Mar/Apr 2020 ISSUE 22 socialdialogue.online

Social Dialogue

Free Magazine of The International Association of Schools of Social Work

Social Work: Key lessons from its' troubled past

Confronting Social Work's troubled past: Is it time for a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The age of apology – the challenge for social work continues

The long night of the last dictatorship in Argentina

The Complicity of Organized Social Work with McCarthyism

ISSN: ISSN 2221-352X

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues & Friends

The organizers of the SWESD2020 have carefully observed the situation regarding the COVID-19 outbreak in Italy and in Europe. We were constantly evaluating press releases and other official information from relevant authorities like WHO, Italian Ministry of Health, etc., which we are in contact with.

Currently our two major aims as organizers of the Conference are protecting our delegates & speakers from becoming infected by COVID-19 during traveling for meeting at the SWESD, and also significantly contributing to the prevention of any further spread of the virus; this can only be achieved by suspending the current event schedule. Having studied all alternatives, we mutually decided to postpone the Conference to the following date:

8th to 11th of November 2020

This action is a postponement and not a cancellation of the event. We cordially regret the inconvenience this postponement might cause for you. However, this decision has been taken in order to protect the vulnerable part of our society and to reduce any risk that might be caused by travel and attendance to such an international meeting.

We wish you all the best & health for the near future and hope to see you soon.

IASSW, ICSW & Local Organising Committee SWESD2020

NEW KEY DATES

Early Registration Deadline - August 31st, 2020

Late Registration Deadline - September 30th, 2020

Final Programme - October 2020

SWESD Conference - November 8/11, 2020

STAY TUNED!

www.swesd2020.org

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Social Dialogue #22

The International Association of Schools of Social Work

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Website: www.socialdialogue.online

ISSN: 2221-352X

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The photo was taken in the "Park of Souls", on Mount Parnitha, Athens. The "Park of Souls" is an open museum of sculptures crafted on the remains of the burnt area of the mountain after the conflagration of 2007.

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Printing and logistics sponsor:

Regal Printing Limited

11/F Wyler Center

Phase II,

200 Tai Lin Pai Road,

Kwai Chung Nt

Hong Kong.

Tel: (852)2552 2202

Fax: (852)2552 0700

Web: www.regalprintingltd.com.hk

Producer: IASSW

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Email: hello@iassw-aiets.org

Website: www.iassw-aiets.org

Published by:

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

Website: www.iassw-aiets.org

Editor-in-charge Carolyn Noble

The current coronavirus has put the spotlight on many issues our profession has been raising for many years. The impact of neoliberalism on service delivery and welfare ideology resulting in the privatisation of public services and utilities causing funding and staff cutbacks and the demonising of welfare recipients are two recurring themes. The move to the right of politics and the rise of right-wing nationalism are further concerns because of the increase in the politics of fear, distrust, xenophobia and victim blaming, fostering individual egocentrism over community generosity.

With a lot of self-reflection going on as much of the world is self/physically distancing from work, love ones and social supports; with many workers losing their jobs, unable to pay for food, accommodation and essential services, this edition is dedicated to lessons learnt from our past mistakes in responding to economic, moral, ethical, political and human right challenges.

While this issue explores past transgressions committed in the name of social welfare we can learn lessons from our past actions and inaction by committing to a profession that will never allow the politics and power structures that perpetuated this abuse and neglect be replicated in our current practices and contemporary health and welfare institutions. This is especially true as this current health crisis puts huge pressures on health and welfare services as the human cost of this virus impacts on so many vulnerable people.

As the many articles in this edition attest to the uncomfortable fact that in the time of economic, moral and ethical crises and human rights violations social workers showed an inability (and at times a reluctance) to contest systemic injustices. While some did resist and advocate in favour of protecting those being discriminated against and/or abused, overall, the profession was implicit in practices that were shameful and unjust.

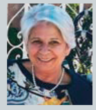
While apologies for past harms have been sincerely offered and, in many instances, accepted by those who suffered physical and emotional damage there is still more work to be done. The guest editors of this edition, Vasilios Ioakimidis, Maria-Ines Martinez and Aaron Wyllie argue that to consolidate lessons learnt and incorporate them into current practices the social work profession must establish a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC), not only to give survivors a space to share their experiences but for the profession to understand and reflect on the conditions that gave rise to and fostered harmful practices.

Included in this edition is also a warning that we still face these challenges as more restrictive and punitive control and surveillance measures are introduced to deal with the current pandemic.

In establishing a GTRC we have an opportunity to not only redress past mistakes, but an opportunity to reflect on these events and work to build a strong and effective profession ready to face current and future challenges as we are presented with yet another global crisis open to be manipulated by the more powerful moneyed players. We need to trust our institutions and practitioners to care for those made vulnerable and for our organisations to advocate for their welfare in ways that enhance their human rights and secure appropriate social and economic wellbeing.

On behalf of the guest editors I thank all the authors who have contributed to this edition.

Again, enjoy and reflect!!



PRESIDENT:
Prof. Annamaria Campanini, President, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

President's report

Dear Colleagues,

This volume of Social Dialogue is published in a very challenging period. The COVID 19 pandemic has spread to 180 countries across the world endangering lives and economic development.
Keeping health as a priority for people across the globe, the UN has cancelled both events of WSWD in NY and Geneva, even though a lot of effort had been undertaken in preparation.
This decision was welcomed by Social Workers across the world.

Many activities have taken place in the countries not yet affected by the virus, while the WSWD's celebration has been replaced by videos and other interactive presentations.

In agreement with Lena Dominelli, chair of the Disaster Intervention, Climate Change and Sustainability committee, we have decided to create a specific page on COVID 19 on our website with three different columns: News and updates, Social work teaching and Social work stories. Details of these activities are also included in this edition.

We want to share evidences about what social work academics, researchers, students and practitioners have been doing to safeguard health and well-being of the communities during this pandemic. We also want to hear how teaching and learning methodologies have been innovated, using online tools and interactive classrooms etc.. There are lessons to be shared from every country that has been affected by the virus, and IASSW can facilitate their collection so that we can learn from each other.

You all are invited to submit papers and responses in your own language, and if possible, to provide an English translation to widen the readership.

Please send 200-500 words and 2 photos, where possible, to rashmi@iassw-aiets.org and copy in the Chair of the Committee on Disaster Interventions, Climate Change and Sustainability, lena.dominelli@stir.ac.uk.

In the last quarter:

1) The IASSW Board meeting was held in January in Kuala Lumpur with the support of the APASWE President Hatta Zulkhanian, followed by a very successful seminar on School social work.
2) One important outcome of the Tripartite meeting in London with the representatives of the IASSW, ICSW and IFSW is the preparation of a memorandum of understanding to ensure ongoing cooperation among these key groups.
3) I was invited to participate to a symposium at the University of the South Pacific in Suva Fiji from the 18th to 20th of February. In collaboration with Social Work Regional Resource Centre of Oceania and the School of Social Science this meeting was organised to bring together social workers, welfare officers, community workers and academics from across Oceania to contribute to models of practice, education and research relevant for the Fijian communities. I presented a keynote speech to discuss the international priorities and issues in social work and how these interfaces with indigenous knowledge. During this symposium, the book "Pacific Social Work: Navigating Practice, Policy and Research", that has been realized in the context of the Second Resource Center supported by IASSW, was also launched.
4) The joint IASSW and IFSW task force on the Global standards for social work education is now in its final draft . Led for IASSW by Dixon Sookraj, this valuable project will be circulated shortly to collect feedback from our members and then circulated for our colleagues and institutions once the feedback had been addressed.

I want to end my notes with two important information.

- Due to the difficult situation related to the COVID19, we have decided to postpone the **Rimini IASSW and ICSW conference** - Promoting Human Relationship: Bridging the future! (www.swesd2020.org) to **8/ 11 November 2020**. The Early bird registration has been postponed to 31st of August.

We have received more that 1400 abstracts and accepted 1100, the key note speakers have sent their abstracts and are available on the website.

Our Association has selected Prof Angie Yuen as the "Eileen Younghusband lecturer" and Prof. Leila Patel as recipient of the "Katherine Kendall award".

The Rimini conference will be focused on social work education and social policy, so there will be a larger space for our academics to share ideas, experiences and develop networks and platforms to enhance international cooperation.

- The IASSW Elections will be held between April and June, 2020 with results announced at the ONILINE General Assembly to be held on Monday 13th July. For more details please visit our website: https://www.iassw-aiets.org/

I wish all of you and your loved ones good health and to go through these challenging times while maintaining our supportive engagement towards our communities.

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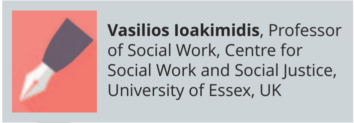
Stolen Babies victims protest in Spain. Banner reads: “Human Rights for Stolen Babies”.



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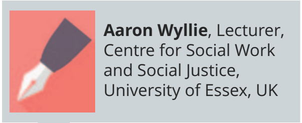

Aaron Wyllie, Lecturer, Centre for Social Work and Social Justice, University of Essex, UK

Confronting Social Work’s troubled past: Is it time for a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

Social Work and Social Service’s troubled past.

As the painful history of “Franco’s Stolen Babies” unfolds in Spain, evidence of Social Services complicity and state violence comes to the surface. In the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent defeat of the Republican forces, General Franco created a sophisticated and extensive system aiming at the ideological and political control of the population. It was based on two main pillars: the ruthless suppression of socialist ideology and the creation of the ideal-type Spanish family. The former happened mostly through incarceration, coercion and direct pathologisation of left-wing citizens while the latter primarily focused on the ideological ‘re-education’ of the Spanish family. It is estimated that up to 300,000 new-born babies of leftwing and working class families were illegally removed from their parents and given for adoption to mostly middle class nationalist families.

This practice continued well into the 1970’s. Undoubtedly, its sheer scale betrays the direct involvement of several state institutions and hundreds -if not thousands- of state affiliated professionals including doctors, nurses and social workers. The all-mighty Spanish Catholic Church held a key role in this vast surreptitious network and Franco’s Social Services were directly implicated in the removals. . Neither the case of Franco’s “stolen babies” has been an isolated episode of social work complicity nor can social services’ involvement be attributed to the “few bad apples” theory. A closer look into the political history of countries that also experienced military rule, such as Argentina and Chile, reveals that similar practices were systematic and widespread. Moreover, recent research on the violent assimilation policies targeting First Nations policies in Australia, Canada, the US and Greenland suggests that state Social Services were also actively in attempts to suppress indigenous cultures and forcibly extend settler values to native

communities. Once again, manipulating and re-shaping the institution of nuclear family was deemed to be the 'gold standard'. Details of the brutality and inter-generational trauma caused by the 'sixties scoop' in Canada and the 'stolen generations' in Australia are yet to be fully explored and recorded. Meanwhile, in South Africa for much of the 20th century mainstream social work, which had largely accepted segregationist ideologies well before 1948, readily adopted the practices of racial separation culminating with the creation of Apartheid.

The most extensive, notorious and sophisticated example of social work's complicity in practices of segregation and social engineering is that of Nazi Germany. Social services in this context served a dual purpose; on the one hand they aimed to physically and socially segregate and exterminate those families and individuals deemed 'unworthy' of being citizens of the Reich. On the other hand, they focused on educating/ reforming the family and ensuring that all members had a clear understanding of the distinct and superior status of the Aryan race. **The centrality of Nazi social work in the history of our global profession, informed our decision to dedicate a substantial part of the current special issue to this particular episode.**

Histories of resistance

Despite our focus on the most troubling aspects of social work's past, histories of resistance have not escaped our attention. Although much of the official social work profession colluded extensively with oppressive regimes, it would be a terrible omission to ignore the efforts and sacrifices of several social workers who acted collectively or individually towards resisting authoritarianism and reimagining a progressive social work. In almost every case we recounted above, considerable -albeit minority- numbers of social workers prioritised their commitment to social justice and human rights over unconditional loyalty to the State.

We need to remember and celebrate these stories, such as that of African American social worker Thyra Edwards from Chicago. Thyra Edwards was a dedicated socialist and antiracist, who strongly believed in the universal nature of the struggle against all oppressions. She travelled to Barcelona where she worked in the Rosa Luxembourg children facility while also becoming the primary link between the Afro American Community and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade fighting in Spain. She continued her anti-fascist action through the Second World War and died shortly after while trying to set up care projects for Jewish children in Rome.

As Second World War engulfed most of Europe and Northern Africa, the Red Aid, a vast anti-fascist welfare network, mobilized thousands of social workers and social welfare practitioners globally in order to develop services caring for refugees, political activists and orphan children. We also need to remember and celebrate Irena Sendler a Polish-Jewish social worker who between 1940 and 1943 saved nearly 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Thyra Johnson Edwards (December 25, 1897 – July 9, 1953) was an African-American educator, journalist, labor activist, and social worker.

(public domain source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ThyraJEdwardsPD.jpg)

These individuals and numerous other social workers, the unsung pioneers of the social work profession, suffered from vilification, arbitrary detention, harassment and state violence for decades. It is not a secret that FBI has been the best biographer of radical pre and immediate post-war social workers, such as Thyra Edwards and Jane Adams. In fact, many social workers were persecuted or even murdered because of their anti-fascist action. In Latin America alone, human rights organisations have recorded over 200 "disappearances" of practitioners who actively opposed military regimes in the 1960's and 1970's.

Professional accountability and the need for a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Despite those histories of resistance, the stark reality is that millions of people have been subjected to practices of institutional oppression and abuse in the context of Social Services. A thorough exploration of Social Work's troubled past demonstrates that Social Services are not inherently benevolent but, like most state institutions, they constitute politically contested jurisdictions. History shows that when social workers ignore what is at stake politically and instead, they emphasise on the anodyne "get on with the job" approach, they are more likely to - unwillingly or intentionally- engage with oppressive practices.

The historical tension between professional loyalty to the employer and loyalty to the user of social services is resolvable through an appreciation of the political contradictions. When social workers are expected to abide by unjust state laws, invocation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should always provide a clear and undisputed ethical compass.

Social Services and the Social Work profession have an obligation to explore, appreciate and learn from historical injustices. Communities that have suffered from institutional racism, violence and segregation in the context of social services should have a prominent role in the process of exploring such history. The stories of those affected need to be told and their traumatic experiences need inform meaningful change in policy and professional practice.

It is exactly the centrality of the collective experience of survivors and their sacrosanct right to the Truth that require a meaningful response. Social work cannot celebrate its achievements, progress and commitment to social justice while neglecting its own troubled past. Reaffirming such commitment would require that Social Work becomes the first among all Health and Social Care professions to offer an apology to communities affected by historical injustices and set up a Global Truth and Reconciliation Commission (GTRC). The international organisations representing the Social Work as a profession and academic discipline can lead the way.

The main aims of the GTRC would be to empower communities of survivors to tell their stories, provide a safe space for healing, reaffirm the human rights base of the profession and collectively articulate a vision for truly universal and democratic social services. The purpose of this process will not be to absolve the oppressive role of the State through a devolution of its historical responsibility to constituent professions or services. On the contrary a social work GTRC can provide important evidence towards highlighting the fundamental and politically contested role of the State while also demanding reform and reparations.

Social Work is the fastest-growing profession internationally, mostly because investing in social services evidently has a positive impact on societies. It is high time that the profession also demonstrates the necessary leadership, confidence and determination to re-imagine an ethical future through learning from its troubled past. It is only then that its transformative potential will be fully realised.

South Africa: the shackles of Colonialism and Apartheid

Linda Harms-Smith, School of Applied Social Studies, Robert Gordon University, United Kingdom

Horrible Histories: Tracing 'Europe' in The South. The Case of South Africa.

South African social work stands indicted with culpability for its origins in and complicity with colonialism and Apartheid in its ideologies, knowledge base, discourse and practice (McKendrick, 1999; Harms-Smith, 2014). However, British and Dutch colonisation and their logical successor, Apartheid, was the context within which social work evolved in South Africa. It arose from the consequences of racist capitalism and was characterised by discourses of charity, philanthropy and social control. Generally, social work's roots are found in processes of industrialisation and urbanisation in emerging capitalist societies of the 18th and 19th centuries (Ferguson, 2008), and in South Africa, in the capitalist imperialist project of colonisation and racist oppression. However, there are also narratives of hope and resistance in those dark times. This short article explores these contradictory histories – the formal narratives at times celebrating, from a position of collective denial, the maintenance of and complicity with the status quo and also those informal narratives of subversion, resistance and liberation

The expectation that South Africa would achieve the ideal of a rainbow nation, at peace with itself and the world (Nelson Mandela, 1994) has continued to evade a society which still struggles with structural oppression, racism, extreme poverty, racialized inequality and currently, overall the highest levels of inequality in the world (Harms-Smith, 2014; Statistics South Africa, 2019; World population review, 2019).

