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SACHS (Continued from Page 1)

- professionalization and licensure. The organization was a progressive force which had at least a marginal influence on moving NASW and CSWE slightly to the left. In reaction to this movement the now very powerful and relatively right-wing Society of Clinical Social Work was organized. The organizing literature of the SCSW raised concerns about the progressive trends in the field, especially the use of community paraprofessionals and the need for the field to work at the core of social work education and practice. The power and influence of the Society of Clinical Social Work has had great impact on NASW. Specifically, NASW has protected itself during the late '70's and throughout the '80's by moving to the right and adopting positions regarding licensure, third party payments and setting up committees on private practice which parallel those of the SCSW.

- 2) It is worth noting that one meaning of profession is "an avowal whether true or pretended." It is relevant for progressive social workers to ask whether the NASW code of ethics is true to their values or has whether it has become a pretense. For example, the progressive 1967 version of the code of ethics adopted by the delegate assembly begins with: " I regard as my primary obligation the welfare of the individual or group served, which includes action for improving social condition." In 1980, the code was changed and it now begins with: "The social worker's conduct and comportment as a social worker ." It then moves on to the worker's ethical responsibility to clients - Section II - which includes a section on fees. Finally, in Section VI, the last section, the next to last entry of the code states that "the social worker should advocate changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions and to promote social justice." Priorities have clearly changed.

- 3) Licensure is private property which in private practice is traded on for private benefit. The poor are systematically excluded from services offered by private practitioners. Private practitioners are usually unwilling (and in most cases unable) to offer the comprehensive and flexible services which are delivered by at least some agencies. Agencies are also more apt to provide advocacy services.

- 4) Professionalization and licensure have brought a new breed of students into the field. During the sixties, social work attracted applicants from VISTA, the Peace Corps and activists from both the civil rights and peace movements. These students saw social work as a progressive occupation through which they could live their ideals. Currently, many applicants choose social work in order to get a quick license to open a private practice. All too often, social work is chosen to avoid the lengthy time it takes to get a doctorate in clinical psychology or because the prospective student was not accepted into a clinical psychology program. Many do not call themselves social workers but rather identify themselves as therapists or psychotherapists. They want "into the system" versus systems change.

As a progressive organization, The BCRS needs to be aware of an mobilize against the regressive aspects of professionalization, licensure and private practice. This will not be easy in a generation of workers who view themselves as "entitled" rather than working for entitlements. The good fight of social work is for socialized medicine and mental health services which permits workers to advocate for clients from case to cause in the areas of jobs, housing, education, nutrition and other human needs. Some time ago, Helen Perlman called on us to put the "social" back in social work. It appears now that it is time to put the "worker" back in social worker.