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# Review of: The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States

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people who are excluded brings intense meaning to someone. That encounter can quickly be written off or it can lead to a probing interest that goes beyond a surface review of the situation. The second crossroad is “taking a risk and becoming an ally.” This often involves a personal exploration into the ally’s own experiences and the need to decide whether to risk one’s own situation and comfort to benefit the needs of another. The third crossroad is an “awakening to citizenship” in which the ally takes a stand and initiates long-term actions on behalf of the community. In a sense this part of the process is familiar to those taking an advocacy perspective, but the explorations go beyond client advocacy to carefully examining the values of the institutional contexts as well. The beginning of some attempts to reconcile the competing needs and values of all the parties is now undertaken. Finally, the step might be taken to “dare to become political.” Change at the institutional level typically requires revisions in organizational policy. The focus of the learning process shifts to broader changes that unlock doors to the community from which the excluded emerged.

The approach taken by the authors challenges institutionalized services and advocacy. Increased standardization of social services often limits the flexibility and opportunity to listen to and personally engage the poor. Overworked and understaffed service systems are challenged to foster the development of allies who can bring about microsystem changes. At the same time, advocacy increasingly operates at a political level because of challenges to underlying assumptions about how public welfare is to be provided with increasingly scarce public resources. Rosenfeld and Tardieu would argue that both social workers and advocates for the poor need to become more effective allies. But they would also argue that quality services and advocacy can be fostered from many different vantage points and that good social work and advocacy should promote greater public engagement from all the communities and industries that intersect with the poor. It is not enough just to provide services and benefits that sustain people in their poverty or modestly to chip away at their barriers to opportunity. More must be done to promote the development of personal and community allies, people who will dedicate themselves to fully learning and understanding the poor, engaging the poor in their own opportunities for success, and building bridges to broader public engagement so they will no longer be excluded from the opportunities of society.

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**The Road Not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States.**  
By Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews. Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2001.  
Pp. 276. \$59.95 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Writing a history of radicalism in social work is no easy task. In many ways, such a pursuit is more difficult than it would be in a variety of other fields; if one studied the legal or the medical profession or many other fields, not only might the actual numbers of self-proclaimed radicals be fewer, but, more important, the bounds of the official professional discourse and those who proclaim activism or radicalism would be less permeable. Both the interest in radical social work and the fuzziness of what it is to reflect, as I have argued elsewhere, the special role of social welfare in Western society as a shock absorber for protest and a co-opting force for those activists and their ideas that at times challenge the

status quo (David Wagner, "Radical Social Movements in the Social Services: A Theoretical Framework," *Social Service Review* 63 [1989]: 264–84; *The Quest for a Radical Profession: Social Service Careers and Political Ideology* [Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990]; and *What's Love Got to Do with It? A Critical Look at American Charity* [New York: New Press, 2000]). Social work is one of those few fields where liberals often claim to be radicals, while radicals often assert they are only liberals putting the ideals of the official profession into practice. This may be an opportunity, or it may be a danger confronted by radicals in social work along with the chroniclers of such movements.

Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews have produced a comprehensive book that covers many eras of social work history beginning with the Progressive Era. They combine a historical review and a recent interview project with a large, if self-selected, group of identified radicals in social work, some from the 1930s and many from the post-1960s period. The book's strengths and weaknesses emerge from the contradictory nature of the rich interview material, which reflects the tension, pain, and even suffering felt by many radicals within social work, and the historical material, mostly based on secondary sources, which provides a more standard history of social work.

The "road" in *The Road Not Taken* is never quite explained. Could social work as a profession somehow choose to be a "radical," taking a "road" different from the society it is in? The title itself raises an important question never confronted. Otherwise, the book is actually two books. One book reflects the interviews with victims of McCarthyism and with the activists who emerged out of the 1960s and 1970s and since. This book is rich and interesting. The reader is likely to read this book consecutively with the second, historical account of social work, which is too bad because the study improves as it moves past its relatively boilerplate historical chapters into the actual, on-the-ground experience of those who were radical in the last 6 decades and what happened to them in social work. The pain and bitterness of those interviewed who lived through the 1940s, 1950s, and even parts of the 1960s in social work is palpable. In contrast to some of the liberal claims of social work, activist and radical social workers were black-listed, purged, ignored, and cast out of the profession for more than 2 decades. The incidents recounted are important and should be mandatory reading. Reisch and Andrews also do a very credible job in their last three chapters, trying to make some sense of social work radicals in the last 3 decades, with the myriad groups and journals and the overlapping claims to activism and radicalism within official social work itself.

While the authors sometimes can be criticized for exaggerating the number and influence of radicals, nevertheless, given the contested nature of any accounts about recent politics, the authors do a fair job. Again, in the latter chapters (particularly 8–10), the interview data speak for themselves. Those interviewed, while certainly not subject to the professional blacklisting of the McCarthy Era or its total isolation, still report alienation, loneliness, and frustration in social work. The majority of those interviewed find the claims of leadership and official pronouncements of the profession to be at best inadequate and often misleading in their assertion of progressivism. Instead of an alliance with official leaders, most confront strife and anxiety in relation to their managers, supervisors, deans or directors, professional leaders, and others at social agencies where they work, at social work schools they attend or at which they teach, or in professional organizations with which they are involved. Identifying with radicals may be an opportunity for some, but clearly there seem to be as many negatives as positives in social work.