The transition from Apartheid in the early 1990s was a political rather than a social and economic liberation, and the class and race-based inequality, structural oppression, racism and internalised oppression are an ongoing challenge (Fanon, 1967; Stevens, 2003; Duncan, 2003). In spite of South Africa having one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, socio-economic rights are aspirational in the ideal rather than realised materially (Mugambizi and Mugambizi, 2005). The current South African context of inequality is ascribed to colonisation and Apartheid's ongoing consequences, together with global and local neo-liberal economic environments (Terreblanche, 2012; Bond, 2013), asymmetrical power relations and a race and class based society (Duncan, 2003; Stevens, 2003).

A liberal understanding of Apartheid as a consequence of Afrikaner nationalism is insufficient. These realities must be understood in terms of an historical context of colonial mercantile capitalism and later, capital industrialization and exploitative, racist relations of production (Patel, 2013). The oppressive colonial project not only

decimated peoples and expropriated land and resources, but also subjugated and destroyed histories, traditional ways and culture (Masson and Harms-Smith, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Colonialism and imperialism perpetuated by Britain and the Netherlands established persisting structural inequalities based on race, class and gender (Patel, 2013), further entrenched by the institutionalized racism and inequality of Apartheid. According to Legassik, (2008, p.441) "The colonial conquest by the mercantile Dutch East India Company and the British resulted in "racism, slavery, attempted genocide, the expropriation of land of indigenous people and the exploitation of their labour as forced labour. Here lie the roots of national oppression."

Missionary workers of philanthropic and liberal organisations, such as the London Missionary Society set out to convert 'heathen' to Christianity, spread 'civilisation' and teach the poor to be patient and obedient and to accept their lowly position in life. This appeared to diminish the injustice of the inequalities between themselves and the rich (Majeke, 1953). Missionary ideology included the expansion of the empire:

"While our missionaries are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilisation…they are extending the British empire … Wherever the missionary places his standard among a savage tribe, their prejudices against the colonial government give way, their dependence upon the colony is increased by the creation of artificial wants…Industry, trade and agriculture spring up…and every genuine convert becomes the friend and ally of the colonial government"

(Philip, 1821, cited by Bundy, 1979, p. 39).

Later, the systems of Apartheid subjugated 'black' South Africans through violent and unjust means including land and resource appropriation, unjust and repressive laws; curtailment of movement and exploitative labour practices which generated excessive wealth for white South Africans (Coovadia et al, 2009). Pernicious policies ensured that black people were positioned lowest in all areas of social and economic provision, barely able to survive. Privilege was preserved for white property-rich South Africans while black South Africans were removed forcibly into geographically designated areas, with little or no basic services, poor health and education and violently induced deprivation (Noyoo, 2003).

The complicity of social work in racist capitalism and oppression as perpetrated by European colonialism and Apartheid, especially during the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, was therefore in keeping with its roots. It is from within these

ideologies that social work finds its early formation in South Africa – perhaps inevitable that it stands indicted as complicit in oppressive practices, responsible for racist status quo maintenance, and enabling state ideologies of white supremacy.

How could this have been?

The origin of social work in South Africa is fraught with competing histories and narratives, with a prevalence of individualist, paternalistic, colonial and white hegemonic discourses (Harms-Smith, 2014). In spite of some liberalism, formal textual sources display predominantly colonial and apartheid ideologies of racism, eugenics, patriarchy and social control. Understood in Gramscian terms, this was to be expected as it is well known that state machinery is able to create hegemonic control over knowledge and thought (Flynn, 2019; Garret, 2018).

South African social work knowledge and practice was maintained in this way both through control by the political realm, or "the state," through force and laws but also through subtle maintenance by "civil society," the private realm, producing consent without threat of force (Gramsci, 1935 cited by Roelofs, 2007, p. 479). Social work systems of knowledge and practice generally and in South Africa particularly, are known to have been nurtured historically on Western, predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Eurocentric systems of thought. Ironically, these also birthed the global system of capitalist imperialism and colonialism, the consequences of which these professionals sought to address (Ferguson, 2008).

The evolution and history of social work in South Africa unfolds within the framework of colonial and apartheid welfare policies (MacPherson and Midgely, 1987) leading to complicity with racialised, white supremist goals of the Apartheid era South African welfare system (Patel, 2005).

Social work culpability: from eugenics to Apartheid

As in Britain, dominant explanations for poverty and 'unrest' were found in social Darwinism and eugenics that maintained that some people were beyond help due to their weak genetic inheritance (Ferguson and Woodward, 2009, p. 18). The strong racist discourse of eugenics formed a basis for the development of social work in South Africa during the 1920s and 1930s (Harms-Smith, 2014).

A racist "sanitation syndrome" focusing on 'white' communities arose due to concerns that 'black' inhabitants would spread infection, which led to removals and racial segregation (Worden, 2008, p. 47). Liberal ideologies as expressed in organisations such as the Race Welfare Society, founded in 1930 also used theories of eugenics to limit the fertility of 'poor whites', cultivate a healthy and productive 'white' population

DJM Photos Apartheid era signage in South Africa
https://www.flickr.com/photos/lifeisadventure/21684598286/

and avoid 'white' race degeneration (Legassik,1976). Liberal ideologies served to project an appearance of concern with social care and wellbeing, obscuring the underlying racist paternalism.

And so it was that social work, within the framework of state policy and legislation, comfortably embraced liberal 'status quo maintenance' activities.

Of significance was the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry of 1932 into the causes of 'white' poverty, which played an important role in solidifying white Afrikaner political and economic dominance. It excluded any exploration of 'black' poverty, while the report of the Commission shaped the development of social welfare and social work in South Africa in terms of policy, ideology and the discipline of social work. It made recommendations about segregation and "was seen to have formed the ideological and sociological motivation for apartheid" (Bowers-Du Toit, 2014, p. 513). This 'Poor White Study', led to the rise of the National Party with the slogan in the 1948 general elections, "The white man must remain master" (Carnegie corporation of New York, 2004). Following its recommendations, the Department of Social Welfare was established in 1937.

The Carnegie Report influenced the formalization and professionalization of social work furthering the hegemonic position that "The poor needed to be rehabilitated through developing new personal and psychological qualities" (Seekings, 2008, p. 521). This laid the grounds for social work's remedial and pathologising nature as well as the initial curricula in social work education focussing on the individual and rehabilitation (Harms-Smith, 2014).

Social work's collaboration with racist policies of segregation and unequal services and later apartheid, occurred as part of liberal efforts of the early 1930s. Support for policies which advanced white interests and claimed to 'protected' Africans, fitted with liberal ideologies and policies of the time, to structure and create a separate 'native world' based on the religion and ethics of the white ruling minority (Harms-Smith, 2014). The 1936 report of the Native Affairs Commission stated:

"… The ideal is to recreate a Bantu world which shall be enlightened by our religion and ethics, and instructed by our economic experience, whether that world lives and works in European areas or whether it is separate from the Europeans as in the Native Reserves…"

(Legassick, 1976, p. 235)

Liberalism acted through institutions to reproduce the structures of South African racialised capitalism (Legassick, 1979). Given the liberal and philanthropic history of social work, justifying participation in these activities would have been easy.

When considering the scale of oppression, violence, hardship and suffering of the majority of the population through Apartheid, and the absence of an appropriate social work response, the nature of social work as an instrument of the state is clearly evident. By 1960, "welfare became synonymous with white welfare under Nationalist rule. As 'white' families stabilised and poverty declined, government welfare services could cope with the small numbers who fell through the cracks." (Glaser, 2005, p. 327). The provision of welfare services among African people was greatly neglected and served to violate human rights and social justice.

Apartheid social welfare was tied to the political and economic objectives of the time (Patel, 2005). The services were incapable of meeting the needs of the majority and were oriented towards social control and influencing people to adapt to an unjust social system (McKendrick, 1990).

Social work as a profession during apartheid had been "understood to be inherently linked with, and in its execution inherently dependent upon, a system of racial segregation and the institutionalisation of white supremacy" (Sewpaul and Holscher, 2004, p. 76).

Social work education

Social work education is rooted in the policies of the state and the dictates of Apartheid higher education. It is notable that a founding figure of social work education was the Afrikaner nationalist Professor Verwoerd (also considered the founder of Apartheid) of the University of Stellenbosch (Harms-Smith, 2014).

Social work education, according to Kotze (1998), was strongly based on British and American models, with a clinical approach focussing on case and

group work (which inhered with the philosophy of personal responsibility) (Harms-Smith, 2014). The basis for social work training was predominantly that of the welfare system of the day and focussed on the preparation of practitioners for work in a therapeutic and restorative social welfare system (Lombard, 1998, p. 17).

An example of the contradictory narratives around the history of social work is that of the Hofmeyer College. Opened in 1941 by Ray Phillips (Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work, 1940) and closed in 1959 when state enacted legislation resulted in tertiary education institutions falling under its control. Well known graduates from the college include well known and respected national leaders and activists, Ellen Kuzwayo; Joshua Nkomo; Winnie Mandela; and Gibson Kente (Harms-Smith. 2014). The However, in spite of the college contributing to the shaping of national leaders and liberation struggle heroes, there is still evidence of hegemonic discourse and the misrecognition of relations of conflict and exploitation where the purpose of the college is described as being about eliminating 'barbarism':

"...It is becoming clearer and clearer to many Europeans that the welfare of their race in this country is bound up with that of the African race. They realise that as corn and tare [an undesirable weed] cannot grow side by side without the one overwhelming the other. So civilisation and barbarism cannot be allowed to grow side by side." (Bantu World, 1940)

Alternative discourses

During the apartheid era, alternative discourses did emerge (albeit minimally and absent from formal social work texts) through the resistance by some social workers especially within the informal welfare sector. This was especially evident during the Truth and Reconciliation process when social workers and representatives from NGOs declared their culpability and experiences during the apartheid era (Androff, 2014). They had found themselves working within an oppressive and racist system, which dictated with whom ('white' only or 'black' only), where and how they should work. This included requirements to apply racist discriminations through policies and laws.

An example of participation in the struggle for social justice is that of the South African Black Social Workers Association (SABSWA), which played an important role in the resistance against Apartheid. For example, in 1977, the Black People's Convention (BPC) convened a consultative meeting with various organisations at Hammanskraal, to work out strategies on frustrating the pending "independence" of Bophuthatswana from the Republic of South Africa.

Where social workers did engage in subversive tactics, they worked at conscientisation, organised and mobilised against the order of the day, and participated in 'grassroots' community action towards liberation. The state used harsh repressive tactics such as victimisation, intimidation, and detention without trial (Baldwin-Ragaven, de Gruchy and London, 1999). Prior to the 1994 transition, social work resistance to the Apartheid regime also occurred in sporadic ways, often within political resistance movements. However, in a more formalised way, "progressive social workers of various persuasions" in the late 1980s, also began to question their own roles in human service delivery (Ntebe, 1994, p.41).

Social change and transition to democracy

The transition to democracy and the elections of 1994 were characterised by hope and commitment to social justice. Social work had tended to remain silent about social injustice and oppression. However, new forms of oppression arise. During the 1990s pressures by global economic institutions led the South African government to adopt the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme (GEAR) in 1996 (Noyoo, 2003), exacerbating the high levels of race based poverty and inequality.

Questions must be asked about new forms of oppression and discrimination to which social workers should respond. After the transition to democracy, social workers were required to depart radically from the forms of intervention and service provision of the Apartheid era. The question is, 'what culpability might social workers carry for the evasion of oppressions and dehumanisations in the current era'?

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image: Australia's Multicultural Policy by Kate Lundy CC by 2.0, https://www.flickr.com/photos/lundyk/5449910217

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Multiculturism and Social Work in Australia: 2020 and Beyond

In 1978, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser brought to fruition the notion of multiculturalism in Australia with a view to end a racist white Australia policy. The policy was formerly designed by Al Grassby during the Labor period in the early 70s.

Fraser set the ground rules in a most difficult situation where people would be admitted based on need – not based on creed. That was a sterling breakthrough in a period which was just after the end of the White Australia policy. Fraser was approached by several people to try and bring out more refugees. One of them, Robert Manne, went to see Fraser and said we'd really like you to bring a couple of thousand people in under some sort of orderly scheme. Fraser basically said that we're going to bring in 10,000 per year; we're going to do this on a regional basis; we're going to get everyone co-operating and even though a few years ago we were shooting at each other, we must get the Vietnamese government onside. Malcolm Fraser was clearly the instigator of what became the Galbally report on post-settlement services for immigrants and their families. That's the blueprint that we live with today: it hasbeen amended and modified a bit, but that framework – which was again incredibly innovative – has shaped our capacity to respond to migration. It has made Australia's settlement process probably the most successful one in the world.

(Jakubowicz, quote as cited in Millmow et al, 2015, The Conversation)

Malcolm Fraser will always be remembered as the Prime Minister who became the champion of Australian Multiculturalism.

At a recent Deepavali festival in Canberra the current Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison, likened 'Multiculturalism in Australia to Garam Masala'[2]. He suggested that when any spice is consumed on its own it is 'rubbish', however when one blends them all together, the 'wow factor' emerges (SBS, 2019). This simplified version of Australian multiculturalism has unfortunately been detrimental to developing 'just' social policy for a group of people who now seem to be part of the inevitable future of a Multicultural Australian society. It is typical of what Watkins and Noble (2019, pp.302) deem as 'Lazy Multiculturalism', an approach that is often reflected in the adoption of Multicultural day celebrations in Australian schools. The authors grapple with the attitudes of the

image: Australia Day 2015 by Campbelltown City Council, CC BY 2.0, https://www.flickr.com/photos/campbelltowncitycouncil/, cropped

teachers and principals in Australian schools and their lack of 'intellectual labour' surrounding the complexity of a multicultural society. In their study, Watkins and Noble (2019) found that most stakeholders superficially addressed the underlying assumptions about race and cultural diversity. In Australia today, we are a long way away from the impending vision of Australian multiculturalism as crafted by those early proponents such as Fraser and his political colleagues.

One of the frustrations of political and scholarly analysis of Multiculturalism in contemporary Australia is that 'food' seems to be at the center of the discourse. What actually needs to occur is a sustained dialogue around how we build on the strengths of these emerging diverse communities and how can we work closely in developing policies that have a lasting impact on the current and future generation of multicultural communities. Unfortunately, against this backdrop, the need to build policy and practice competencies thinking and working with multicultural communities in Australia has not been fully embedded in social work academia, education or practice (Monani, 2018).

Majority of the social work competencies are centered around developing skills in a 'cross-cultural' context. As Australia embraces multiculturalism, the complexities of the communities at risk are not fully understood. These are also not thoroughly captured in social work research in Australia. For example, The Good Shepherd Youth and Family services commissioned a scoping study on Sudanese Refugees in the Yarra and Brimbank regions of Melbourne (Benhadya, 2010), the in-depth study highlighted several difficult and challenging case studies. For the purpose of this article, a young boy named Tahir's case study is highlighted, Tahir was eventually removed from his parents and placed in foster care after disclosing that he was experiencing abuse at home. This led to severe family breakdown and trauma experienced by Tahir's refugee parents who did not seem to comprehend rules around punishment and parenting in Australia. Tahir found foster placements challenging, his placements were changed rapidly, leading to Tahir experiencing considerable trauma and a nervous breakdown (Benhadya, 2010, p.33). This is not a unique case, children and families of immigrant backgrounds in places such as Norway also experience similar conundrums around parenting and removal of children (Monani, 2015). It is interesting to note that no formal evaluation on the outcomes of refugee children in Australian foster care has been undertaken from a social work perspective.

A quick literature review search using key words such as 'refugee children' and 'foster care' in Australia reveals one key publication by Barrie and Mendes (2011) on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in and leaving the out of home care system, this publication mainly highlighted a literature review that compared the outcomes between Australia and the UK. Another significant study focuses on the Australian child welfare system through a feminist lens to eexamine the experience of African mothers (Ramsay, 2016). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this article to comment on the existing research evidence, what is intended to shed light here is the lack of funding geared towards social work research critically examining the experience of children and families of multicultural backgrounds. Service user voices were effectively absent in the research.

