

SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY FROM LEO XIII. TO BENEDICT XV.

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Abstract:

Background: Social work in the 19th and 20th centuries went through a transformation. In the 19th century, social work was often focused on charitable activities and voluntary organizations that provided assistance to the poor and needy. In the 20th century, it was significantly professionalized and became systematic, with an emphasis on training and a scientific approach to the work of social exclusion and inequalities.

Results: New institutions were created, such as social services and agencies, which focused on providing help and support to the most vulnerable groups of the population. Social philosophy in the 19th and 20th centuries was characterized by similar approaches and ideas. The 19th century saw the birth of major social theories and ideologies, such as Marxism, liberalism, conservatism, and anarchism. **Conclusions:** Marxism focuses on the analysis of the capitalist system and the working class, while liberalism emphasized individual freedom and the market economy.

Keywords: social work; social philosophy; representatives; changes in society; social policy

Introduction

Human history is marked by deep transformations. People have often thought about various questions and searched for corresponding answers to those questions, trying to explain why this is so (diversity of religious currents) [22]. We most often think of philosophy as something that is written in books, that philosophers in universities deal with, that is recognized science and that can be studied. The present understands philosophy either as a scientific field or as an individual approach of a person to his own self, to his own life and to the relationship of my self to the surrounding world [9,10].

The essence of social work consists in providing support, help and services to people in difficult life situations or crises. Social workers focus on strengthening individuals, families and communities through support in solving personal, family, social and economic problems. Their goal is to improve the quality of life and support people in achieving their potential and personal goals.

However, the essence of the origin and development of philosophy is human curiosity. Our constant need to ask questions and seek answers. When a person starts to wonder, to question, when he starts to doubt. People were asking philosophical (religious) questions long before philosophy as a science even came into existence [2].

Social Work

Social work has its roots since the beginning of humanity. Biblical history describes the need to care for the poor and suffering. In the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, God calls to love one's neighbor [13]. This message became a call to active Christian activity. Modern successors of this legacy include, for example, Mother Teresa, John Paul II, Pope Francis and many others. The origins of social work cannot be defined. We can define it in the two thousand year tradition of Christianity [16].

Elements of social work as a response to the cohesion of the human race, the human relationship of man to man, understanding and co-responsibility for others, the adoption of equality and justice of individuals [23]. Š. Strieženec states that we can find the roots of social work wherever there is talk of help, care of the poor, the poor, children, orphans and widows.

The term "social work" first appeared in the United States in 1917 in the name of an institution dealing with charitable activities. The previous name National Conference of Charities and Corrections was replaced by the name National

Conference of Social Work. This change was caused by the professionalization of social work, which at the beginning of the 20th century ceased to be a type of social charity and became a profession. Currently, it is a systemic activity of the whole society, aimed at providing help to other people [1].

One of the important areas of basic research in this discipline is the understanding of the nature of social work, which is expressed in a meaningful way in the form of definitions or broader definition. From the point of view of linguistic semantic construction, defining is one of the important statements about the essence of the object under investigation.

According to Strieženec, the definition should be as complete as possible, but dense in content and, if possible, should be one-sentence [23]. We can distinguish definitions:

- global, for which international organizations are responsible,
- national declared by national professional organizations, professional chambers or state administration institutions (in the form of laws or decrees),
- professional created by specialists in the theory and practice of the given field. The new international definition of social work, even more strongly than the version from 2000, is based on the so-called reform paradigm.

Social work is an applied science dealing with helping people with the goal of achieving a sufficient level of their psychosocial functioning and implementing social changes leading to the improvement of the prosperity of all people.

„In the vast majority of cases, he is the basic working tool of social work on my own.“ [4]

The role and profession requires not only education and practical training, but also certain demands on his personality and character [26]. M. Oláh et al. they mainly emphasize congruence, i.e. the agreement of the external manifestation with the internal experience, incongruence can falsely affect the client as lack of openness, which at the same time prevents the client from behaving openly and authentically, [16]

- his personal qualities, on the basis of which the client feels that he is cooperating with a "person", the helping relationship should be highly professional, but also carries elements of a normal human encounter, at the same time we also mean purposefulness and perseverance, which, within the set boundaries, show an effort to do maximum for the client [25].

The Slovak Code of Ethics emphasizes the value of service and honesty. In his work, the social worker considers it a primary obligation to serve and assist the professional community's efforts to make its services available to the widest possible public. The social worker acts in accordance with the highest requirements of professional honor.

L. Robert defines social workers as graduates of schools of social work (at the bachelor's, master's or doctoral level) who use their knowledge and skills to provide social services to clients (which may be individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations or society in general) [1].

Social workers help people develop coping and coping skills problems. They help people get the necessary resources, facilitate interactions between individuals, as well as between people and their environment. They create organizations that help people and influence social policy [14].