The fascinating interview material skillfully woven into prose in *The Road Not Taken* is well worth reading. In contrast, the inclusion of a surrounding official

history, particularly in the first several chapters, weakens the book. While the interview data suggest tension and conflict, Reisch and Andrews do not critically explore the history of social work or social welfare. The contradictions and ambiguities of the political struggles are glossed over. Two examples come to mind.

One example is the uncritical assertion that Jane Addams and other settlement and progressive leaders were radical. Taking Addams's pacifism in World War I as dispositive, they ignore her incredibly complex life, which generally was spent striving to resolve class conflict, promote social purity in behavior, support gradual social change, and promote Republican candidates from Theodore Roosevelt to Herbert Hoover. Like many social work accounts of history, there is little sense of what was going on in the broader context of America at the time. As a broad generalization, Addams and the Progressives were in the middle of a rapidly changing and industrializing America, which on the one side included brute force capitalism of the J. D. Rockefeller variety (then associated with the bloody massacres of workers at Ludlow, Colorado), while on the other there were radical forces such as the Wobblies and Eugene V. Debs's Socialist Party. I would suggest there was no social work radicalism in the first few decades of the twentieth century as people of the time would define it—not that would be evident to a Debs or Emma Goldman or Joe Hill. More likely—and again the difficult boundary—they were forerunners of modern liberals. Why radicals seek so hard to claim the Progressives has always escaped me.

The second example is the frustrating account of the 1930s–1950s politics and history that Reisch and Andrews present. Although recounting many incontrovertible facts, the emphasis is always on the so-called innocent victims of McCarthyism. Over and over the authors stress how the Right and its allies used McCarthyism to attack the welfare state. Yes, this is a part of the history, but the “innocent victim” ideology reminds me of how the AIDS epidemic has often been covered. Sure, the Ryan Whites helped make AIDS a disease that people could speak of, yet the major victims of the disease in the United States *are* stigmatized groups. Similarly, there were Marxists, Communists, Socialists, Trotskyists, anarchists, Musteites (a radical labor group), and other very radical people around in the 1930s and 1940s. The authors spend so much time on innocence and liberals caught in the cross fire that there is little or no discussion on what the radical groups really stood for or how they may have differed from late twentieth-century liberalism or mid-century New Dealers. Further, the paean to everyone who claims to be progressive obscures why it was so easy in postwar America to crush the existing American Left without mass protest. Had the Communist Party not consciously hidden its politics and its members, claimed to be 100 percent American, and to be, after all, only one of the gang, the great disappointment in Communism that occurred when Popular Front period turned into Cold War era might have been different. In the labor movement, for example, many workers felt sold out by the Communist Party, who supported every effort during the war to crush strikes and dissent. Many who signed petitions or were in front groups led by the party felt manipulated, no doubt. This is not to suggest that anyone deserved McCarthyism but rather to suggest that those grappling with history need to move beyond the fear of possibly antagonizing anyone to explore how the Left itself is often a problem, and how the distance between ordinary people and parties and caucuses can often be quite a large chasm.

In sum, Reisch and Andrews have done a great job at weaving qualitative interview material into a significant part of a book about radicalism in social work. The overall work is lessened by a kind of official look or, if one will, the

overall standard package the material is in, which provides the reader with little new in the way of historical or theoretical analysis.

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**Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference.** By William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Pp. 623. \$60.36 (paper).

Talk about an impeccable pedigree: *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* is a sequel to arguably the most influential methodological volume in the last 2 decades (T. D. Cook and D. T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979]), which in turn is a sequel to arguably the most seminal methodological treatise since the end of World War II (D. T. Campbell and J. C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966]). Such an exceptional heritage demands that the current volume be understood with respect to its past.

In writing about the advantages and disadvantages to various designs for conducting experiments, Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley (1966) immortalized the distinction between internal and external validity and detailed nine threats to internal and four threats to external validity. Cook and Campbell (1979) subsequently doubled the number of types of validity by adding statistical conclusion and construct validity to internal and external. In addition, that text inflated the number of threats to validity somewhat beyond the capacity of long-term memory. The authors of the current volume maintain the four-category structure of validity, thankfully add only a few new threats, and focus as much on refining the notions of validity as on enlarging them. For example, they transfer the four threats of compensatory equalization, compensatory rivalry, resentful demoralization, and treatment diffusion from the category of internal validity to the category of construct validity. This relocation is the result of conceptualizing threats to internal validity as confounds that could arise even in the absence of a treatment, while threats to construct validity encompass confounds that are present only because the treatment is present. (That this reconceptualization also demands that differential attrition in a randomized experiment be relabeled a threat to construct validity, rather than internal validity, is not noted.)

The purview of construct validity is altered in another way as well. To Cook and Campbell, construct validity concerned the labeling of causes and effects. In Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, construct validity is expanded to include the labeling of persons and settings. Similarly, external validity in Cook and Campbell referred to generalizations across persons and settings, while Shadish, Cook, and Campbell enlarge external validity to include generalizations about causes and effects as well. (Generalizations about time sometimes are and sometimes are not included in Shadish, Cook, and Campbell under the rubric of construct and external validity.) Because they remove some of the primary distinguishing features of construct and external validity, these augmentations require that the distinction between construct and external validity be reconceptualized. Although conferring construct and external validity with the same referents produces a parallelism that is appealing on the surface, I find the new conceptu-