In the Case for an Australian Academy of Social work and Social Welfare, social work academic (Healy, 2017) highlighted the extent to which Social Work is effectively excluded from the 'Fellowship of a Learned Academy', that she describes is a core measure of esteem in research building in Australia. Healy (2017) further notes that social work is also excluded from the Academy of Social Sciences Australia (ASSA). ASSA, however, recognises accounting and law, education, Psychology and Sociology. The latter disciplines of Psychology and Sociology heavily engage with the discourses around multiculturalism, including critical research on cyber racism and community resilience (Jakubowicz et al., 2017). These disciplines also encourage the publication of research that highlight the voices of participants from multicultural backgrounds. Here, it is critical to reflect on Healy's (2017, p.1) argument that social work could improve its empirical research evidence by including service user perspectives as opposed to practitioner voices and engage in statistical research. However, for the purpose of this article, the author would like to argue that along this spectrum social work could also explore synergies in research with the broader fields in child, youth and family studies, and health and ageing, and mental health that intersect with the needs of multicultural communities. Within social work academia in Australia, considerable rigour exists in the area of research concerning Indigenous communities (Briskman, 2007) and refugees (Briskman, 2017). However, Australia has about sixteen different migration visa

categories and new arrival immigrant communities representing those visa categories. To date, limited attention has been given to experiences of social exclusion or trauma among non-refugee immigrant groups. For instance, exploitation on farms of female workers from Korea, Taiwan, China, Philippines, India', could be a potential social work research topic.

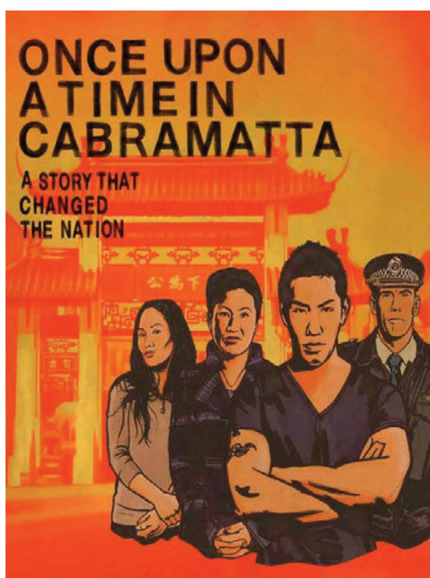
Here, it is important to highlight that the author of this article has had the opportunity to co-author a report for the Academy of Social Sciences Australia on International Students and Human Rights in Australia (Jakubowicz and Monani, 2010; Jakubowicz and Monani, 2015); published in the legal field on India and gendercide (Monani and QC Gerry, 2017), and also engage in research with Business and management discipline scholars on Immigrants in Australian agriculture (Collins, Krivokapic-skoko and Monani, 2015). The underlying themes examined in these exemplars intersect with issues related to 'multicultural' communities in Australia. The author brought her social work skills within a multidisciplinary team.

In the majority, social work curriculum in Australia at best engages with scholarly work produced by Ife (2012) on Human Rights and Social Work; Dominelli 'Anti-racist Practice' (2017). Ife (2012) and Dominelli (2017) provide case studies on overcoming oppression and racism, however, the generalisability of the findings do not particularly examine the complexities of working with multicultural communities. Racism in their research is addressed through the lens of developing inclusive practices, rather than offering models that strengthen relationships and enhance mutual trust between multicultural communities and 'white' social workers.

Social work is a white profession in Australia. Perhaps, social work could benefit from the scholarly work of the 'Guru' of Australian multiculturalism Andrew Jakubowicz's seminal work on Australian multiculturalism (1989;2002). Jakubwowicz's (2002) critical reflection on 'White Noise: Australia's struggle with Multiculturalism, he reminds scholars of multiculturalism about the extent to which 'white' plays a central part in the historic mythology of Australia. The remnants of this legacy are evident in the staffing and curriculum of the social work schools in the oldest universities in Australia.

Afterword: Personal reflection

Social work curriculum needs to embed compulsory viewing of immigrant stories narrated in the 'Once upon a time in Cabramatta' (2012) and 'Once upon a time in Punchowl' (2014) these were developed based on the advice offered by Professor Andrew Jakubowicz. The films are mostly powerful for social workers viewing as it depicts counter-transference of trauma from parents to second generation, in this case it is the Vietnamese community of Cabrmatta and the impact on their families, challenges that emerge from these traumatic situations such as drug addiction and youth crime. Thus, the documentary has all of the intersectional analysis that need to form a prerequisite for social work students interested in working with multicultural communities (Jakubowicz, 2016, p.145 as cited in Monani, 2018, p.94).



Once Upon a Time in Cabramatta is a three-part Australian documentary SBS television series about how the Vietnamese community in Cabramatta overcame the odds and found their place in multicultural Australia.

Since 2015, the author is lecturing within the discipline of social work in Australia. The subjects she mainly teaches are Ethics, Rights and Social Justice and Social Policy. There is a growing interest in studying social work in Australia by international bi-lingual students from Nepal, Nigeria, Kenya, Brazil, Philippines and India. It is critical to map their contributions to the practice of social work during the next decade. Majority of the social work practitioners in Alice Springs, Northern Territory are from India. Australian Government population growth policy is focused on regional and rural settlement of migrants. This means that as a profession we may want to develop significant foresight about the potential issues and challenges experienced by these aspiring social workers from multicultural backgrounds.

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Watkins, M., & Noble, G. (2019). Lazy multiculturalism: cultural essentialism and the persistence of the Multicultural Day in Australian schools. Ethnography and Education, 14(3), 295-310.

[2] Garam Masala is a spice used in Indian cooking. Here, the author is reminded of The Prime Minister's reference to multiculturalism as a form of 'Lazy multiculturalism', particularly having significant synergies with views presented by Watkins, M., & Noble, G. (2019). in 'Lazy multiculturalism': cultural essentialism and the persistence of the Multicultural Day in Australian schools. Ethnography and Education, 14(3), 295-310.

Image: Social workers attending a memorial event

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Chilean Social Work and the Legacies of the Dictatorship

It is well known that the right-wing, civil-military dictatorship led by Pinochet in Chile between 1973 and 1990 produced not only economic and political damage to vast sectors of the population by the violent imposition of the 'neoliberal experiment', but also provoked a significant fracture in collective trust and social bonds. Fragmentation of the Chilean society in factions 'in favour of' and 'against to' the dictatorship and neoliberal policies, along with fear, repression, and censorship, created an extremely complex political environment at that time. It needs to be added that unemployment and poverty reached a peak during the 1980s -nearly 50% of the Chilean population was under the poverty line in 1990; while privatisation policies were rapidly conducted and the state was reduced to its minimal expression (Ffrench-Davies, 2010).

Image:Workers of the Vicariate of Solidarity

Social work, as a profession always shaped by its political context, also experienced such divisions and tensions: many social workers were intimidated, persecuted, arrested, imprisoned and tortured (López, 2012; Catañeda and Salamé, 2013, Aguayo et al., 2018). According to the registers of the National Association of Social Workers, 19 colleagues were arrested and 'disappeared' during the dictatorship's first years, including at least four social workers who were pregnant at the time of detention (Vera, 2016). At the present time it is still not known where their bodies are.

But many other social workers survived and resisted such a period, struggling for the recovery of democracy. As Aguayo et al. (2018) have expressed, the history of social work is 'a history of lights and shadows', full of conservative, reactionist, colonial and oppressive practices as well as critical initiatives, committed to the struggle for social justice. The Chilean dictatorship not only represented violence and repression, but also reminds of the courage of those social workers who took the road of defending human rights and contributed to the recovery of democratic regimes, as several studies have illustrated (Morales, 2010; Castañeda y Salamé, 2013; Rubilar, 2018; Del Villar, 2018). These social workers worked under dangerous conditions, protecting those people persecuted by the regime, organising community food banks during the economic crisis, creating popular and feminist collective movements, producing knowledge from participatory active research and popular education and forming alternative professional associations (López, 2012).

Looking at the dark side

The other side of this history -often the silenced one- refers to those social workers that collaborated with the authoritarian rule of Pinochet either in passive or active ways, "deciding to maintain or even upgrade their positions at the expense of declaring their adherence to de facto regime or even justifying the repression against their colleagues" (Hernández and Ruz, 2005: 96). Some social work academics accepted to remain in their positions at universities under the rule of Chancellors and Deans imposed by the Military Junta at the same time that some of their colleagues were expelled from universities due to ideological reasons and some frontline social workers continued to work in municipalities under the direction of Mayors imposed by Pinochet. Even the Board of the National Association of Social Workers was imposed by the Military Junta bypassing established democratic procedures of election. This Board, formed by social work colleagues who supported the Pinochet's rule led social work professional organisation until 1985 (López, 2012).

Some social workers have also been accused of participating in irregular adoptions occurred during the dictatorship. Despite evidence gathered as part of a judicial inquiry suggests that irregular adoptions transcend the period of dictatorship, it has been estimated that there are more than 20,000 victims only between 1981 and 1983 (Inquiry Commission's Report, 2018). In a similar vein, the historian Alfaro-Monsalve (2018) has suggested that "data provided by international adoption centres indicate that between 1975 and 1982 the percentage of Chilean children who were subject to adoption increased considerably" (Inquiry Commission's Report, 2018: 63).

The judicial procedure, currently in development, indicates that at least nine social workers collaborated with irregular adoptions, receiving considerable payments for their professional services . According to the Inquiry Commission's Report (2018), social workers used to write legal reports indicating that children were neglected by their parents and suggested families able to provide them care and protection, demanding legal entitlement for adoption. Then, social workers took the children out of Chile -mainly to the United States and European countries- to proceed with the adoption process . In most of the reviewed cases, there was a financial contribution for mothers .

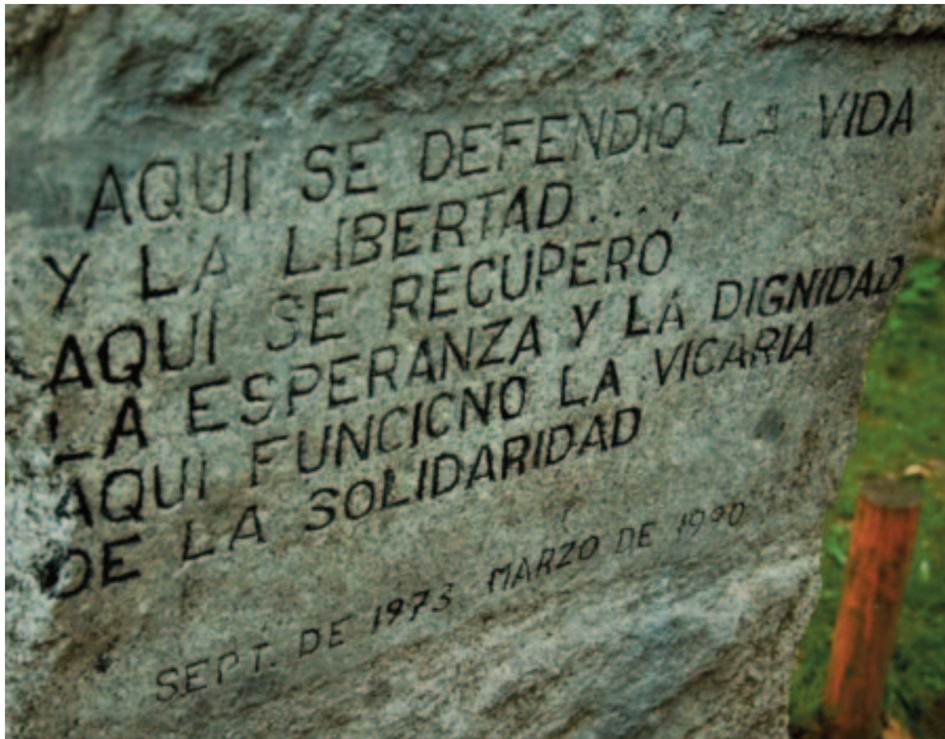

Image: Stone which reads: “Here life and freedom were defended…, here hope and dignity were recovered. Here operated the Vicariate of Solidarity. Sept 1973 – March 1990”

According to many of the testimonies gathered in the Inquiry Commission’s Report (2018: 54), “after giving birth, most of the time mothers were told by social workers that their children had died”, and “social workers wrote false reports” to support the cases for adoption. These testimonies claim that children were taken without their parents’ consent and that most of these children were not registered in the National Civil Registry as required by the Chilean regulations. The Inquiry Commission has not arrived at any conclusion regarding the motivations underlying these irregular adoptions’ procedures, although a working hypothesis is that irregular adoptions were politically motivated and underpinned by an ideological approach inspired in the ‘civilizing project’ and ‘class hate’ driven by the Pinochet’s dictatorship (Alfaro-Monsalve, 2018).

Recognising the legacies, looking for hope

The question that arises here is why Chilean social work has been able to recognise the legacy of its heroes and martyrs but has dismissed the darkest side of such a history: that of those social workers who acted against or declined to act in favour of human rights during the dictatorship. Different from professional associations in Argentina and other countries that have experienced institutional violence, Chilean social workers’ organisations have been unable to investigate and even speak about that darkest side of our professional history. We can look at structural conditions to find out some clues that may help us understand why we have negated or at least silenced such a dimension of our professional inheritance. The Pact of Silence that has protected data related to the crimes committed during the dictatorship may have inhibited disclosing the truth about those social workers that collaborated with the dictatorship. In addition, if we look at the trials for Justice and Reparation conducted since the return of the democratic regime, we can see that the results have been generally unsatisfactory for victims, marked by a prevailing denial of political crimes and a rejection of their vindication as necessary for the good of the country (Lira, 2010). This creates an environment of defencelessness, desolation and isolation, which may have also affected social workers by means of professional trauma. Whereas this may contribute to understanding the context, more research is needed to deepen this analysis, especially from the voices of those social workers that experienced this brutal episode of the Chilean history.

What can we do with our history? Reiterations and regressions to its past show that social work is pendant and in process, an unfinished project. Historical and political fractures that have shaped Chilean social work during the last four decades emerge today as a legacy that involves both neoliberal oppressions inherited from the dictatorship and resistance against them. Such a professional inheritance places limits to social work, but, at the same time, provokes the creation of emancipatory strategies to contest the hegemonic order. Our past is not a sentence. As Cortés (2018) has claimed, recognising professional inheritances compels us to choose, prefer, exclude, let collapse the legacy in order to answer the call of the present. Despite the traumatic professional past and the fact that the consequences of the dictatorship are far from ending, Chilean social workers are called, from a critical perspective, to examine the ‘lights and shadows’ of our professional history to recompose memory and look forward.

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Facing a dark and unknown chapter of the history of social work in Spain: social work in times of Franco's eugenics and stolen babies

Introduction

The first Spanish school of social work was founded in 1932 in the city of Barcelona during the Spanish II Republic (1931-1939), which historians consider the first democratic attempt in Spanish history. This school was economically supported by Raül Roviralta, who was a doctor and aristocrat, and it was linked to a Belgium Catholic school of social work. According to the testimony of one of its students, the teachers of the school were prestigious and held varied ideologies (Estrada, cited in Barbero and Feu, 2016). The foundation of this first school of social work in Spain is a well-known and celebrated milestone in the development of the profession in the country which social work students in Spain are taught about. It is also widely known that the activity of this first school of social work was however short lived as this had to come soon into a halt with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) four years after the school´s foundation.

But very little is known or discussed about some rather dark ramifications (discussed below in this article) of this school´s work and the pro-fascist political trajectory the school´s patron Roviralta would follow during and after the war. This is just one small reflection of a significant spot of political blindness affecting most historical accounts of the evolution of social work in Spain: a lack of explicit acknowledgement of social work´s history of complicity and collaboration with the social control, oppression and indoctrination methods of the country´s far right dictatorship which was established at the end of the civil war in 1939 and lasted until 1975. Extreme implications of this complicity include instances of involvement in human rights abuses such as forceful removal and stealing of babies from political prisoners and other families deemed unworthy or incapable to raise their children according to the Spanish religious and cultural values the dictatorship vowed to protect and enforce. Little is known, either, about histories of social workers´ individual and collective resistance to such abuses.

The historical background: the spanish civil war and establishment of the francoist dicatorship

The Spanish Civil War was started in 1936, as the result of a coup against the Republican government by a group of generals of the Spanish Armed Forces supported a number of nationalist conservative groups and political parties. After almost 3 years of conflict (1936-1939), the war ended with the victory of the Nationalist front and subsequent establishment of the francoist dictatorship (1939-1975), ruled by the general and dictator Francisco Franco until his death in 1975.

Auxilio Social (Social Aid) propaganda. Reads: "Social Aid protects children". The dictatorship single party (Falange) symbol is on the left. Image from feminicidio.net (free to use under non-commercial creative commons licence)

The Spanish civil war and dictatorship became internationally notorious historical events for the political passion and civil division they raised (within and outside Spain), and for the many atrocities that were committed (*on both sides during the war, on "the defeated" after this). Political repression aimed at consolidating the francoist political regime, especially in the post-war period, was ferocious and systematic. This did not only involve violent crimes such as mass killings of opponents to the regime but it also involved sophisticated family policies and strategies of social control and repression for enshrining the "national catholic" fascist ideology of the regime, eliminating the "degeneration" caused by leftist ideas and educating (or re-educating) women and children to embrace the Francoist religious, moral and cultural norms and values. The repression of the time was however disguised by a powerful propaganda machinery of the regime which praised Franco´s generosity with "the defeated" and an excellent treatment to their children as well as the regime´s top priority to protect and educate all children as they represented ´the hope of the New Spain´ (Armengou and Belis, 2002). Propaganda around the regime´s investment on the wellbeing and education of children continued throughout the dictatorship.