Selected representatives of social work

Štefan Strieženec 1938-2006

Prominent educator, scientist and theoretician in the field of social work. He was born on 23/12/1938 in Čuklasovce, received a university education in pedagogy. He married and had two children. As a teacher, he went through all levels of schools in Trnava. After 1990, he began to devote himself to social policy and social work. He was one of the founding members of the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Comenius University in Bratislava, where he worked until 2005. He died on 27 March 2006 and is buried in the cemetery in Trnava [7].

Benefit for social work

He was engaged in poetry, wrote essays and especially aphorisms. He published a collection of poems *Above the Circles of Water* and a collection of aphorisms *Eternal Half-Truths*. The determinant of his thinking and work was social justice. After 1990, he worked at the universities of Nitra and Bratislava. The book *Outline of Social Policy Issues* from 1993, published by the Comenius University in Bratislava, was the first step in defining the relationship between social policy. The dictionary of social work from 1996, which contributed to conceptual and terminological clarification in the theory of social work, followed the introduction to social work from 1999. In the area of qualification works, he collaborated with Associate Professor Bednárík's publication *Written study-qualification presentations in the field of social work* (2000). As an author, he was involved in the international field. Also significant is his co-authorship of foreign publications, such as *Dictionary of Social Protection Terms*, European Commission (2000) and *Leksykon Wiedotreningu Komunikacji*, published in Krakow (2002). He was the only one in Slovakia to deal with the definition of social work adopted at the world confederation of social workers in Montreal. It also influenced his further work, *Theory and Methodology of Social Work* from 2005. He was the chairman of the Association of Educators in Social Work in

Slovakia. Together with his colleagues, he contributed to the profiling of the Social Work field of study. He was also a member of the editorial board of the magazine Sociálné práce/Sociálna práca.

Vladimír Krčméry 1960-2022

He was born on July 24, 1960 in Bratislava in the family of a scientist and a doctor. His father's scientific interests undoubtedly inspired him as well. After high school studies, he decided to continue his studies at the Faculty of Medicine of the Comenius University in Bratislava. After completing his studies, he worked as a secondary doctor at the Bratislava clinic for infectious diseases. Since 1988, he was an assistant professor in Bratislava. At the Comenius University, he also defended his doctoral dissertation in the field of internal medicine. In 1992, the habilitation procedure in the same field also took place at the same university. In 1993, he became a doctor of sciences. After successful proceedings, in 1996 he received the title of professor in the department of internal medicine at Masaryk University. He gained further experience at foreign universities in London, Edinburgh and Philadelphia. He lectured at important medical universities at home and abroad. He was a member of domestic and foreign scientific and editorial boards and commissions. He was also a member of important organizations at the global or European level. He is the recipient of many awards, such as Scientist of the Year 1999, Slovak Academy of Sciences Literary Fund Award, Bratislava Mayor Award 2010, Zlatý Biatic Award 2010, Crystal Wing 2010 and others. Author of many monographs and scientific studies. He holds several honorary doctorates, the title of honorary professor. And the most important award is the nomination for the Nobel Prize. He died on December 20, 2022 [12].

Benefit for social work

He was an internationally recognized and respected expert in infectious disease and tropical medicine, scientist, doctor, university teacher, rector emeritus of the private University of Health and Social Work St. Alžbety in Bratislava, founder of medical and social facilities and foreign humanitarian missions in third world countries. He participated in the founding of the Faculty of Health and Social Work in Trnava. Also a share in the establishment of the state university of the Slovak Health University in Bratislava. Among the foreign activities, it is necessary to emphasize the spending of his time and energy also in the poorer countries in developing countries. He founded clinics in Kenya, Sudan, Haiti, and Cambodia. He worked tirelessly for the rights of the unborn. He was one of the main faces of the campaign for vaccination against covid during the two-year

coronavirus pandemic in Slovakia. He therefore became the target of anti-vaxxers, who threatened him with death [12].

Social philosophy

Social philosophy is a philosophical investigation of social life that results in a philosophical picture of social life. He is looking for theoretical possibilities to improve the world. The subject of social philosophy are theorists and practitioners dealing with social and societal issues of the individual as well as society. The subject of social philosophy is all questions of society concerning society and the social aspect of society [6].

Social philosophy in relation to social work discusses social work and its philosophical, methodological and axiological starting points in a remarkable way. It emphasizes the bridging of ideas into real life [18].

From Leo XIII. To Benedict XV.

Leo XIII. he was in favor of the most active participation of Catholics in political life, especially in countries where the majority of the population was Catholic. Even though in his encyclicals he defended the medieval doctrine of the divine origin of sovereign power and preferred an absolutist monarchist form of government, he admitted the possibility of cooperation with parliamentary and even republican regimes. He encouraged the establishment of Catholic trade unions, which advocated class cooperation, and various secular clerical organizations.

