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	Sommario/riassunto	This original and stimulating book examines contemporary issues in social work, particularly exploring the politicisation of the profession from the 1970s onwards. Detailing the wider social and political influences on the development of social work, the book argues that underlying much social theory and practice is a pessimistic and degraded view of humanity. The author discusses different areas of social work in relation to this diminished view of the human subject, exploring the rise of the concept of abuse, the focus on individual vulnerability and the fear of the other, as well as the threat to civil liberties and privacy that has influenced changes in mental health legislation and the introduction of the Social Care Register. The book highlights the need for a new approach to social work that has a more

optimistic view of both individuals and society, and of their capacity to overcome problems. It is essential reading for students of sociology, politics and social work and for those involved in social policy and social care practice.