Influences on the francoist use of social assistance and family segregation as means of social control

It is in relation to the promotion of social work (asistencia social) as a mechanism for social control and indoctrination at the service of the francoist dictatorship that Roviralta (patron of the first school of social work in Spain) played a role. Soon after the closure of the Barcelona social work school, during the civil war, Roviralta wrote the first Spanish book on "Social Asistance" and dedicated this to the nationalist leader and future dictator of the country Francisco Franco. This dedication reads: "To his excellency Francisco Franco Bahamonde, Head of State, genuine representative of the new Spain" (Roviralta, 1938, cited in Barbero and Feu, p.29). The book extolls the Italian and Portuguese fascist dictators Mussolini and Oliveira Salazar, too, and it outlines the curriculum of the Fascist School of Social Assistance founded in Rome in 1928, noting that this is " a model institution" which the author [Roviralta] had "had the pleasure" of seeing at work and studying its methods. In 1933, the author continues to explain in this book, "facing the tone of disorder the republican regime had imposed in the social life of Spain and with the purpose of reducing ... its harm, I had the satisfaction... of founding in Barcelona a school of this type, the first of its kind in Spain" (Roviralta, 1938, cited in Barbero and Feu, 2016, p. 30).

More sinister and profound was the influence on the regime of the work of another doctor: the psychiatrist Antonio Vallejo-Nágera, who in 1938 was authorized by Franco to establish a national cabinet of psychological research aimed at discovering "the psychophysic roots of Marxism". The Spanish Cabinet of Psychological Research cabinet mirrored a recently created research institute of the Nazi German secret services, and its work was underpinned by eugenic theories Vallejo-Nágera had imported from his experience as inspector of concentration camps in Germany during the First World War, where he had been in contact with notorious German pioneer eugenic psychiatrists (Gordillo, 2014). As stated in the Cabinet´s records:

We have exposed before, in other pieces of work, the profound relationship between Marxism and mental inferiority (...) The confirmation of our hypothesis has an enormous socio-political relevance. If Marxism is preferentially militated by antisocial psychopaths, as it is our belief, then the total segregation of these subjects from their infancy could free society of such terrible plague (Cabinet of psychological research, n.d, cited in Gordillo, 2014, p.49).

According to the cabinet´s work, children born in leftist or democratic families had to be confined to institutions that would promote "the exaltation of racial bio-psychical qualities and the elimination of environmental factors that with trough generations lead to a degradation of the biotype" (ibid).

Stolen babies: from franco´s eugenics to economically motivated baby traficking

On the foundations above, the Francoist legal system allowed children´s segregation and subtraction from their leftist families (political prisoners and retaliated). It is estimated that between 1940 and 1954 about 30.000 children were forcibly removed from their families (including Spanish refugee children abroad, who were systematically brought back to Spain with the help of fascist European regimes) to be raised in Catholic church institutions on behalf of the state, or given for adoption by "suitable" families linked to the regime (Gordillo, 2014).

Carme Figuerola, who was a political prisioner at the time, explains how her 3-year-old son was taken from her:

[In this prison], when a child turned 3 years old, they came to pick him up and take him to an asylum Franco had built in Madrid. They told me ... I would not see him again.

Olivia Rapp speaks about losing her refugee brother during that period:

My brother was repatriated from Russia without us knowing anything. When my mother tried to bring him home, the Child Protection Board told her there was an order not to let him come, without any explanation. Many years later we have seen a report that says my family was not fit for my brother's education.

Contrary to Franco´s propaganda, life in the institutions aimed at offering these children the "proper" care and education they would not receive from their families was marked by brainwashing and frequent abuse.

The Auxilio Social ladies gathered us and told us that we were scum, we were daughters of horrible reds, murderers, atheists and criminals, we deserved nothing, and we were there for pure public charity. Francisca Aguirre.

I was brainwashed to go against my father and the democratic and republican Spain. I had to be like them, like the victors. All my education has been "el Cara al Sol" [Fascist anthem] and "Our Father". They stole my childhood, they killed me in 1936. I am dead as to whom I was going to be. Uxenu Álvarez.

(Interview extracts from Armengou and Belis, 2002)

Whereas adoptions in application of francoist family law and policy did not involve in theory economic transactions, informal payment systems and influence networks developed within the country and abroad. As business at the expense of the exploitation and plunder of "the defeated" (including removing their children for adoption) run out, the systems and networks developed around "legal" adoptions (on political grounds) became to reach out for new sources of children to keep up with the adoptions demand and feed the economic and influence networks established which are being proven to have operated until the late 1980s (Gordillo, 2014; Vinyes, Armengou, and Belis, 2003).

Most of the new victims would be among the poorest, most vulnerable and stigmatized Spanish women (such as single mothers, less educated or socially excluded women, or young pregnant women in the care of the state). The maintenance of the trafficking networks required the continued complicity of health professionals and institutions that assisted births (increasingly at hospitals), of those in charge of the civil registration of the newborns, and of institutions of social assistance that would identify and lure suitable vulnerable pregnant women from whom to obtain babies by means of coercive persuasion to give up their babies for adoption or by deceiving them to believe their children had died. The consolidated plot could however affect any women who gave birth in the many health institutions involved.

The full history and extent of baby trafficking in Spain has only started to be discovered in recent years (2010 onwards) and the struggle for justice and for finding relatives of those affected has been faced with almost unsurmountable legal challenges (prescription of crimes, legal amnesty on war and dictatorship crimes, etc), shock and an extent of denial on the part of Spanish society, and a lack of collaboration of the Spanish authorities. At present, the total number of "stolen babies" who are living or have lived with a false identity (mostly in Spain but some abroad) is unknown and estimations are highly contested. There have been, however, complaints related to the stealing of babies in more than 175 institutions across Spain between 1950 and 1990, including hospitals, health centers, institutions for expectant and new mothers and children´s homes (Gordillo, 2014).

Both the apparent great reach of the scandal and the nature of the institutions involved should pose questions to the social work

profession, even at this early stage of ongoing discovery of the truth. In fact, fingers have already been pointed at individual social workers in the few court proceedings related to stolen babies that have taken place in recent years.

Sor María (María Gómez Valbuena), a nun and the social worker of a main maternity hospital in Madrid between the early 70s and 1984, is the most renowned character involved in the illegal adoptions scheme. She was brought to court in 2012 but died aged 87 before the end of her trial. During this trial, another social worker was requested to testify due to her administrative involvement (her signature appearing in falsified documents) in one of the cases Sor Maria was accused for (ABC, 2012).

Another famous name in the scandal is that of Eduardo Vela, the first doctor to appear in court in 2018 in relation to a stolen baby case (Vela was found guilty but acquitted as the offence was considered prescribed; he has died aged 86 in October 2019). He insisted during his trial that he only dealt with the "medical" aspects of births whereas it was the midwifes and social workers who dealt with registers and administrative procedures (RTVE, 2018).

These might be seen as punctual accusations towards social workers. However, considering that since the early years of the Spanish dictatorship social workers were trained to fulfil a social assistance and control mission at the service of the regime, and that they received practical training and worked in institutions that played a role in baby trafficking plots such as hospitals and new mothers´ homes, it can be concluded that many will have witnessed (from a more or less naïve lenses) and played a part on what was going on. Nevertheless, this is a chapter of the history of social work in Spain that the profession has not yet started to acknowledge or own.

Conclusion: filling historical memory gaps in order to look forward, and as a human rights mandate

Accounts of the history of social work in Spain tend to present social work as a technical profession which development was reversed and halted during the long period comprising the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and most of the far right francoist dictatorship (1939-1975), when public social assistance and the training of social workers were delegated to the Catholic church and to a feminine section of the regime´s single party to fulfill paternalistic roles´ in relation to the relief of the poor. The development of the profession, accounts tend to report, was however reestablished and rapidly expanded during the last years of the dictatorship (when a decrease in political repression allowed foreign critical influences to enter the profession) and first decades of the Spanish democracy and welfare state (late 1970s -1990s).

As a general characteristic, these accounts, whilst acknowledging the political context that would prevent or allow the development of social work as a technical profession, do not explore in any depth the role of the profession during the most repressive periods or acknowledge the histories of complicity and resistance to political oppression throughout the history of social work in Spain. There is little recognition either that the ideology and practices of many services have remained largely untouched since the times of the dictatorship. And in the same way that the history of the darkest implications of the profession´s complicity with the dictatorial regime have not been explored in depth, little is known about the profession´s involvement in radical and democratic struggles (including from within critical sectors of the Catholic church and its social action groups/organisations) during the period around the Civil War, the dictatorship and the establishment of Spanish democracy. These are some areas of historical amnesia that require social workers´ urgent attention.

Social work as a profession should understand, own and make amendments to our history, including the history of complicity with human rights abuses under repressive political regimes. This is a matter of justice and to our commitments to human rights, democracy and (critical) peace. This is also necessary to overcome regressive practices and stigmas affecting the profession and its service users, and to avoid

Social Aid propaganda
Digital image courtesy of the National Library of Spain
(free to use for non-commercial purposes)

repeating mistakes and falling again into traps of the past.

Spain does have a recent sociopolitical history marked by fear, silence pact, and repressed collective trauma (Ioakimidis and Trimikliniotis, 2018) that has naturally affected our profession and shaped the context of training and practice encountered by the well-intentioned social workers who enrolled this profession to help those in need during very complicated times. But a ripe time has come for new generations of social workers to engage with historic memory and search for the truth with fresh and willing eyes; the profession's commitment to human rights entails this mandate and offers helpful lenses to embark on this. More urgent and importantly, this is also the right time for those social workers who were involved, suffered or witnessed these systems of repression to speak and contribute with their insights and invaluable testimonies to help fill the gaps in the profession's historical memory before their stories are lost.

***If you have witnessed or been involved in any of the historical events discussed in this chapter and would potentially like to take part in research on the topic, please do not hesitate to contact the author of this chapter for discussion.**

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The Complicity of Organized Social Work with McCarthyism

During the New Deal and World War II, social workers in the U.S. played a prominent role in the development of the American welfare state and the burgeoning labor union movement. They were particularly vulnerable, therefore, to the anti-Communist hysteria of McCarthyism. Many social workers lost government jobs when they refused to sign so-called "loyalty oaths;" unions purged them from leadership positions. Others were fired from university faculties and major nonprofit social service organizations. Social work scholars had their work censored or rejected for publication by leading journals, sometimes because of mistaken identity. The organized profession retreated from its advocacy for social justice and turned inward to focus on occupational status enhancement. The mainstream narrative of this dark period, if it receives much attention at all, largely attributes these events to the influence of powerful conservative forces in government, the corporate sector, and the media. What often goes unmentioned in these accounts is the role the profession played to abet or acquiesce to this repressive environment.

Administrators in public and private social service agencies, including the United Way, portrayed those who joined social work unions as Communist-inspired dupes, who placed their self-interest above that of their clients. They refused to respond to legitimate workplace grievances and repeatedly attempted to break unions (Crosby, 1952; Brilliant, 1990; Schrecker, 1986). These administrators opposed such pro-labor concepts as the closed shop and the use of strikes to settle employment disputes (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). In New York City,

welfare commissioner Raymond Hilliard blamed unionized workers for increases in the welfare rolls and repeatedly tried to break their union (Crosby, 1952; Gailmor, 1951). He fired union members, including leaders, and investigated workers who demonstrated in favor of expanding benefits. These attacks, coupled with purges by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), led to a dramatic decline in union membership among social workers (Kampelman, 1957; O'Brien, 1968). Mainstream professional organizations, such as the American Association of Social Workers (AASW), severed their ties with unions and repeated unsubstantiated charges of Communist infiltration (AASW, October 1948). The AASW also said little about social service cuts and failed to protest the firing of social worker Jane Hoey from the Bureau of Public Assistance for taking pro-welfare and pro-union positions.

With the exception of organizations like the YWCA, voluntary sector agencies frequently supported or failed to resist the anti-Communist climate of the period. They dismissed staff with suspected leftist politics, volunteered information to the FBI and investigators from the House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC), and cut funds for social action programs (Brilliant, 1990; Trolander, 1987). The prestigious Jewish Board of Guardians and the New York City Bureau of Child Welfare cooperated with the government in their investigation of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and their co-defendant Morton Sobell and even tried to remove the Rosenbergs' children from the custody of their family and foster parents (Meeropol & Meeropol, 1975).

In higher education, prominent social work scholars, such as Marion Hathway at the University of Pittsburgh, and Harold Lewis and Robert Glass at the University of Connecticut lost faculty positions because of their political views and activities. Although some colleagues and students supported them, the equivocal stance of university administrators failed to stop the pressure exerted by trustees, local politicians, and the media. At Pittsburgh, this produced a massive exodus of prominent faculty. Other private universities, especially those dominated by corporate trustees, fired professors for unspecified "disloyalty."

A prominent example was the case of Eduard Lindeman, a well-known senior scholar at Columbia University, who confronted accusations of disloyalty because of his advocacy for civil rights, labor unions, and the expansion of the welfare state. Most of his colleagues on the faculty refused to defend him (Chaiklin, 1997). Similar developments occurred at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Michigan, New York University, Rutgers University, and the University of Washington. Standard histories of the profession, however, make no mention of these incidents or their consequences.

Social workers like Hathway and Inabel Lindsay, Dean of the School of Social Work at Howard University, who supported the 1948 presidential candidacy of Henry Wallace, FDR's former Vice President, also faced intense criticism within the profession. Bertha Capen Reynolds, one of the most highly published social work scholars in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Associate Dean of the School of Social Work at Smith College lost her job in 1938 due to her political activities. The profession effectively blacklisted her for the remainder of her career and virtually ignored her once prominent theories of practice and education well into the 1960s.

In the mid-1950s, the official organ of the profession, the Social Work Yearbook, nearly expunged the contributions of labor unions from historical accounts. The AASW failed to defend union activists, such as Abraham Flaxer, charged with contempt of Congress. In the late 1950s, its successor, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), assisted the FBI in its investigation of suspected social work radicals, as did the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (Schreiber, 1995). Social workers who had been prominent members of the New Deal coalition or the Rank and File Movement of the 1930s were particularly vulnerable (Fisher, 1987).

Liberal anti-Communists, including most of the profession's leadership, were particularly strident in their attacks. Speakers at the National Conference of Social Welfare (NCSW), the leading organizational voice of the social welfare field, made a conscious effort to distinguish their views from radicals inside and outside the profession. This led to their cautious criticism of McCarthyism's attacks on civil liberties and the personal consequences they produced.

Group workers were among the most frequent targets of these attacks because of their support for participatory democracy. Activists like Verne Weed and Ira Krasner lost their jobs; Sherman Labovitz spent a month in solitary confinement because of his political work. By the mid-1950s, these persistent attacks led group work to shift its primary emphasis from broad social goals toward the "enabling" of clients and, mirroring the emphasis of casework, the therapeutic function of groups. The new journal, Social Work, refused to publish articles on group work for many years. It is also possible that anti-Semitism played a role in this repression as Jews represented a high proportion of group workers.

These attacks from within the profession undermined its social justice mission by focusing primarily on individual needs and the preservation of capitalism regardless of its human consequences. Although they defended civil liberties, liberals in the social work profession accepted the basic premises of McCarthyism. As a result, they were complicit in the repression the anti-Communist fervor produced and ultimately bear some responsibility for its social and personal consequences. These consequences lingered well into the 1960s and beyond. The profession retreated from its previous advocacy for social justice and focused most of its energies on profession building and the refinement of professional technique. Ironically, in so doing social work leaders inadvertently erased the profession's historical efforts to build the broad-based coalitions required to achieve desired social reforms and made the field vulnerable to partisan attacks. This widened the gap between the profession's stated social justice goals and the realities of daily practice, a gap that persists today.

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The long night of the last dictatorship in Argentina

On March 24, 1976, in the midst of a convulsed social and political climate, Argentine armed forces seized power. The immediately overthrew the constitutional mandate of Estela Martínez de Perón and imposed a de facto government led by a military junta. Commanded firstly by Jorge Rafael Videla, they established as main goal to reorganize the nation by using the methodology known as state terrorism. In other words, they pretended to use the state´s monopoly of violence to discipline and terrorize groups and social sectors considered subversive, that is to say, a threat to the social cohesion of the country. Censorship, violence and political persecution along with kidnappings and forced disappearance of persons were the main tools of the military to install a terror regime.