Leo XIII inherited from his predecessor. conflict with Germany, where Otto von Bismarck began to implement a decisive policy of separation of church and state. With this process, the chancellor wanted to break the resistance of his political opponent, supported by the clerical German party. The clergy strongly protested Bismarck's anti-clerical policy, and the Pope urged Bismarck to reconsider his anti-Church attitudes. 25 May 1887 Leo XIII. announced a reconciliation with Bismarck, who a month earlier, under public pressure, had revoked all anti-Church laws. Leo XIII. he was a political pope. During his pontificate, Catholicism experienced a huge expansion outside of Europe. He established 248 sees, 48 vicariates or prefectures and two patriarchates in North Africa, India and Japan, as well as 28 new dioceses in the USA. In 1892 he appointed the first apostolic representative in the USA. He was interested in the reunification of the church, he was the first to talk about "separated brothers".

That is why they considered him the pope of diplomacy, kings, emperors and bishops [3].

In the course of history, the Church did not give up the opportunity to talk about the issue of social life in society. When answering social questions, she relied on the natural law, which has its basis in the Gospel of Christ. The first document that answers a great social question is the encyclical *Rerum novarum* – Encyclical on the workers' question, written by Pope Leo XIII. in 1891. This encyclical is considered the basis for the very social teaching of the Church, which today is also referred to as Christian social teaching [8].

„Encyclical of Leo XIII. *Rerum novarum* represents a milestone from which all subsequent social teaching of the Church is based. This encyclical draws attention to the unfavorable social situation for the working class brought about by industrialization and new technologies. It intends to formulate a "social theory" and present a systematic interpretation of the existing dispute and its solutions, while respecting human dignity. It very clearly supports the rights of workers to form trade unions, rejects communism and unfettered capitalism, and at the same time affirms the right to private property.“ [24]

It deals mainly with the restoration of a just social order, calculates the errors from which evil in society originates, rejects socialism, makes an up-to-date social doctrine on work, on the right to property, on the principles of cooperation, on the rights of the weak, on the dignity of the poor and on the duties of the rich, on the improvement justice through love.

„The encyclical demanded cooperation between businessmen and workers, a fair wage that would be enough to support the whole family, and finally defended private property. In the encyclical, the Pope called on the state to take constant care of all citizens, including workers, and encouraged the workers themselves to join in self-help organizations. It also marked the beginning of the Church's systematic and normative social teaching and laid the foundations for the further building and development of social teaching.“ [8]

The encyclical *Rerum Novarum* is rightly called a prophetic work. The subsequent social encyclicals of the popes further developed the principles of the encyclical *Rerum novarum* and materially refer to its still relevant message [24].

As the successor of Pope Leo XIII. was elected Pius X in 1903. His pontificate lasted until 1914. Pope Pius X wrote 16 encyclicals in which he touches on social problems on the occasion of various events.

Predecessor Pius X. Leo XIII. focused on restoring the Church's external relations, Pius X decided on internal reform. Already in the first days after the election, he ordered a new codification of church law. In 1908, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* began to be published - a circular for the whole Church, in which statements and information about the happenings in the Church are published. To this day, it is a common practice not only of the Holy See, but of every diocese. Pius X had great organizational and reforming talent. Administration became much simpler, he eliminated clutter and unnecessary bureaucracy. He proposed new methods and means for pastoral care. He cared a lot about the holiness and education of priests. He reformed the liturgical music, removed the long interminable preludes during the liturgy and paid great attention to the Gregorian chant. A college for church music was established in Rome. At his initiative, a new edition of the Roman Missal and the Roman Breviary was published. The Pope had a great feeling for errors and anti-Catholic directions. In matters of faith and morals, he was adamant, but he tried to lead strays to the right path with kindness and goodness. He drew attention to the so-called modernism that began to spread. He radically rejected it in 1907 with his encyclical *Pascendi*. On the other hand, however, many did not understand the Pope correctly and when condemning modernism, they went to the other extreme (integralism) – they opposed any adaptation of the Church to modern life and wanted to have a decisive say in worldly affairs as well. However, the Pope did not do politics. He was only interested in the purity of faith and the renewal of religious life. He tried to separate the Church from the state. He issued a decree that no secular power should interfere in the election of the Pope. Even during his election, the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph interfered in the election, announcing an "exclusive objection" to the election of Cardinal Rampolla, who had the greatest prospects for election [15]. For the inner life of the Church, his decisions regarding frequent Holy Communion and Holy Communion for children were extremely important. He very often opposed the emerging modern direction called modernism. „Since he was preoccupied primarily with the crisis of modernism, he did not publish a large social encyclical. However, it is wrong to generally consider his teaching in this area to be of less interest to us.“

In 1914, Benedict XV was elected Pope. His pontificate lasted until the First World War. He had a very difficult task, namely to lead the Catholic Church in countries that were pitted against each other in war. Maintaining a neutral stance and taking the correct position on world events detracted from the seriousness of the office he held.

