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PREFACE TO THE ARTICLES ON THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND LAW DISCIPLINES

J. D. HYMAN*

THE papers which follow represent a stage in a continuing effort at the State University of New York at Buffalo to develop a sound program for the interaction between the teaching of law and the teaching of social welfare. At the present time, the University at Buffalo is engaged in a wide ranging effort to stimulate interdisciplinary study, research, and teaching. One structural reflection of the effort has been the reorganization of the academic personnel of the University into seven faculties. The School of Social Welfare is a part of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Administration. The Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence is charged not only with continuing and developing the professional education of lawyers, but also exploring the full range of possibilities for fruitful interrelationships between law, its skills, processes, and attitudes, and other disciplines, with the purpose both of enriching the scholarly study of the law and the perspective of those following it as a profession and also of making other disciplines aware of the impact of the law in their areas of concern and the possible contribution of legal approaches to the examination of problems with which they deal.

As one phase of this effort, for more than a year a joint committee consisting of Dean Benjamin H. Lyndon of the School of Social Welfare, Professor William G. Bell of the School, and Professor Louis H. Swartz and the undersigned of the Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence have been engaged in exploring ways to make more effective the interrelationship between the professions of law and social science in connection with education for those professions. The committee determined preliminarily that three courses relating to the law might profitably be offered in the School of Social Welfare. The first would be a general introduction to the institutions, techniques, and approaches of the law, in order that in future professional contacts social welfare workers might be more understanding of the orientation of the lawyers and judges with whom they come in contact. The second course tentatively projected was one in which selected problems of current concern in the administration of social welfare with respect to which the law and legal institutions were particularly significant would be explored. The third projected course would be at a more advanced level, involving an examination of the underlying value assumptions of the legal system and of the social welfare system.

In order to test the appropriateness of this approach, the committee determined that a workshop should be held at which distinguished scholars in the fields of law and social welfare would be invited to speak and at which the Faculty of the School of Social Welfare would have an opportunity to

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probe into the problems presented by the kind of interdisciplinary effort anticipated. The University was fortunate in enlisting the scholars whose papers, as presented at the opening session of the workshop on January 5, 1968, are printed in the following pages. The breadth of experience and the insights of all three speakers have combined to produce a set of papers which will be of enduring value in the further shaping of the program and, we believe, of value to others in the two professions interested in their relationships.