The background of this plan was to follow the steps of the Chilean dictatorship installed by Augusto Pinochet whose main objective, directly influenced by the shock doctrine promoted by the neo-liberal think-tanks, was to generate the social and political conditions for the application of neo-liberal prescriptions. To fulfill this purpose, they needed to undermine the main social and political movements and actors that represented a potential danger. So, they focused their intervention on social organizations, factories, trade unions and the student movement.

According to Florencia Bossié (2009), the areas linked to education suffered censorship and repression through different mechanisms. In the case of the University, the dictatorship aimed to dismantle the student movement that had gained strength by resisting in the last years and also aimed to intervene academic units that didn't fit the curricular or institutional agenda of the new government. The Education and Culture Ministry created a plan called Operación Claridad that was in charge of the physical disappearance of persons considered suspicious, as well as the systematic destruction of cultural assets, the intervention of publishing houses, universities and libraries (Bossié, 2009). Social Work was not exempt from such repression.

Exploring what happened in the heart of Social Work during those dark years and asking ourselves why was there an attempt to erase our voices, is an act of justice and remembrance for our colleagues who disappeared or were assassinated by the military junta. Of a total of forty-five academic programmes, fourteen were closed or suspended. One of the most paradoxical cases was that of the Rosario Social Work School, that was closed in 1976 through a resolution of the provincial government of Santa Fe, justifying their action by “meanings of public knowledge”. Also, as a part of the intervention, historical documents were illegally appropriated (files, books, papers produced by students) and moved to Social Work School of Santa Fe city; that documents were partially recovered in 2004.

This intervention can only be explained by the big changes that the profession was going through in the years before the military coup. According to Mariana Servio (2009), this process was linked to different international events (the Cuban Revolution, the French May, the arrival of Salvador Allende to the presidency of Chile), national events (Cordobazo y Rosariazo) as well as the arrival of new readings mainly linked to the Marxist tradition. One should also mention the influence of their contemporary Latin-american thinkers like Enrique Pichón Riviere y Paulo Freire.

These factors created a process of revision of the “classic” vision that prevailed until that moment in the profession. They acknowledged that, until then, social work had retained a traditional and conservative profile which preserved the status quo and reproduced the established social order. Since the middle sixties, a new Latin-american and Argentinian movement known as reconceptualization began to emerge within Social Work.

Although it was heterogeneous, this movement suggested that our profession should accompany the processes of social liberation contributing to the organization, mobilization and awareness of the Latin-american people that were oppressed by the imperialist countries and the capitalist system. In those years, a significant part of Social Work students began to take part in a sociopolitical project committed with social transformation and started to take part in students, political and social organizations in order to fight against inequality, injustice and oppression. Within this framework, the arrival of the last dictatorship led to a brutal interruption of the reconceptualization movement.

Nevertheless, following María Virginia Siede (2015), the ultra-conservative sector of the profession in Argentina -represented by Marta Ezcurra, a social worker who was linked to the military and also member party formed by dictatorship apologists, directly opposed the reconceptualization movement. Far-right social workers, at a conference that took place in 1969 branded the reconceptualization movement as communist. Such a characterization proved really dangerous at a time when people involved in the movements were facing repression and violent persecution (Siede, 2015). In addition, in 1977 the far-right fraction of the profession was involved in negotiations aiming at surrendering regulation of the professional practice to the military government (1977:69).

After the re-establishment of democracy in 1983, a new phase seeking to uncover and judge the atrocities perpetrated by the armed forces began. To that end, the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) was created. Their investigation, documented in the Nunca Más report, that revealed the shocking figure of 30,000 forced disappearances and detailed accounts of the treatment by the armed forces towards the captives. In 1985, began the judicial trial against of the members of the de facto military government known as Trial of the Juntas, after which only five where convicted. However, the pressure exerted by military groups to prevent prosecutions from continuing, led to the enactment of the Full Stop Law and the Law of Due Obedience in 1987, leaving the process truncated. It was not until the arrival of Nestor Kirchner to the presidency of Argentina that the trials where reopened.

Image: Nunca Mas
http://venceremos-arg.org/2019/03/06/a-la-plaza-a-todas-las-plazas/nunca-mas/

It is important to understand that this process couldn't have taken place without the fight of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo who, on the search for their missing children and grandchildren during the dictatorship, have transformed their struggle for memory, truth and justice into the anchor of Human Rights in Argentina. To this day, their quest has not stopped and the identity of 130 children stolen and illegally adopted during the dictatorship have been restored.

In this context, the possibility of starting to rebuild the professional project that had been devastated during those seven years was opened. In a complex process, closed and suspended social work careers began to reassume their activities thanks to the efforts of those who resisted the dictatorship and organized to reroute the project. In the case of Rosario, the Social Work School was reopened in 1986 thanks to the dedication and commitment of teachers and graduates who had experienced the closure in their own flesh.

Vindication of social workers involved in this story is of particular importance, mostly because during all these years the Social Work has made Human Rights a cornerstone of the profession. That is why in 2012, December 10 was established as a new "Social Work Day" in Argentina: "placing the issue of Human Rights as the central axis of our ethical-political project as a professional collective" and stating that "the issue of Human Rights is, without doubt, the great horizon that gives meaning to our professional practices (...) many colleagues and Social Work students have lost their lives, who believed and fought for a more just and humane country" (Resolution JG 1/2012 of the Argentine Federation of Professional Associations of Social Service, Paraná, April 14, 2012).

Memoria, verdad, justicia. Nunca más.

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'Never again!' Social work's darkest episode

Since its beginnings in the asylums of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the contribution of the social work profession to the relief of mental distress has been a complex and contradictory one.

Translation: "60,000 Reichsmark is what this person suffering from a hereditary defect costs the People's community during his lifetime. Fellow citizen, that is your money too. Read '[A] New People', the monthly magazine of the NSDAP Office of Racial Policy."

image: wikimedioa commons/public domain
Found at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EuthanasiePropaganda.jpg

For some commentators, the psychiatric social work which flourished in the post-war period in both Britain and the USA (in the former case, often within Child Guidance Clinics) represented a high point in the profession's development. Psychiatric social workers in the 1950s and early 1960s were often viewed as an elite group, described by leading social work academic David Brandon as the 'jewel in the social work crown'. In the current era of neoliberal social work, when front-line practitioners often struggle to find time to build effective working relationships with service users, many would look back enviously at the opportunities these predecessors enjoyed to conduct in-depth, relationship-based work with children and families experiencing emotional distress. At the same time, however, as critics argued in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that work was often conducted within a narrow psychoanalytic framework which reduced emotional distress to individual psychology. It was an approach which ignored the contribution of poverty, inequality and oppression to the problems which people were experiencing. Not surprisingly, then, more radical social workers in the late 1960s and early 1970s sought their understanding of mental distress not in the ideas of Freud but rather looked to thinkers such as R.D. Laing, Franco Basaglia and Michel Foucault to make sense of their clients' experiences.

Whatever the limitations of that psychiatric social work, at its best it did represent a genuine attempt to get to grips with the complexities of people's experiences and make sense of their distress, arguably in much greater depth than do currently fashionable cognitive-behavioural approaches . The same cannot be said, however, for mental health social work practice during what is without doubt the darkest episode in the history of social work – the period of National Socialism in Germany.

The facts are these. Between 1939 and 1941 an official programme instituted by the Nazi regime, known as Aktion T4, resulted in the murder of a recorded 70, 000 mentally ill and learning disabled individuals in Germany. The final figure was probably nearer to 200, 000 since the slaughter continued until 1945, including in the occupied territories. One recent mainstream history of psychiatry describes the involvement as psychiatry's 'most shameful chapter', noting that there was no effective opposition by psychiatrists (Burns, 2013: 201). But the role of the German social work profession in this slaughter was scarcely less shameful. As Walter Lorenz has argued:

Sticking to their professional task with the air of value neutrality and scientific detachment (especially after the "non-conforming", "politically active" social workers had been sacked or imprisoned), they did not feel responsible for the consequences of their assessments and indeed may not have been conscious of the full implications their work had in the national context

Two other writers, Dalton and Barney, also note:

[Social workers and welfare workers also actively participated in social engineering (called "social hygiene") at a broader level consisting of certification for compulsory sterilization and diagnostic recommendations for euthanizing disabled and infirmed mentally ill, mentally retarded, and aged in institutions such as hospitals, pediatric wards, and prisons.

Political coercion was clearly one important factor in social workers' participation in these programmes but three other factors were also significant. Firstly, there was the acceptance of a eugenics ideology which saw certain groups, most obviously Jews and Roma but also people with disabilities, as inferior and as diluting the 'purity' of the Aryan 'race'.

Second, there was their adoption of a medical model of social work, a model of diagnosis and intervention which located problems within individuals and ignored or denied the influence of their wider material and political context.

Thirdly, there was the view of social work as a non-political project, resulting as Lorenz says in a blindness to the implications of their actions.

So what lessons can we draw today from this most shameful episode in the profession's history? The first lesson is a rather depressing one. Until fairly recently, it had seemed safe to assume that, following the Holocaust, eugenics theory, the idea that one 'race' is inherently superior to others, had been consigned to the dustbin of history. Sadly that no longer appears to be the case. With the rise of the far right across the globe and with neo-Nazis now sitting in several European Parliaments, race science appears to be making a return. As an example, it emerged in 2018 that the prestigious University College London (UCL) had hosted secret conferences on eugenics for three consecutive years which included white supremacist speakers. Following pressure from students, UCL management agreed in December 2018 to launch an inquiry into historical links with eugenics and promised to consider demands to rename its Galton Institute. The institute was founded in 1911 as the Galton National Laboratory for Eugenics, along with Britain's first and only professorial chair in the subject, as part of a bequest by scientist Sir Francis Galton - best known as the father of eugenics. So consideration needs to be given to including a critique of eugenics and race science within social work education.

Secondly, we need to challenge the domination of the biomedical model and the marginalisation of social work in the field of mental distress. The past few decades have seen the emergence of a very powerful body of knowledge which highlights the social and structural roots of much mental distress. That knowledge has emerged from several different sources. They include social epidemiology (such as the influential The Spirit Level by Richard Wikinson and Kate Pickett), critical psychology and psychiatry, and crucially, out of the voices and experiences of service users. So far social work has not taken advantage of this knowledge to develop new forms of practice and models of service at micro, meso and macro levels. Yet there is a rich tradition of relationship-based, community development and networking approaches as well as political campaigning and advocacy work which can be drawn on and developed to offer a real alternative to the current over-medicalisation of trauma and mental distress.

Finally, as noted above, one reason that social workers in Germany in the 1930s were drawn into collusion and active involvement in barbaric practices was their willingness to see themselves as professionals who were 'above politics' and their denial of the political role of social work. Although the consequences of that denial were undoubtedly more catastrophic in Nazi Germany than elsewhere, there are many other examples from social work's history, some discussed elsewhere in this issue of Social Dialogues, of the leadership of the profession either actively colluding with the State in oppressive practices or at least keeping its head down and staying out of the fray, usually in the name of 'professionalism'.

Fortunately, however, in all of these situations there were also social workers, including in Nazi Germany, who courageously opposed these practices and stood up for the core values of social work. Similarly in our own time, a positive aspect of global social work over the past decade has been the emergence of a new radicalism, with practitioners and academics as far apart as Budapest and Hong Kong challenging the notion that social workers should not involve themselves in wider issues of structural poverty and oppression. These workers are actively engaged with social movements in the defence of refugees and asylum seekers, in challenging austerity and in fighting for civil and democratic rights. They include the Social Work Action Networks in the UK, Ireland and Greece, the Orange Tide in Spain, the Progressive Social Welfare Alliance in Hong Kong and many more. If their vision of a politically engaged social work profession based on social justice can grow and spread, then there are grounds for hoping that the 'horrible histories' of the past need not be repeated and that, at least as far as social work is concerned, the slogan 'Never again!' can be a reality.

There were also social workers who stood up for the core values of social work: Irena Sendlerowa, a Polish social worker, saved 2,500 Jewish Children during World War II in German-occupied Warsaw.

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Image: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irena_Sendler- public domain-cropped

Heinz Sünker, Heinz Sünker holds a chair in social pedagogics, Department of Education, University Wuppertal,

Social Work and Social Care under National Socialism

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1. Social care and social policy

Social work and social care in the guise of Volkspflege [national care] and the institutions, areas of activity, organisational forms, practices and programmatic aims associated with them constitute one of the elements of National Socialist society that received attention in West Germany relatively late and that remain insufficiently explored (cf. Otto/Sünker 1986, 1991; Hansen 1991; Sachße/Tennstedt 1992; Sünker/Otto 1997). Social work and social care are key factors in any analysis that seeks to understand more clearly how the social system of National Socialism operated and that does so by examining its social context as a whole, a social context that includes questions of social policy. Social work and social care are important areas where processes of "integration and exclusion" are organised. To what extent did "Volkspflege", in its structural conditions and ideological aims as well as its practices, help to secure the regime? In doing so, to what extent did it reinforce supposedly normal standards in everyday life under National Socialism that nevertheless were always also terroristic in nature (cf. Lotfi 2000)?

2. Selection policies

Today, the basic ideological and political factors determining the framework of Volkspflege are understood, whereas our knowledge of its actual practices remains incomplete. A starting point here is the dismantling of the kind of approaches that had developed in the Weimar Republic. These had been rooted in the idea of a welfare state. Their essential feature had been the legal claims of individuals, with a basis in political debates and professional discourse on "welfare" Such welfare-based social care is replaced by Volkspflege, centred around the model of the Volkskörper [the body of the nation, with the latter defined in ethnic-racial terms] and of Volksgesundheit [the health of the nation]. Volkspflege is founded on the ideology of the Volksgemeinschaft [national community] (Sünker 2006), which also formed the basis for the destructive labour policies of National Socialism (Mason 1995). The ideologemes of hereditary biology and racial hygiene embedded in this concept, which find expression in the language of "worthless life" and of segregating "asocial elements", in practice lead to a policy of selection that takes the form of choosing and culling. The counterpart to a "systematic policy of racial improvement", the selection of "Volksgenossen [members of the Volksgemeinschaft] capable of living as members of the community", is the elimination – by means ranging from exclusion to acts of murder – of those deemed incapable of participating in the community. There is a trajectory from the pseudo-medical diagnostics that form part of a so-called Erbgesundheitslehre (eugenics) to ideas of "social diagnostics" (Aly/Roth 1984). In the scholarly debate, this has led some to discuss the concept of a "final solution of the social question" under National Socialism (de Witt 1978, 259f.).

The "chief ideologue" of the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt [National Socialist Welfare – NSV], Althaus, explains the policy as follows: "National Socialism does not recognise social care for the sake of taking care of people. .... The point is not the welfare of the individual, but of the Volk [nation in an ethnic-racial sense] as a whole. The individual Volksgenosse is given help in the national interest, and the rights of the individual extend no further than the duties towards the community as a whole which he is willing to accept and fulfil....On the basis of this ideological stance, social care of a National Socialist character is fundamentally guided by considerations of hereditary biology and racial hygiene. It does not acknowledge the principle of the equality of citizens. It proceeds from the knowledge that heredity renders people unequal in their value to the welfare of the community as a whole. ..On the contrary, social care which is aimed at the welfare of the Volk will repress those of inferior value by engaging in a eugenic practice of elimination. In particular, this applies also to those individuals whose status as carriers of hereditary diseases is not certain, but may reasonably be suspected due to their asocial behaviour" (Althaus 1937, 8).

Ideas such as "racial improvement", "breeding", "value scales" and corresponding "special treatments" – ranging from selection to murder – play a leading role in the discourse and the reality of the Volksgemeinschaft as a "Leistungsgemeinschaft or 'performance-oriented community'" (T. Mason 1995, 93). This raises a crucial question as to the differences and similarities between this approach and the discourse of the human sciences at the turn of the 20th century: a discourse whose foundations indeed do include a distinction between those who have "value" and those who do not, between those who are "superior" and those who are "inferior" (Weingart/Kroll/Bayertz 1988). This has led Peukert to postulate that it is from this qualitative classification of human beings that an abstract practice of selection founded on a fictitious, racially defined totality emerges, together with the principle of large-scale industrial "solutions" based on cost-benefit thinking. According to Peukert, the "Final Solution", whose largest group of victims were Jewish people, is thus to be understood as a systematic, industrial-scale "culling" of those without „value". It is characterised by a merging of "the dichotomies healthy/unhealthy as regards the Volkskörper, normal/deviant as regards the Volksgemeinschaft, and Volk/Volksfremd as regards nation and race" (Peukert 1993, 236).

