



## Theory and Practice of Social Work in Western Europe in the XIX-XX Centuries

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### Abstract

The article describes how social work theory and practice evolved in Western Europe over the middle of the 19th and 20th century and gathered a wealth of experience. In the 1950s of the 20th century, the magnificent theory of the scientific viewpoint was established. V. Solovyov provided the most accurate understanding of O. Comte's "positive philosophy." "O. Comte's personality arouses sympathy rather than terror," stated V. Solovyov.

The necessity for professional training of those who help the destitute was raised loudly towards the end of the 19th and 20th century. Women shouldn't work in social work, according to a group of persons that was founded. In order to work effectively with individuals in need, supporters of the profession's exclusivity for men underlined the importance of understanding the characteristics of the client. However, women started to play a significant part in the study of social work theory and in arranging the professional training of social workers in the USA around the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

The value of scientific understanding about the universe and society in general is rising in European nations.

All of these developments in Europe and the United States only accelerated by the end of the 19th century. In practically all of the European nations at the time, relatively low salaries were a result of the high proportion of potentially low-skilled employees and the dearth of available occupations, which led to severe social tensions that may endanger the political system of the time.

On the other hand, socialist Blank and his allies thought that the state should be in charge of establishing social safety. The needy have been categorized and organized by age, financial situation, gender, material state, level of labor aptitude, and other factors by other experts. During the time of the renowned German philosopher and psychologist G. Münsterberg, this issue was carefully examined. The appropriate quantity of social assistance has also been a topic of discussion since some academics think that if it is given in "excessive" amounts, it may promote social dependence. The avoidance of poverty was also a topic of discussion, and many regarded the execution of public social policies and government action as their major objective.

There has also been a great deal of debate around the employee-employer relationship. According to renowned Italian psychiatrist and forensic scientist C. Lombroso, certain criminals and immigrants fall into the category of congenital mental defects. Liberal scientists often attributed all problems to prevailing social circumstances. But they also made the following points, citing the inability to make enough money to survive as well as the harm done to the environment, the lack of security, and others:



- ✓ psychological traits unique to an individual;
- ✓ physical efficiency, i.e., condition;
- ✓ a particular "ideology" and other immediate social context;
- ✓ the typical living circumstances of the socioeconomic class that includes the poor, etc.

Determining each of these elements should assist in determining how each person will approach the subject of social assistance and particular types of support. The necessity for professional training of those who help the destitute was raised loudly towards the end of the 19th and 20th century. It's important to remember that the social worker's gender first sparked a highly contentious discussion. Even independently, it was considered during the Milan Congress of 1905. In order to properly assist individuals in need, proponents of the profession's masculinity stressed the importance of getting to know the client's personality and surroundings. The "women" said that they lacked this knowledge and that it was hard for them to find specific information regarding slum life. However, a different viewpoint gradually won out. Women have stated that they believe that women have superior perception clarity than males, and that their capacity to sympathize and feel comfortable is more prevalent.

Social professionals, particularly feminists—among whom were many philanthropists—strongly advocated this stance. They asked that women be allowed to work as social workers because they perceived this strategy as another instance of gender discrimination.

However, women started to play a significant part in the study of social work theory and in arranging the professional training of social workers in the USA around the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The Nobel Peace Prize will be given to D. Adams and M. The Richmonds (1939). They attempted to bring the English concept of "settlements" to America because they believed that a person's social context had a significant impact on how poor they became.

In essence, it was a group of affluent and well-educated benefactors moving temporarily into impoverished areas. The upcoming objectives are as follows:

- to carry out social work by directly supporting the needy at their place of residence, including material support and the implementation of specific social education "retraining" programs.
- to familiarize philanthropists with the real situation of workers and the needs of the poor.
- to develop the most effective methods of social assistance based on the obtained experimental data. A foundation was laid for helping the less fortunate, doing in-depth research into their actual needs, providing targeted support, and closely monitoring the situation. In the latter part of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, M. Richmond significantly influenced the growth of social work theory. He always argued that an individual approach to the issue of aiding the destitute is best. Following the old Puritan traditions of New England, which were somewhat strengthened by the liberal sentimentalism of the late 19th century, M. Richmond thought that treating poverty through broad-based social reforms or the establishment of a single state-wide charitable organization was preferable to treating each needy person on an individual basis. There were individual actions done. With each client, M. Richmond presented the following method of social work: acquiring information on the client's health and way of life; social diagnosis, or help selection; and social therapy, or direct work.

There are two ways to perform social therapy: directly and indirectly. The first step is speaking with the client, getting to know him well, recommending next steps, and, if required, offering any actual support, such as helping him find work or giving him a small stipend. The indirect technique makes the assumption that the client's family, who are in close proximity to him, are a



very strong influence on how well he does a work. Intriguingly, M. Richmond underlined the necessity for federal action to assist women who have been dumped by their husbands or kids, who are seen as vulnerable populations at the end. Due to his assistance, the first National School of Applied Philanthropy (now a faculty of Columbia University) was established in the United States in 1898 with the purpose of teaching social workers.

At the end of the 19th and 20th centuries, similar theoretical advancements were achieved, and in many European nations, such as Germany, the feminist A. Salomon was well-known. It should be mentioned that it occurred in Russia at the turn of the 20th and 19th centuries, as well as in the Protestant nations of Europe (England, Sweden, Germany, and Holland). The first educational institutes for social workers' professional training debuted. Such educational institutes only emerged a few decades later in predominantly Catholic nations (with the exception of France).

