represents actions by radical workers to insure that their clients are protected by their agencies.

Organizing and planning for social change is outlined by Galper in a four-fold proposal. This proposal includes: political education; working with mobilized populations to provide resources of money, personnel, and organizing skills; building social units and values congruent with future expectations (i.e., clinics and clients' rights groups); and emphasizing decentralized power and control. He maintains that "If it is believed that society must be transformed to provide humane existence, then efforts should be directed toward working from the local level up."
A radical view of casework has been explored by several authors, and few have presented actual methods for radical work on a microcosmic level. Rein maintains that,

A radical casework approach would mean not merely obtaining for clients the social services they are entitled to, or helping them adjust to their environment but also trying to deal with the relevant people and institutions in the clients' environment which which are contributing to the difficulties...we need to develop casework...directed not so much at encouraging conformity (adjustments to reality)...but to marshalling the resources of clients to self-help and reform (challenge reality). Thus Rein sees that by challenging social standards and working with relevant people and resources, radical casework is a viable strategy.

Galper sees the problem with traditional casework in that it:

...does not build on a sufficiently comprehensive analysis of the extent to which a person's well-being is intertwined with the well-being of the social order, nor is it sufficiently critical of the destructive nature of the social order...it operates as though one person's private well-being could be achieved in the midst of general public squalor...(in contrast,) a radical analysis and program must be primarily responsive to human needs...it suggests a perspective...which seeks to relate these problems to the context of the social order in which they occur.

Rein has proposed a three-fold plan of action for radical casework. First, he advocates social criticism of established procedures in institutions (i.e., Gouldner's writings on the oppressive factors in the adoption process). Second, he encourages the radical worker to "revive the values social workers believe in as morally right and society accepts but fails to act on. Finally, he proposes a critique of the community for example, Lichtenberg's observation that society itself is much less therapeutic than what a psychologist works for with clients.
Leonard and Corrigan have written specifically about radical case-work as it deals with the family. They state that, "... radical social work with the family... must be based upon an analysis of the family in its relation to capitalist production and reproduction and the personal and private feelings, emotions, and conflicts that this gives rise to." Thus, the specific problems of the family unit can and must be analyzed and acted upon within a socio-economic-political context.

Galper has noted the importance of recognizing one's self as a focus of change in a radical practice. He states, "... each of us must consider his or her self as one of our primary targets of change... we do not need to define ourselves in the dominant terms of society, but must struggle for a more human definition of what we would like to be." The targets of change have ranged from the individual to the group to agencies and organizations, and finally society itself. Attempts have been made to integrate these practice modalities into a whole.

**Unified approach**

Development of an approach to practice that encompasses both macro and micro levels is not easy, but it has been attempted by a limited number of writers. According to Taylor and Pritchard, "If the need to work for and with individuals is referred to the periphery and replaced only with a concern for macro-cosmic social and political change, then there is a grave danger of further individual suffering resulting from the 'grand plan' to achieve socialism." Rein echoes this idea that the two levels must become inter-dependent when he
writes, "Action (on a macro-cosmic level)... is crucial, and should be encouraged, but it should not lead... to the neglect of the center (the individual)."64

These concerns and others have prompted Leonard to develop an integrated "paradigm for radical practice" which he has based on some of the tenets of social work. He begins with the systems theory which can form the framework "within which to grapple with an enormous range of individual, group, and wider environmental variables."65 He proposes that a Marxist approach "... acknowledges the mutual inter-connectedness of social systems, asserting the dialectical relationships between a range of variables, including the fact that the 'superstructure' of political and social institutions and the ideologies which justify them interact with the 'infrastructure' of economic production... economic variables have a preponderant influence on the system."66 Thus, elements of systems do interact with one another, but the influence of the economic sector demands special attention.

In seeking a unified approach to working with individuals, families, groups, communities, residential institutions and organizations, Leonard notes that these divisions have caused uncertainties. He states, "Dividing social work into casework, group work, and community work focused emphasis on methods over purposes, resulting in fragmentation and uncertainty about the profession."67 He acknowledges that efforts on a broad, societal level are not adequate: "The individual in his/her experience of pain and suffering is also a part of radical social work. Otherwise, the practitioner will fall into the trap of dehumanizing and fragmenting the individual—the very oppression he/she opposes."68 He concludes that, "Radical social work must therefore encompass direct
work with individuals and families, as well as with the wider groups and collectivities to which they belong, and must seek to relate organizational and individual action."69

In developing his paradigm, Leonard sees some merit in the non-radical work of Pincus and Minahan, particularly in terms of their emphasis of social work's focus as the interaction of people with their environment. This concept is important in that emphasis has shifted from pathology to interaction. Thus, the problem no longer rests within the individual or family, but in the interaction of the client systems and resource systems.