Most of his pontificate was dominated by the First World War, which is also mentioned as one of the possible reasons for the rather surprising papal election, during which an experienced diplomat who had been active in European politics for a long time and had a clear attitude to the newly created conflict and a plan for its solution was trusted. An important role was certainly played by the fact that, from the point of view of internal church politics, della Chiesa represented a compromise between the style of the previous popes, Leo XIII. and Pius X.). The Pope declared neutrality throughout the conflict and repeatedly called for an end to the fighting and for the non-use of some extremely cruel weapons (eg combat gases), which provoked indignant reactions on both sides. He unsuccessfully tried to mediate peace several times. Although his seven-point peace plan was rejected, as both warring parties considered it more advantageous for their adversary, some of the pope's proposals appeared again in the peace appeal of American President Woodrow Wilson in January 1918. After the end of the war, he managed to stabilize the long-term tense diplomatic he maintained relations with France and diplomatic negotiations with other countries. In 1915, he also intervened in the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the persecuted Armenians. However, they were not successful and genocide was committed against Armenians.

In addition to anti-war efforts, he worked to reorganize church structures to match modern times. In his first encyclical, he, like Pius X, rejected modernism, which, however, he defined in a much narrower sense than his predecessor, and he also treated personalities accused of modernism much more leniently. In 1917, he had the Code of Canon Law published, which represents the first comprehensive codification of the main laws and regulations of the Roman Catholic Church). He also supported missionary work in the Third World in every possible way and placed great emphasis on the education of priests coming from the original population [17].

„During the war of 1914-1918, he intervened many times and swore to the warring parties to stop military actions. According to the best experts Benedict XV. can already be considered one of the great popes of the 20th century. Right in the middle of the war campaigns, he proves his extremely broad outlook, making him one of the founders of a new international morality.“

In 1920, the Pope publishes the encyclical *Pacem, Dei munus pulcherrimum* on the restoration of Christian peace in the world. In it, he expresses his joy at the conclusion of peace and at the same time condemns the differences between nations. In this encyclical he pleads with the nations to put aside their mutual

hatred and unite in the name of Christian love, and for the nations to make a sincere peace based on Christian love and to unite in permanent alliances based on justice [17].

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the Church has always argued about social issues in society throughout the history of mankind. She did social work and helped people through the teachings of Jesus. She was guided by the gospel, practical life and Christ's teaching about love for God and neighbor. However, this teaching did not have the character of a scientific discipline. The Church had to reflect on emerging situations in the world, and so began to develop its teachings. The teachings of the Church began to be carried out systematically in the 19th century. It began to develop with the encyclical *Rerum novarum* and continues to develop. It points out emerging problems in society and offers solutions in accordance with the gospel and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Social philosophy permeates various areas of life, in which it proves to be very necessary and authoritative. It helps to prevent the emergence of new problems and debate about the future so that the future is full of love, understanding, moral behavior and responsibility towards future generations.

In the 20th century, social philosophy expanded to include new approaches and schools of thought, such as feminism, postcolonialism, and existentialism. Also, the 20th century was the age of anxiety [11].

These currents focused on new aspects of social inequalities and power struggles in the world. Existentialism, for example, dealt with questions of existence, freedom, and the meaning of life, while feminism focused on gender inequality and discrimination against women. Postcolonialism analyzed the legacy of colonialism and its impact on social, cultural and political structures in the world. These schools of thought shaped social philosophy and led to various political and social movements that shaped the history of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The activity of social work in the 20th century saw significant development and expansion. During this period, social work became an organized professional activity that focused on helping people in need, protecting social rights, and promoting social justice. Various organizations and institutions such as

charitable associations, social services, and government agencies were established to provide help and support to people in various life situations. The 20th century also saw the formation of theoretical approaches to social work, such as the humanistic approach, the systemic approach, the critical approach, which influenced how the profession came to be understood. Professional interest in social work focuses on understanding and solving complex social problems and creating better living conditions for individuals, families and communities [5]. Experts cover topics such as poverty, abuse, mental health, domestic violence, drug addiction and more. Their aim is to provide support, advice and resources to improve the quality of life of those who find themselves in need or have limited options. This interest is reflected in research, intervention development, policy and practice, as well as in professional discussions and education.

The scientific and professional activity of social work representatives includes research, analysis and application of theories and methods in the field of social work. This may include researching social problems, developing interventions and programs to address these problems, and contributing to social work policies and practices. Social workers may also write about their experiences and research in professional journals and publications.

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