Returning to the practice of social work during the time period under discussion, it should be remembered that major changes in this area were introduced in 1834 in England, the most developed nation at the time. In particular, the law on mandatory financial support for those unable to support themselves that was mentioned earlier was repealed.

The state has made a sincere effort to define the group of persons who should get assistance in a more logical and selected manner. In the nation, a number of districts were established, where special councils of justices of the peace and elected citizens (including women) were tasked with finding these people and selecting the best candidates to assist them. A central, semi-state and semi-public organization for the care of the destitute oversaw the district councils. Later, in England, a specific ministry of social services was founded towards the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries. It was able to somewhat lower the number of persons who received various forms of social support with the use of such methods. They represented 5% of the population in 1863.

The regulations in England to combat people who have turned to begging as a career have also been somewhat reinforced. This brought back the practice of transferring able-bodied beggars of both sexes to newly constructed colonies or workhouses. Parallel to this, the nation's non-governmental philanthropy—from both religious and secular organizations—has grown tremendously. In his remarks, Prince Albert expressed these feelings (husband of Queen Victoria, who ruled England for almost the entire second half of the 19th century; the expressions "Victorian era" and "Victorian traditions" appeared in his honor). It should be mentioned that when these statements were spoken towards the end of the XIX century, a major portion of the English nobility regarded a royal family member's view as the law. Private charity in England developed more than in other European nations in the later part.

It should be remembered that the idea of society helping everyone in need (even after breaking the law) was not widely held in the second half of the 19th century, when individualism was most strongly expressed in Europe.

In general, giving aid is a moral obligation of every state rather than a responsibility of an individual. Many semi-religious, totally secular philanthropic organisations began to emerge in the nation during this time, trying to develop their initiatives by incorporating aspects of a scientific approach to aiding the underprivileged. Here, the Salvation Army was founded in 1878. It is a semi-religious group whose goals include helping the needy and "saving religion."<sup>1</sup> It is possible to make hazy estimates of the real impact of these public donors' actions. On the one hand, they help the poor, frequently keeping them from starving, giving them jobs, caring for the ill, and the aged. However, there is more proof that near the end of the 19th century, well-known American

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<sup>1</sup> Спирина В.И. Спирина М.Л. История социальной работы: учебно-методические пособие //Научный ред.д.п.н., проф. Спирина.; отв.ред. к.п.н.доц.Спирина М.Л. – Армавар, 2019-173 с.



author Jack London—who was an American individualist at heart and attracted by socialist ideas—conducted a fascinating sociological experiment in the English capital. He ventured to the city's most underprivileged areas and attempted to stay there for a few days while wandering and nearly destitute. The author shared his thoughts in the nonfiction book "Rescue." The following were the writer's primary conclusions:

The major causes of certain urban inhabitants' poverty include an unequal social structure, complacency with the status quo, and the English people's lack of initiative in looking for employment. The entrepreneurial and self-assured Americans resisted them. Since a day's gross pay for unskilled labor is not a great incentive to seek it out, this situation can only be improved gradually and by offering well-paying jobs to people who need it. Many people are acclimated to professional begging, and charities are ineffectual. In the second instance, the author used a Salvation Army dormitory as a personal example. They made an effort to reserve a few hours in the evening and following a little breakfast for them to deliver the sermon in church.

The writer was later prohibited from going to this shelter as a result of his failure to attend church since he needed to get a job. London learned at the same time that the hostel had regular guests who ate and stayed there every day. They stayed at the church for a half-day before begging on the streets, drinking, and going back to the refuge. Perhaps the author's socialist ideas contributed to his stern words. But writers have also been critical of the Salvation Army. In the German Empire, things were different. Here, the state exerted rigorous control over social support at the national level, and this was done at the expense of different forms of required state social insurance, despite the existence of a vast network of public, municipal (local), and religious charity organizations.

Chancellor Bismarck introduced a number of legislation in Germany between 1880 and 1890.

- labor health insurance;
- accident insurance;
- workers' pension insurance;
- disability insurance.

Without a doubt, one of the primary reasons for passing these regulations was to limit the impact of Bismarck's burgeoning German social democracy. Insurance payments were quite minimal. The way these events played out, however, demonstrates that the state should play its part in helping the poor during the Industrial Revolution, and that the United States was still able to do so. This support included not only municipal authorities but also the secular and religious benefactors of wealthy England.

Germany's public welfare increased throughout World War One. During this time, as the demand for assistance expanded significantly, England was compelled to "overtake" with Germany by developing governmental social support systems.

A comparable "state" approach to social welfare was seen in France and particularly in the newly established Kingdom of Italy in the final quarter of the 19th century. In France, which had a long history of state and local aid, Charity Orders were established in each municipality, including the villages, during this time, with the mission of coordinating social support in residents' homes. In France, a law was passed in 1893 requiring free medical care for the underprivileged.

In terms of Italy, it was eventually unified under a single ruler from 1861 until 1870. Social assistance was at a low level and was mostly offered by religious institutions that date back to the Middle Ages. The area had previously been separated into a number of distinct estates. The state



had to serve as an organizer and coordinator of any social help because there were hardly any traditions of secular philanthropy and municipal assistance.

As a result, the first social worker training programs began to develop at the end of the 19th century in Amsterdam, followed by Berlin and London. This indicates that social work is moving toward a professional level where social diagnoses and method and tool selection will be based on professional standards rather than general ethical standards.

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