Another key point in Leonard's paradigm is the development of a critical consciousness, or conscientization. Conscientization attempts to develop praxis: "Critical reflection on reality and subsequent action upon it."70 This concept has been developed in Latin America by Paulo Friere in the area of education and its application to social work has had a profound effect on social work practice and education in Latin America.71 Leonard contends that, "This conscientization must be encouraged both with the people with whom the social worker is involved, and with the worker himself."72

Leonard presents the elements of the paradigm as a combination of context, aims, and methods. The context is that 1) social workers recognize the contradictions and incongruities in the system they work in and can help people increase their control over the structures; 2) there is a duality of people and the system they interact with, and workers can help individuals enhance their own potential in the system; 3) systems are oppressive and supportive and social workers can enhance the supportive features while working to abolish the oppressive features;
and h) the social worker must have an understanding of past and present experience on consciousness, intentions and behavior of people, so that the worker's activity is with people, not over them.\textsuperscript{73}

The aims of radical social work are seen as education, linkage, building of countersystems, and engaging individual and structural responses. Education is seen by Leonard as the key task of radical social work. He emphasizes contributing to the development of critical consciousness of oppression by its victims, and encouraging realization of their own potential, with others, to resist and overcome it.\textsuperscript{74} By linkage of people and systems, Leonard means development among all involved of an increased awareness of the implication of present social relationships.\textsuperscript{75}

In the building of countersystems, it is necessary to "develop a power base from which some changes in existing systems can be achieved, or from which in the long or short term such systems can be radically transformed or abolished."\textsuperscript{76} Leonard believes that in engaging individual and structural responses, "... the radical social worker must acknowledge that his activity is at best short-term and ameliorative intervention which tacitly supports existing structures."\textsuperscript{77} The worker can justify this work with co- incidental "activity to further the critical consciousness of the recipients of these welfare services and to build power bases from which to achieve changes in the services themselves."\textsuperscript{78} These aims encourage enhancement of the individual's potential for dealing effectively with the system, and the social worker's awareness of what is to be done and how to do it.

These aims are goals for the radical social worker. But, as Leonard states, "Radical ideology does not replace the need for a range
of skills in the effective organization and planning of the work. 79

Methods, then, are critical to the actual carrying out of radical practice. Leonard identifies three methods: dialogical relationships; group conscientization; and organization and planning. He sees equalitarian, dialogue-centered relationships as replacing the former authoritarian and oppressive relationships between a worker and client system. Exchange, not imposition, is the key to such relationships, and equity in the primary relationship is seen as vital to all else. 80

Group conscientization as a method of practice demonstrates the potential of collectives of people. Leonard states, "The group is central... for conscientization can not be undertaken by one individual on his own. Group support helps carry the tensions and anxieties."

Thus, the power of an informed and motivated group can be effectively utilized for support and action in radical practice.

Finally, organizing and planning are methods covering a broad range of activities: building and maintaining groups; defining problems; assessing resources; formulation of time-limited goals; monitoring activity; and evaluating action taken. 82 This encompasses much of what is already attempted in social work, but the realization of social, political, and economic influences on systems and the people who compose them leads to a somehow different view of social work practice—a radical social work.
CONCLUSION

This, then, is a look at radical social work: an inexact mixture of feeling that something is definitely wrong with our system, a political and economic analysis of that system, and a proposal for change within social work practice with the intention of inducing change in society as a whole. It is, Galper believes, what social work should "ideally be about" in its relationships with individuals and groups, institutions and economic structures.

The writer has tried to examine why radical social work has evolved, what its tenets are, and how a radical perspective can produce a model for practice. Radical practice based on theoretical knowledge is the critical point, as Piven and Cloward note, "Whether we work with community groups or with individuals is not the issue; the issue is what we do when we work with them." The development of further paradigms for practice should be observed with great interest, as it will be these that will shape the activity of those who call themselves radical social workers—and all those with whom they interact.
ENDNOTES


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35. Piven and Cloward, Poor People's Movements, p. xi.
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