3. Assistance and control

While the National Socialist ideology and practice of **Volkspflege** is thus a continuation - in the sense of a negative radicalisation - of a discourse that had wide currency in the human sciences, it constitutes a break with an approach that regards social integration as the function of social policy and social work. Moreover, in its „positive objectives", it reverses some of the ways in which theoretical questions regarding the professionalisation of social care had been formulated within policy debates. Besides the generalisation of the concept of education within **Volkspflege**, in the sense of educating individuals for the **Volksgemeinschaft** in order to enforce their integration and adaption, this particularly regards the description of processes of „assistance" that demonstrate the functional nature of National Socialist positions. It was not only that even in **Volkspfleg**e, certain individuals were to be shown human kindness: those who were defined and selected as healthy, as serviceable from the point of view of hereditary and racial biology, as educable and thus as potentially capable of living as part of the community. They also were to regard themselves not as objects of assistance, but as members of the **Volksgemeinschaft**, as a part of a larger whole, who were given support in order to enable them to resume their duties as Volksgenossen.

The hearts of Germany's children belong to him. From a Nazi propaganda photography book 1935 (Image WL4082)

This motivational structure on the part of the recipient corresponds to that of the provider. Processes of assistance are to be detached from individual sensibilities – such as charity or compassion – based on an acknowledgment of a duty to support the Volksgemeinschaft and its – essentially military – strength and preservation into the future. This entails the privatisation of processes of assistance in two ways: the privileging of „self-help" and „prevention" corresponds to an understanding of „assistance" as a matter for everyone.

4. Organisation and practice

The move from a welfare state to a functional, educative state geared towards training people for the Volksgemeinschaft is one essential element of this development. Another element consists in the re-allocation and re-distribution of welfare expenses: in principle, what can be observed is a privatisation of social care resulting from a nationalisation of society, on the basis of the ideology of the Volksgemeinschaft that was to be realised especially in this field. The aim is to reduce the burden on the public purse (de Witt 1978), to cut welfare spending in favour of military spending.

In the end, this invariably leads to inhumane solutions based on cost-benefit calculations. To associate National Socialism with a "welfare state concept" of any kind (Hansen 1991; Sachße/Tennstedt 1992) is therefore impossible; the only option is to use the term Volkspflege, since the latter entails a repudiation of the claim to universality contained in the idea of welfare, an idea that has the provision of services to all citizens at its core (Sünker 1994).

A syncretic mixture of racism, hereditary biology and the search for asocial behaviour, in which eugenics merges into racial hygiene, leads to language such as „worthy of support" and „culling" or "weeding out". This represents an important focus for the practical work of Volkspflege, given that Volkspflege is directly connected with Volksgesundheit and with education as normalisation.

This effectively also entails professional „involvement" in „selection tasks": decisions on whether or not to provide developmental or educational support, decisions on sterilisation and, within the context of residential care for children and young people, the especially repressive measures adopted following discussions surrounding the so-called Bewahrungsgesetz (custody law), up to and including the establishment of the youth concentration camps Moringen and Uckermark (Schnurr 1997; Guse/Kohrs/Vahsen 1986).

A crucial instrument in carrying out National Socialist objectives in this area is the NSV, for several reasons. Firstly, it represented the second-largest mass organisation of National Socialism (after the Deutsche Arbeitsfront [German Labour Front]). Secondly, as early as March 1934, it had taken control of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Spitzenverbände der freien Wohlfahrtspflege [The Working Alliance of the Central Associations of Independent Welfare Organisations - AG]. After the banning of the Arbeiterwohlfahrt [Worker's Welfare Organisation], the exclusion of the Jewish Welfare Association and the dissolution of the Deutsche Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband [German Association of Welfare Organisations], or rather its take-over by the NSV, the only other remaining members of the AG were the German Red Cross, the Central-Ausschuss für die Innere Mission der Dt. Ev. Kirche [Central Committee for the Internal Mission of the German Protestant Church] and the Deutscher Caritas Verband [German Caritas Association – the welfare organisation of the German Catholic Church] (Kaiser 1989). What is important to note here is that the entire work of this AG was to be carried out in line with the aims of the National Socialist state. Moreover, with 12.5 million members (1938), the NSV was also an important transmission belt between party and population, and, last but not least, a major prerequisite for organising the „complete registration" (Zimmermann 1938/39, 27) of all Volksgenossen.

In line with its "self-perception" and its self-assigned mission, i.e. that of working with "Volksgenossen worthy of support", the NSV distanced itself from the other organisations within the AG. The ecclesiastical associations were primarily left to work with those defined as "inferior in value": accordingly, problems in psychiatric institutions, sterilisation programmes and the murder of patients are issues that particularly affect these associations.

The NSV occupies an exceptional position within the National Socialist system owing to its organisational link to the NSDAP in the Hauptamt für Volkswohlfahrt [Main Office for National Welfare], its membership fees, its privileges - among other things a monopoly on collections - and its suborganisations, the Winterhilfswerk [Winter Relief Fund] and Mutter und Kind [Mother and Child]. However, it is only recently that academic research has turned its attention to this position of the NSV and its constitutional importance for the National Socialist regime.

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Social Work in Nazi Germany – why resistance would have been necessary

Social work in Germany - as in many countries - was decisively influenced by the women's movement at the beginning of the 20th century. In their concept of social work all those in need of help were equal, weakness was not a flaw, everyone had the right to help, even if they had allegedly caused their own emergencies. In this understanding, helping each other was part of being human because nobody is so strong that he or she never needed help. Human culture proved itself in the way nature civilized and society deals with the helpless, with minorities and the weak (see the theory of Alice Salomon: Kuhlmann 2008).

In this sense there was no continuity of social work after 1933. But of course there were the same professionals and institutions in the established fields of social work. Public and private welfare continued to exist – apparently business as usual. But the daily work changed in a way that we know today: Resistance would have been necessary.

The change first showed itself through the coining of new terms and soon through new laws. Social Work became a preventive "Volkspflege" ("people's care"), which separated the „worthy" from the „unworthy" clients. The National Socialists denied their right to a dignified life and finally denied their right to life at all. Their 12-year rule destroyed long-term moral concerns that could have prevented the mass murder of Jewish, disabled, mentally ill, handicapped, homosexual and other so called "inferior" people.

With a determination that their political opponents lacked in 1933, with a brutality that left no doubt, the National Socialists succeeded right from the start in turning the first German democratic welfare state into a dictatorship based on violent persecution. This functioned almost smoothly, mainly because the measures were approved by a large majority or were underestimated as temporary. Many not only tolerated them, but were enthusiastic about the idea of the "Volksgemeinschaft" and the associated social racist exclusion of the allegedly "inferior" and "foreign peoples". But what would social workers have had to resist between 1933 and 1945 - not only as citizens, but also as professionals? Here is the answer:

1. Exclusion of Jewish and socialist colleagues

No one working in the field of social work was unaware that socialist or Jewish colleagues were dismissed overnight in 1933. First arbitrarily, then secured by the "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" of 7.4.1933, "non-Aryan" and persons who did not offer the guarantee "to stand up unreservedly for the national state at all times" lost their position in public authorities. In this way, not only many members of the social democratic party (SPD) lost their jobs in the municipalities, such as Walther Friedländer in Berlin or Hertha Kraus in Cologne, but also many women from the women's movement. Instead of protesting against these measures, many used the vacancies for their own careers. Professional journals and welfare organisations published devotional addresses welcoming the cleansing of the people from alleged popular pests. Advocacy for racially or politically persecuted people only happened on the part of the radical wing of the "Confessing Church", which, however, remained numerically small. In addition to the exclusion from the profession, the new discrimination and exclusion of racially "inferior" and politically unreliable people also concerned the clients of social work.

2. Racist exclusion of client groups from care: Jews, "Gypsies", "Foreign Peoples", "Asocial".

The higher the public support - according to the thesis of the Nationalsozialisten (following Thomas Robert Malthus) - the more those would increase who otherwise would not be able to acquire means in the economic struggle for existence and would die out as a consequence in a "natural" way. It was therefore the new policy of the welfare offices to exclude both "foreign peoples" and "antisocial" from the currency of support. Therefore, from 1933 it was examined whether applicants had to pass on "valuable" or "inferior" hereditary assets. This social racist idea represented a qualitatively new variant of the classic divorce into worthy and unworthy poor. Among the groups that were excluded from welfare were first and foremost the Jews, which led to a mass, "persecution-related", "structural impoverishment process" as early as 1933 (Gruner 2002, p. 11f., p. 47). Later, the "antisocial" and Sinti and Roma were also included in the racist legislation. In the process of the deliberate exclusion of Jews from the welfare system, historian Wolf

Gruner found "rare indications of resistance or even opposition" among municipal officials of public welfare (Gruner 2002, p. 33). On the contrary, the welfare officials helped to identify the destitute Jews, who were later the first to be deported (ibid., p. 95).

3. Inhuman coercive measures

3.1 "Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses“

The "Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses (GzVeN)" (Law for the Prevention of Hereditary Ill descendants) passed in 1933 regulated that, in addition to mentally and physically handicapped, mentally ill people, "morally imbecile" persons, so-called "inheritors", prostitutes, delinquents and welfare offenders could also be forcibly sterilized. It had the avowed goal to clean the “Volkskörper” (people body). According to the commentary, the law should ensure the "primacy and authority of the state in the field of life, marriage and the family". Consequently, § 14 prohibited voluntary sterilization. The intervention could take place from the 10th year of life, from 14 years under police compulsion (Kuhlmann 1989, p. 132f.). When we speak of persecution in the Third Reich, we are not only talking about ethnic minorities or political parties, but also about the group of people classified as "inferior" for social reasons. The specific National Socialist racism was not only ethnic but also social. This distinguished this law from many similar laws that existed, for example, in Scandinavia. Social conspicuities were reinterpreted as allegedly genetic "diseases".

Applications for sterilization were also made by social workers before the "hereditary health courts". They were decided on the basis of medical reports, which repeated in many cases word-for-word the expert opinions of Social Workers. For exact registration, the Health Office, which took over the leadership of the welfare and youth welfare offices in the Third Reich, introduced so-called „Sippentafeln" (“clan tables“) on which all relatives and ancestors were recorded, especially their behaviour if it was perceived as problematic.

3.2 Forced admission to concentration camps: "antisocial" and "ineducable" -

There shouldn't be beggars in the streets of the Third Reich anymore. The National Socialists achieved this by sending homeless people, "drunkards", prostitutes, pimps, multiple offenders, the so-called "asocials" to the workhouses that had existed since modern times, and later to "camps for closed welfare". From 1938, "asocial" recipients of aid were no longer subordinated to the municipal welfare offices, but directly to the criminal police and the Gestapo (Ayass 1995, p. 224). As part of the "Arbeitsscheu Reich" action, many of them were transferred to concentration camps, some only for a short time for deterrence, some for longer. The transfer of the "inferior" clientele to the Gestapo historically represents a return to the police "solution" of social problems. In the concentration camps, the "antisocial" had to wear the black triangle. In various concentration camps, prostitutes were also forced to work in a camp brothel for prisoners (Paul 1994). Welfare administrations and employment offices transferred a total of approx. 10,000 persons and used the opportunity to deport their clients mainly for financial reasons (Roth 2015, p. 125). Even "uneducable" youths were imprisoned from 1940 onwards in so-called "youth concentration camps" (Moringen for boys, Uckermark for girls) or regional "work camps" for "young strollers" (Kuhlmann 1989, p. 204). The educational institutions and youth authorities, as well as the welfare associations, did not criticise these "terminal stations" for hopeless cases. On the contrary, they were used again and again and were often threatened with them in everyday educational life.

4. Murders of "incurable" and "useless."

During the planned and later "wild" euthanasia actions, more than 250,000 adults and children of the so-called “Irren- und Idiotenanstalten (insane or idiot institutions were gassed or poisoned. These murders took place on transports as well as in specially equipped killing centres. The killings began in August 1939 with the so-called child euthanasia. Doctors and midwives were obliged to report children with "constitutional severe ailments" and received 2 Reichsmark as a reward for each report. In the children's departments selected for the murders, the nursing staff involved received a 25 Reichsmark surcharge. 10,000 children were murdered here by the end of the war (Roth 2015, p. 199). Only a few doctors refused to carry out the killings. Nothing happened to them. The subsequent T 4- actions carried out by the Reich Ministry of the Interior under the guise of a "transport company" (T 4) were aimed at disabled adults and the mentally ill. Heads of the institutions were asked to report in a "registration form" those residents who were terminally ill, could not even be used for the simplest of jobs and were particularly intensive in care. Until the temporary halt of the measure in August 1941, 70,000 patients were murdered, some of them after multiple transfers. The experiences made with the T 4 -action, especially with the gassing of the sick in groups, served the National Socialists as preparatory work for the construction of the killing facilities in Auschwitz.

Bundesarchiv Bild 152-04-28/ CC-BY-SA 3.0

Schönbrunn Psychiatric Hospital, 1934

There is no doubt that the murder of defenceless people entrusted to a social institution was the biggest crime in the field of social work. At this point, at the latest, there had to be resistance and there has been resistance. Unfortunately, it was only individuals who had the courage to do something. The National Socialists did everything they could to silence them. So it is all the more important to remember them today (Amthor 2017).

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Syrian and Iraqi immigrants getting off a boat from Turkey on the Greek island of Lesbos 2015/ wikimedia commons/ CC BY-SA 4.0

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Greek social work in the context of the "double crisis"

The "double crisis" and the constant struggle of social workers

At the outset of the financial crisis, the already weakened welfare sector was further undermined by the implementation of a series of strict austerity measures by what came to be known as the Troika of lenders (International Monetary Fund, European Commission and European Central Bank). Domestic and international elites, in search of a scapegoat, placed the blame for the crisis on the public sector, the welfare state and the working classes (Papatheodorou, 2018).

Therefore, the financial crisis was used as a pretext to promote strict austerity measures and apply neoliberal policies. These, most notably, included drastic cuts in salaries and pensions, deregulation of labour relations and cuts in health and social care. The dominant narrative at the time framed the Greek people as the solely accountable and responsible for the crisis by placing an emphasis on the supposed "laziness and extravagance" endemic in Greek society. A 'blame the victim' approach was extensively used in order to justify the implementation of the harsh austerity.

Unsurprisingly, the consequences of austerity were disastrous. Poverty increased up to 48% of the people living in Greece and unemployment, especially among the youngest, soared to 60%. A direct consequence of the harsh economic realities was the rapid increase in suicides and substance misuse; all while access to health care was limited through draconian means testing.

Such bleak reality means social workers have nowadays scarce resources to assist service users, while at the same time, the number of people requiring the support of social services increased due to the collapse of what constituted the pre-crisis of middle class.

Although the melting point of the social conditions came with the financial crisis of 2009-2010 and its subsequent austerity measures, the actual impasse that social workers face in supporting people in poverty was a result of the neoliberal measures that preceded the crisis. In fact, a study revealed that even prior to the financial crisis front-line social services were severely understaffed. There was limited welfare provision—if any—for the poor, lack of services and benefits, while social workers were overworked, with no supervision nor support and had already limited means in helping effectively their users (Papadaki, 2005, Teloni, 2011). Practically, in the front-line social services, social workers were used for "every difficult case in the community" with social work being rendered the "social ambulance" for the social problems providing solely a short-term relief (Teloni, 2011).

At the peak of the financial crisis, another "crisis" started unfolding. In 2015-2016,more than 1,000,000 people sought asylum in Greece. The so called 'refugee crisis' triggered a harsh a European wide anti-immigration hysteria which in terms of policy resulted in the increased militarization, a contentious treaty with Turkey that encouraged deportations and the unequal distribution of refugees across Europe. Fortress Europe not only closed its borders to victims of conflict but, more tragically, forced them to opt to unsafe passages. The use of such precarious routes resulted in more than

11,000 dead or missing people in the Aegean Sea (UNHCR, 2018).

Refugees that manage to survive the ordeal of reaching Europe through unsafe routes and falling victims of traffickers, face an ever increasing anti-immigration culture. Tens of thousands of refugees, among them many children, are trapped in militarized reception camps (also known as hot spots). The ones who try to avoid the oppression and indignity of camps remain homeless and without any state support. Both groups experience systematic violation of human and children's rights, which include the lack of access to numerous vital services, particularly, the ones of health and education.

Despite the growing number of frontline practitioners employed byNGOs, developed during the "refugee crisis", refugees' basic needs remain largely unmet. Substantial numbers of refugees have limited or no access to food, clean water, housing, health, and education. The increase in social work employability did not directly lead to an improvement in the lives or the conditions of refugees. The lack of vital resources the (often intentional) increase of bureaucracy has created structural barriers to accessing social services.

Social work practitioners, even when trying to proactively support refugees, have little space for maneuver and at the same time the practitioners face poor labour conditions. There is enough evidence to suggest that refugees routinely experience violations of their human rights and social workers seem unable to respond to this crisis due to a number of institutional, political and structural factors primarily linked to the inadequacies of the social welfare and the development of harsh and punitive policies, that both on national and European level, aim at containing the movement and rights of refugees.

So, where does hope lie?

Nevertheless, there is a silver lining as sources of hope and resistance have become visible during the double crisis. Most of those sources of hope, nevertheless, have been linked to grassroots movements rather than statutory services. Despite the crisis, Greek society did not remain idle or passive to the double humanitarian catastrophe unfolding before their eyes. Between 2011 and 2015, a popular response shaped a vibrant movement that opposed austerity measures (mostly through general strikes and demonstrations). These acts of resistance were also accompanied by hundreds of grassroots welfare initiatives across the country, thus creating an unprecedented solidarity movement. The grassroots solidarity movement re-doubled its efforts when the refugee crisis merged in 2015. These movements seem to have had two levels: one the one hand they focused on providing tangible support to day-to-day issues affecting vulnerable people, while, on the other hand they ephasised on the political struggle against the brutality of the state. A closer examination of these

Photo: Athanasios Karanikolas, documentary film 'Khaima' available online vimeo.com/122246393

movements suggests that social work can learn some valuable lessons from the movements. For example, social work can inform its practice by these movements so it can to adopt a spirit of trust and solidarity similar to this nurtured by activists providing support at a micro-level (social and material support). It can also learn from the broader struggles for social justice. If social work is to reclaim its social justice and human rights basis then there is an urgent need for the profession to organize alongside service users and broader social movements

In Greece, there have been concrete examples of moving towards this direction, including the Greek Social Work Action Network and the grassroots Union of Social Workers. Front-line social workers struggle daily to seek solutions to the hardships of the desperate refugees and the poor by providing social support, information and advocating for their rights in hostile environments. It is not only vital to respect and support the social workers, but also social work needs to become more active politically, to campaign and claim collectively social rights and to demand social justice. Undoubtedly, the social work intervention at a micro level is valuable. However, without the involvement of the users of social work services in a common struggle for social justice little can be achieved in changing unfair policies. In this sense, it is important to consider an alliance between social movements (including users' movements) and social workers. Historically, social movements have helped shaped social work and social services. There are examples where social work has drawn it inspiration from campaigns such as the feminist, gay liberation, antiracist and disability movements (Ferguson, 2008).

In the current context of increased xenophobia and racism, it is urgent that we identify new paths of social action. Currently, state social work, which is seen as the "breakwater" of social problems, can only guarantee secure basic social rights. This is due to the extreme neoliberal milieu that has egregiously bureaucratized social work, which should be focusing on individualistic approaches and the neutrality of social workers.

Therefore, hope lies in the core values of social work, a field that is, by definition politically active. Hope lies in the kind of social work that recognizes the oppressive role of the state and, instead of passively adopting top-down toolkits, it chooses to prioritise the needs and rights of the people. Finally, hope lies in collective action, in the alliance between those social movements and collectivities that share a similar vision for a more inclusive and just world.

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Crown Street Women's Hospital, c. 1930 - c. 1950, courtesy of State Archives and Records Authority of New South Wales https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/nsw/objects/ND0000158.htm

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The age of apology – the challenge for social work continues

In 1971 I was a social work student in my last year of study. For my final social work field placement, I was placed at Crown St. Maternity hospital. This placement went for the entire year at 3 days a week. I was assigned to the senior social worker who was attached to the maternity ward for unwed mothers. In fact, these young mothers and the adoption of their baby comprised the vast majority of the department's case load. These 'clients' were housed in the basement of the hospital in large rooms with beds separated by curtains to give some privacy. I think there were common rooms, but I don't think they were encouraged to go outside and partake in normal life while hospitalised. I also think that visitors were limited and contact with family, friends and the child's father were curtailed until after the birth. Many of the women were there for several months waiting for their child to be born.

On reflection I don't remember being too concerned by these young women and their circumstances, as I was assured all help and advice was being given to them to help them make a wise and thoughtful decision regarding their welfare and that of their child. It was the social worker's role to stipulate their right to free and unpressured consent and that any bullying or coercion was illegal. These young mothers were also told that they could rescind their consent up to 30 days of signing and that their child would be held in the hospital till such time passed. It was only later that I learned that the legislation protecting these women had a clause that included the phrase 'or until adoption order was made'. Little did I know then that in many cases adoption orders were expedited overriding the birth mothers' right to rescind their consent before the 30 days passed. (http://forcedadoptions.naa.gov.au/content/overview-forced-adoption-practices-australia).

I am aware that remembering is an emotionally charged event and that events being recalled undoubtedly will be influenced by history and other information that can colour this experience. However, it is true that between 1950s and 1980s over 150,00 Australian unwed mums "consented" to their baby being adopted. I have put consent in italics because we now know that for many their consent was coerced. This practice, known recently as forced adoptions, has been the subject of a key Senate Inquiry (2012) but there were many apologies from key welfare and religious institutions to these women and their children from the late 1990s. As a result of these events, health and welfare authorities and institutions have been shamefully exposed with authorities accused and found wanting by failing to gain free and informed consent from these young women before their newborns were removed. Many of the young mothers did not get to see, touch or farewell their child as the practice of 'clean break; or 'blank slate' was enacted. This was to establish early attachment between the adoptive mother and the child and save the birth mother from the social stigma attached to the 'illegitimate mother' tag they were labelled with and provide an opportunity for both mum and baby to get on with lives and forget each other more easily. (https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/evgxx7/stolen-at-birth-the-painful-legacy-of-australias-forced-adoption-policy)

We now know that these forced adoptions were carried out by doctors, social workers, nurses and religious figures. We don't really know if these workers were unknowingly complicit like myself or ideologically convinced that their actions were in the mothers best interest. Family members, primarily the mother's parents were also active in pushing their pregnant daughters into adopting. Forced adoptions took place though hospitals, maternity homes, and adoption agencies, both secular and religious, government funded and private, leaving a trail of hurt and trauma rippling through the generations. The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), in a response to these events, suggested that as social work is not a registered name, many of those people involved in these practices who called themselves social workers may not have been professionally trained, distancing themselves from the actual impropriety (Healy, 2012). This was not the situation at Crown St. Maternity Hospital. They were all trained social workers!

However forced adoptions were not the only problematic practices undertaken by health and welfare services and their staff in Australia this last half century. For example, inquiries into child migration practices which occurred from 1920s to 1970s which saw between 7-10,000 British children forcibly migrated to Australia highlighted the terrible abuse perpetuated against many of these child refugees. Dr Coldrey notes that child migration was a policy of social engineering: It was a social policy which involved the transfer of abandoned youth from the orphanages, homes, workhouses and reformatories of the United Kingdom to overseas British colonies – later to the self-governing Dominions. Once overseas, the children were placed with colonial employers – usually in rural areas- for preparation and training prior to employment. The care and removal of the children was undertaken by religious and philanthropic organisations but with government approval and under the law as it was then (Coldey, 1995, pp1-2). Children placed in these large, often isolated welfare institutions and children homes (rather than being adopted) were often subjected to harsh and cruel treatment. Many were intentionally bullied, sexually assaulted and treated like slaves on properties requiring casual labour, most experienced no nurturance, support or kindness. Known as 'lost innocents' these adults have experience lifelong trauma and mental ill-health.

Womens hospital albion street 2011
Adam.J.W.C. / CC BY-SA

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Completed_inquiries/1999-02/child_migrat/report/index

Similarity, Australian children raised in institutional care received the same bullying, abuse and regimented work and discipline routines. Most were placed in the care of Barnardos, the Fairbridge Society, The Church of England and the Christian Brothers. The inquiry found that these institutions were inadequately supervised, monitories and inspected. Following a Commission Inquiry into Child Abuse, these children became known as the 'forgotten Australians' and along with the 'lost innocence' children receive an apology from the Australian Government in 2013
https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/0910/ChildMigrants

The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse in Contemporary Out-of-home Care Institutions (2017) https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/final-report further exposed the level of abuse and neglect that was suffered by children in foster homes, by family members, visitors, caseworkers, and other children in care and identified the almost insurmountable barriers that prevent these children from seeking and receiving help. This time, schools and children's sporting associations and religious institutions (including the Catholic Church) were also implicated. The inquiry showed the broad range of institutions in Australia in which child sexual abuse was carried out over many decades. The now adult's testimony showed how harrowing this experience was and continues to be for them. This six-year inquiry into sexual abuse went to some dark places such as exposing paedophile rings operating in and out of these institutions with impunity for many decades.

Further, a National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention (2014) highlighted the emotional and psychological impact of prolonged detention had on children's wellbeing and development. No other country mandates the closed and indefinite detention of asylum-seeking children when they arrived on our shores or when they are born in detention after their parents arrive. To date there has been no satisfactory explanation for this policy. We have yet to highlight the continuing abuse suffered by the adult asylum seekers and refugees permanently located in detentions centres in Australia and the role social workers and health care professionals have played in supporting this cruel and inhumane regime (Briskman, 2017).

Added to this list of atrocities was the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families and raised in white welfare and religious institutions. This practice was endemic during the same period of these events mentioned above. Between 1910 and 1970 the Australian Government removed Aboriginal children from their families as part of their Assimilation policy. Raised in white institutions or in white families, they were actively taught to reject their indigenous heritage, language and customs and forced to accept white culture to assimilate them into white society, where once again abuse and neglect were common. Known as the 'Stolen Generation' many of these children never reconnected with their families and many of their parents never recovered from this practice. In response to the Bringing Them Home Report the Australian government delivered an apology to indigenous peoples in 2008.

https://australianstogether.org.au/discover/australian-history/stolen-generations.

This list of institutional abuse and welfare practice has not ended. Currently, there is a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability(2019).

https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/ and another Royal Inquiry into Aged Care Services (2018)

https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx

is still to deliver its report. From all indications, we can see that abuse, sexual and emotional, and physical neglect has occurred in these health and welfare institutions for the elderly and people with disabilities too. In time, apologies will be forthcoming to these victims as well.

I mention all this because these organisations and institutions are the primary employers for social workers, past, present and future. It is to our shame that these failings in human rights protections continue! While the cloak of shame has been lifted from the survivors as they recount their experiences of these welfare practices and institutional behaviour and that their stories have been given some overdue recognition for the abuse and neglect they have endured it is to our shame that they had to experience this abuse at all.

Social action and policy advocacy to promote social change and ensure human rights are not violated, especially for vulnerable people and communities, is central to social work's philosophy but maybe not its practice. In practice, argues Mendes (2015), social work activism has been relegated to the margins or left to the Australian Service Union (earlier Australian Social Welfare Union (ASWU)) to protect its workers and the service users in the human services sector. That is not to say that the AASW has ignored its responsibility to help expose past practices by writing submissions, letters to relevant Ministers, networking and developing partnerships with other welfare bodies, and developing position papers on specific issues, (Mendes, 2017) but this is where much of this activity stops.

Despite the distressing findings of these Royal commissions and the painful and traumatic testimonies of many of the survivors of past and present institutional abuses, the AASW has focussed primarily on securing professional recognition and developing competencies in specific practice areas such as Mental Health, Child Protection, Cross-Cultural Practice and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Peoples as means of securing the rights and protection of vulnerable peoples, placing less emphasis on public debate and a public show of activism.

Pressured by the current neo-liberal landscape and new public managerialism which demands agencies, Institutions and practitioners demonstrate measurable competencies and capabilities makes lobbying and activism almost impossible. It also highlights the inherent tension between activism and professionalism. While an apology for past actions has been delivered by the AASW, there is little sign that social activism is a priority, even as these abuses continued to be aired. Surely, by exposing current and past abuses, the profession must become less concerned with its move to professionalise and engage in social activism and social policy advocacy now the full range of abuse and neglect has been exposed in welfare and health services where most practitioners work. It must take responsibility for some of these past and present injustices and identify if and where these might still be occurring. In the face of overwhelming evidence of wrongdoings (past and present) there seem little question that governments and social welfare institutions and practitioners take seriously their role to advocate for human rights when these rights are being abused. If not now after all these exposures of failings, then when?

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Social work's past, present and future: When will we ever learn

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Like many of my contemporaries, I entered social work to 'do good', not expecting to be continually on guard and undertaking critique of the profession alongside the social and political context in which it operates. Reflecting back on more than 40 years of my social work existence since the 1980s, I offer thoughts in three parts – somewhat incomplete – but what I believe to be the nub of the issues and prospects for the future. Although each section hopefully resonates globally, I write from the Australian context.

The first relates to public welfare practice, which was the norm when I entered the profession.

The second is the 'slippery slope' when social work went to the market, combined with colluding with dominant discourses.

And the third is a beginning examination of potential for a changing society at the time of pandemic.

A benevolent state?

As a believer in state provision and a disciple of the 1970s brief reformist era of government led by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, I began my social work career in public welfare in rural Australia. It was a time of less homogenisation and preceding mass communication methods that dominate today; there was less sophisticated propaganda and fake news. Before the development of virtual meetings through technology, interactions took place with peers across the state where there was scope to innovate through collegiality, creativity and compassion. These were not however, halcyon days with the prevalence of unchallenged racism and judgmental labels that reflected wider community attitudes, even without social media to perpetrate bigotry and hate. Critical reflection was not the norm as could be gleaned within files. I recall 'case planning' meetings, where in the interests of a burgeoning but undeveloped idea of 'consumer participation', families sat in judgment by social workers to be told of their dysfunction and, with few checks and balances, found their children retained in the 'care' of the state, despite vehement protest. I recall our audacity in conducting unannounced 'home visits' to vulnerable families, which in hindsight equated to surveillance of the vulnerable.

It was here where I gained first insights into the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal communities and its continuities in welfare practice, although few social workers had the perceptiveness to challenge what had not yet entered the social work lexicon. We frequently operated intuitively from the heart, but emotion was discredited by what was deceptively portrayed as objectivity and 'best practice'. I left state welfare after ten years to enter the academic world where I was ill-prepared for the new turn in my chosen career of social work.

Social work enters the marketplace

The corporatisation of social work and the adoption of market principles was a scandal, although its insidious step-by-step creep initially left us unaware of its significance. The human services increasingly adopted an approach where CEOs and business prototypes became dominant, and content-free management emerged. The entry of the non-government sector was anticipated to neutralise the excesses of state practice. This hope was dashed as non-government provision was clearly at the behest of the state, including homogenisation of programs rather than tailoring to a diversity of groups and communities. Advocacy passions mellowed for fear of loss of funding that came with competitive tendering. What became known as new managerialism stripped social work of moral responsibility in the interests of efficiency, profit and aversion to risk. Boards of management of service organisations were dominated by the voices of accountants and lawyers, holding a worldview that frequently conflicted with experiences and observations of hands-on social workers. It was only a matter of time before social work became complicit in economic efficiency templates, even as critical approaches were tentatively taking hold.

In the Indigenous sphere, there was an alarming over-representation of Aboriginal children in social welfare and youth correctional systems and of adults in prisons, many of which became privatised and thus further reducing transparency and accountability. Out of home care for Aboriginal children increased in scope and scale and has not subsided. Escalating politics of law and order continues to swell the number of incarcerated Indigenous people. Although social work joined others in apologising for past wrongs meted out to Aboriginal families, there has been a regrettable failure of the profession to influence the present.

Collusion

In striking continuity, collusion spirals in states that are increasingly repressive, expansively managerialist and less caring, and where measures that contradict anti-oppressive and anti-racist tenets are in place. Although social work's commitment to human rights is both tacit and codified, as a collective we fail to be outraged by these trends. Two contemporary Australian examples are troubling.

The first is employment of social workers with reputable non-government organisations in offshore immigration detention to meet the interests of Australia's border protection regime. The social justice commitment of these organisations was diminished for the profit motive, despite public relations spin to the contrary. Social workers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (Manus Island) were lured by high salaries and a belief that they could do good. Rather than being 'client centred' they were expected to work with detained asylum seekers within the harsh constraints of government policy, together with a range of contracted providers doing the bidding of government. The work they were undertaking contradicted social work values, ethics and practice imperatives that many inexperienced graduates who took these posts would have had inculcated during their social work education.

The second concerns a relatively recent scourge globally and in Australia – Islamophobia or anti-Muslim sentiment. Social work has been largely absent in joining with the Muslim community in gestures of solidarity. Even more serious is direct collusion with the state, with the Australian Association of Social Workers running radicalisation prevention programs for social workers, reaping substantial financial profit. Despite public denial that such activities target Muslims, evidence from Countering Violent Extremism programs in Australia and globally, points to the contrary. Social work is losing the trust of Muslims and contributing to their surveillance.

The time of pandemic

As I write, we have entered the era of global pandemic through the spread of COVID-19. Although universal in contagion and with media attention primarily focusing on western nations, countries most disadvantaged by income, population size, health provision and/or sanctions will experience the most significant disparities. With less affluent nations unable to put emergency funding measures in place, inequalities will continue long into recovery phase. With populations in prosperous nations such as Australia experiencing what others face regularly – isolation, difficulty accessing basic goods, losing control over day-to-lives - will we observe new insights into structural disadvantage? Will the randomness of the virus and the emergence of the nouveau-poor in western nations create empathy that has been sorely lacking under neo-liberalism? Even at this early stage it is illuminating to see adversarial barriers breaking down in Australia. Trade unions are working harmoniously with government. The unemployed are no longer situated as 'undeserving', with generous boosts to payments. Child-care is free through government subsidies, a measure that in other times would have been pejoratively labelled by neo-liberals as socialism. Government influence on the banking sector signals a slight move away from de-regulation. The new mantra of 'We are all in this together' might overturn previously held attitudes and beliefs. And rather than positioning the west as where answers lie, we can cast our gaze to countries that are inherently more communitarian and where people from even the poorest sectors of society reach out beyond their own hardships.

Communities are emerging and neighbourhoods uniting. Consumerism and brand obsession decline as shopfronts close and travel is banned, with Australian society becoming less acquisitive. Dominance of large supermarket chains has grown exponentially but perhaps with some kindness that tempers the profit motive. Prisons in countries such as Iran, Indonesia and the United States are emptying and although Australia has to date only partially implemented such measures, opportunities may arise to reconsider imprisonment as a first resort and turn around the ascendancy of law and order ideologies. It is timely to discuss the excessive incarceration of Aboriginal people, particularly as the Australian government is deeming Aboriginal people aged over 50 to be vulnerable and endeavouring to protect remote communities. With enforced quarantine taking hold in Australia for returned overseas travellers, we see the middle classes dismayed by their enforced incarceration in hotel settings, which might create insight into the confinement of asylum seekers whom like this more privileged group have not committed an offence. In the environmental movement that social workers increasingly join, we bear witness in a number of countries to improved air quality and cleaner waterways. Pressure needs to be applied in order to halt unfettered industry dominance and carbon emissions.

Slowly, there is a recasting of individualism to community-oriented approaches of mutuality and creativity, driven from the ground up at a time when community development practice is marginalised in social work. This may offer hope for revival when 'the community' sees the benefit of moving to the collective. Can a new order emerge from a crisis and how can social work contribute?

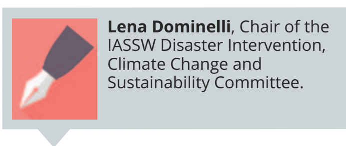
Social workers as advocates and activists can collectively organise to promote a new world order. Now is the time while the nation appears more economically Keynesian. Notions of 'left' and 'right' have temporarily collapsed with political parties working in unity. A move away from the private/public divide in Australia is emerging in the two-tiered health system. A new social contract reveals the value of workers and not just employers.

Despite such prospects, there is a need for vigilance as insidious forces are at play. Although social work is attuned to discussing economic and social rights, we need to ensure that erosion of civil liberties does not become normalised with new forms of enforced compliance that we are witnessing across the globe. Although most of us understand the need for isolation and social distancing, excessive policing, the use of the army and increased bordering could become permanently established. There is a precedent. In Australia as elsewhere, where civil liberties wound down in the sphere of counterterrorism arising from 9/11, which created the so-called war on terror. We are now all potentially under surveillance. There has been a speedy introduction of excessive punishment regimes for those who breach conditions, including the prospect of fines, imprisonment, electronic tagging and the likelihood of what one state Premier in Australia has called extraordinary powers associated with a state of emergency. As civil libertarians point out, groups that are over-policed are the most susceptible to draconian application of enforcement. War metaphors have again emerged. Reversing extraordinary powers when the need diminishes is not guaranteed, as revealed in the almost two decades since 9/11 where there have been increases in counter-terrorism laws and the advent of Challenging Violent Extremism programs to which social work has regrettably subscribed, including in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Although there is cautious chatter about the end of rampant capitalism, there are warning signs ahead. Unlike countries where deficit for social good is accepted, Australia is risk averse. Government is saying that it may take ten years to diminish debt created by the injection of funds. Does this mean that austerity is again on the horizon? Who will be targeted as safety nets are selectively eroded? Can we assist in challenging what is presented as evidence and rational policy, to providing substantiation from social work practice that draws on voices of the marginalised that become increasingly unheard? And will we be more attentive to global inequities in our advocacy?

I end with a plea to raise our voices now and into the future to show that we can learn from past and present. We cannot do this alone so let's join in the solidarity that is slowly emerging – a new social movement that is forward thinking and based on global, national and local justice.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Lena Dominelli, Chair of the IASSW Disaster Intervention, Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

Social Work During a Health Pandemic

The new corona virus that originated in December 2019 is now called Covid-19. Its first known epicentre was in Wuhan, China, where strong measures were taken to contain the virus before any country fully understood its characteristics. It has now evident in 177 countries and its global spread has been termed a 'pandemic' by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Dealing with a pandemic requires concerted international action as well as national and local action. The pandemic places social workers in the frontline and poses many questions for them. Key to this are those concerning what is the profession's role and purpose in fighting the pandemic; and how can social workers support those affected by the virus? In this brief article, I will consider the following:

- What is Covid-19 and its symptoms?
- What steps do WHO and national and local health advisors advocate people follow in preparedness and mitigation strategies?
- What can social workers do in this pandemic?

I have been supporting social workers in several countries address these questions since early January 2020, and am sharing my insights into what I have learnt through this process to help others in our profession offer support – practical and emotional, without endangering themselves, their families or others in their communities. Anyone can succumb to Covid-19, so I do not offer a magic bullet, only advice that you as social workers should then contextualise and adapt to your specific situation using your critical reflective capacities and dialogue with other stakeholders while operating within social work values and ethics. This is where transdisciplinary, multiagency working in a Covid-19 team offers many advantages including access to relevant knowledge and peer support and supervision in uncertain times. Some of this advice you will have heard before if you have read the newspapers, watched television, listened to radio, engaged with reliable social media outlets, or referred to the websites of reliable organisations such as WHO or your own country's disaster advice centre, often provided by your health service provider or emergency management agency.

What is Covid-19 and its symptoms?

Covid-19 is not a seasonal cold or 'flu. It is a respiratory virus that first expressed itself as an atypical pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan, China. Covid-19 usually involves the following symptoms, often occurring together:

- Cough (and)
- Fever over 38 Celsius (although some older people might have a lower one) (and)
- Difficulty breathing (usually affecting the lungs).

In the early days of becoming infected, a person may not show symptoms, or display 'flu-like' symptoms such as cough, sneezing, sore throat or difficulty breathing.

A person displaying these symptoms has usually been in close contact with someone who has tested positive (confirmed) as having Covid-19 (close contact is being within 1-2 metres for 10 minutes or longer of a person carrying the virus); travelled to an infected area and acquired the virus there; acquired the virus from an infected person during the incubation period (when the person concerned may be unaware that they are carrying and spreading the virus); and exposure to Covid-19 contaminated materials in a laboratory or medical facility. In some countries, social workers have been exposed to the last source when assisting health professionals dealing with the virus, making self-care and protection essential. If you have mild symptoms, the best advice is to stay indoors, i.e., self-isolate and quarantine yourself so as not to spread the virus to others or overwhelm health providers unnecessarily because the vast majority of suffers (80%) will readily recover.

What advice can social workers give to help people keep themselves, their families and communities safe?

Not all health professionals agree on what should or must be done in specific situations, and so there is variability in national responses depending on geography, political arrangements, socio-economic contexts and other factors. Given a shortage of resources ranging from disposable masks to ventilators and hospital beds, another important consideration is that of targeting resources at those needing them the most, i.e., those most vulnerable to viruses, or those seriously ill. The resource factor is also important with regards to testing and hospital bed availability including in emergency rooms and intensive care units. Those who are healthy or not showing the symptoms of Covid-19 should stay away from test sites and hospitals, especially emergency rooms, to protect these resources for those who are ill and not waste the scarce time health professionals need to deal with those urgently requiring their assistance. Thus, the following points are precautionary and to be contextualised to become locality specific and culturally relevant. However, they are recognisable in many different places because there is consensus about basic guidance. These guidelines are:

- Frequent washing of hands with soap and water (20 seconds or more with running water and soap, or if this is absent, hand gel sanitisers effective against viruses (not bacteria).
- Not touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth. This hinders the virus from getting into your body and making you sick. This must be observed by those touching contaminated surfaces.
- Not touching your mask once this has been fitted until you are ready to take it off.
- Social distancing. This helps to contain the virus and reduce its spread in communities (2 m/person).
- Frequent disinfecting of surfaces touched or coughed on. These should be those effective against viruses (Alcohol based sanitiser with 60% alcohol or more will also work).
- Self-isolation for 14 days to avoid spreading Covid-19 if you have been exposed to it; suspect you are carrying it, even if showing no overt symptoms; or have been confirmed as carrying it, but not sick enough to warrant hospitalisation or other measures that may result in your being placed under mandatory quarantine.
- Providing information to facilitate tracing contacts whom you may have infected if you have been suspected of carrying the virus or confirmed as having succumbed to it.
- Wearing protective clothing, including eye goggles, one-use disposable masks and disposable gloves to protect the public and yourself from Covid-19 if offering them services.

What can social workers do to support health professionals and those affected by Covid-19?

Social workers have their own tasks and responsibilities in a

pandemic, though these are not often spelt out, as health professionals are assigned the tasks of caring for people, defined primarily in terms of medical care and needs. However, there is also the social care needed – to keep family and communities together despite social distancing, and continue with social care services already being provided including undertaking needs assessments, facilitating access to home helps or specialised services, safeguarding children and adults, reuniting families, and mobilizing communities around social issues. In a pandemic, their activities can be increased to cover:

- Referring people to other services, especially health care ones.
- Utilising teleservices/internet/video/social media connections to reduce isolation and stay connected.
- Gatekeeping access to services, especially scarce ones and explaining why this is necessary.
- Finding and mobilising resources at community level.
- Community public health education essential to explaining how people can take care of themselves, their loved ones and communities and why.
- Supporting people with emotional needs, including curbing fear and anxiety.
- Providing counselling and loss and bereavement services.
- Helping people to identify how to keep themselves safe, especially in social distancing initiatives.
- Promoting solidarity and social justice within safe parameters regarding close contact.
- Advocating with and for people to ensure that social justice and human rights are respected.
- Looking after their own health and well-being (self-care and supervision) as social workers.
- Translating government policies to ordinary people in easy to understand language.
- Supporting health professionals in doctors' surgeries.
- Supporting children in schools, including devising small-group activities that avoid close contact and exposure to Covid-19.
- Supporting children to access food and other essential goods and services, especially during school closures.
- Supporting older people to access food and other essential goods and services.
- Helping children and families access Covid-19 testing facilities when appropriate.

In undertaking any or all of these activities, social workers must protect their own health and well-being.

Appendix 1: Developing Self-Help and Resilience

A crisis can bring out the best in people, and social workers have a role to play in encouraging people to work to their strengths and allay their fears. A crucial issue that worries many people caught up in a crisis they do not understand is fear, fear of the unknown, fear of uncertainty. Social workers can empathise with such fears, but should try to help people look for strengths that people have that they can use to reassure themselves and lessen their anxieties. An example of this may be people's fear of there not being enough of an item, and so they try to hoard supplies of this when they find it. This is usually counterproductive, because supply chains are more robust than individuals think, and replenishing supplies as needed is more likely to keep the shelves stocked and ensure that everyone has what they need. Also, most people have limited space in which to store goods that they are putting by to ensure that they have them in the event that supplies run out. And finally, there is always the option of trying to find other

solutions that will enable you to achieve your goal if you cannot find an item you want. Some of these alternatives are discussed below, but you should work out what you can use by seeking advice (by phone or internet) from others who may have tried them or who may have other suggestions. I cannot vouch for these, but they have been suggested to me as helpful by others who have used them.

a. Masks: If these are in short supply, they should be reserved for the health and social care professionals providing services to vulnerable others. Masks that are not of the correct filtration (like N95) or if poorly fitted will be of no use, so individuals may be better off not wearing them because doing so might make them feel safe from exposure when they are not. However, someone who wants to protect themselves from other people's droplets and not spread their own droplets to others, can cover their nose and mouth with a cloth of 3 layers that is tied around the back of the head, but make sure there are no spaces or gaps for leakages around the edges.

b. Sanitizers: Frequent washing of hands with soap and water are better than these, and if these are missing, surgical spirits or rubbing alcohol may be used as a temporary measure until hands can be properly washed.

c. Proprietary disinfectants: For washing surfaces in the kitchen, white vinegar, lemon juice and lime juice can be useful when proprietary ones are not available. For washing floors, household bleach (suitably diluted) can be used. But with this product, be sure you do not breath in the fumes as these may be harmful to your respiratory system and your skin.

d. Protective outer garments: When these are not available, overalls or an all-encompassing cape which can cover your clothes and which can be removed before entering a house or building and put straight into the washing machine for a separate hot wash can reduce the spread of the virus by keeping it away from others.

Resilient people are innovative, so feel free to undertake your own improvisations and record the outcomes so that you can share them with others.

Working together, we can defeat Covid-19!

Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank all those who offer help and support in compiling these guidelines, especially those social workers and health professionals who drew on their experiences of supporting others through their Covid-19 experience.

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Guidelines for Social Workers During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Introduction

Social workers, social care workers, and welfare assistants will be continuing to work with the public during the Covid-19 pandemic. What principles can help them work in anti-oppressive ways while protecting their own health and that of service users so as to ensure that the corona virus is not spread by them, especially to vulnerable others. Most of the skills that social workers have will be relevant even here. These include:

- Treating people with respect and dignity.
- Doing no harm, neither to others nor to yourself.
- Being kind and compassionate within the guidelines for practice that you have already.
- Reduce sources of fear by explaining issues clearly and simply.
- Provide counselling as appropriate, referring people to specialist services, especially around dealing with grief and loss which can include fatalities, but also loss of liberties and normal routines.
- Active listening (keeping at least 2 m distance between them and service users) and understanding of the local situation.
- Social distancing wherever possible (staying home, working from home wherever possible, keeping 2 m distance from other people, not attending public gatherings, gigs or other events).
- Following safety precautions as advised by health authorities (wearing masks and/or protective clothing; not touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth especially; washing hands frequently and properly; binning used tissues and other paper products immediately; disinfecting hard surfaces you might touch – take care not to use self-isolating if you think you are ill, for at least 14 days – I have provided separate guidelines on these points); not touching your mask after you have put it on until you take it off. If correctly fitted around your face, you should not need to touch it.
- Give service users advance warning (electronically or by post) if you are going to turn up on their doorstep looking like a spaceman or woman.

Here, I want to focus on additional issues that you ought to consider. These require you to be extra vigilant, particularly in spotting vulnerabilities while looking for strengths and capabilities to build upon; being critically reflective, including of your own practice; being on the look out for the impact of social issues such as poverty, discriminatory practices and substance misuse; knowing what resources are available among individuals, families and communities (do this by obtaining a community profile and identifying available resources and gaps before you leave your office where possible); and knowing how to access alternative resources; referring service users to other agencies; training and looking after volunteers who support you; and obtaining training and supervision so that you can do your job to the best of your ability.

Uncertain territory

The Covid-19 virus is new, and there are not many guidelines that have been tested in place. So, we are entering unknown and uncertain territory. In these circumstances, it is important we learn from each other including those from

overseas, and use our reflective, critical and innovative capacities to check out what others say and improvise new solutions in a coproduced way that are tailored to our locality specific circumstances and are culturally relevant to the setting. Below are some points you may wish to consider if you are doing home visits, agency visits or going anywhere else to deliver services to those requiring them:

- Stay home if you feel ill. Discuss your situation with your line manager and take the best possible advice through online support in the first instance. Remember you may be carrying the corona virus to vulnerable others without knowing it.
- Be prepared. Think through different scenarios with colleagues before meeting services users and have any necessary information leaflets with you.
- Wear whatever protective clothing is needed in the circumstances you find yourself in.
- Be vigilant and alert in picking up social tensions within relationships. People under stress may be more likely to abuse others, become violent and aggressive or engage in substance misuse.
- Look for signs of emotional, physical and sexual abuse which may become more prevalent with increased contact between close family members who are isolated at home

with each other. For older people, this may include financial abuse. Domestic violence is also likely to increase when people are stressed and living in confined spaces.

- Think of activities that you can encourage those staying at home to undertake, including digital ones. Make sure that hands are washed before and after playing games, especially board games, and keep your social distance when playing them.

People may be having problems getting grocery shopping, so take your thermos flask with you so that you can say you have/had a drink when invited to have one. Shopping might be an issue for some service users, so getting adequately protected and trained volunteers may help with such tasks. If taking food into people's homes, make sure you use disposable gloves and dispose of them once you return to your car. A new pair should be used for each household. Keep hand sanitizers in your car for immediate use too. Keep a bin bag handy.

- Be alert to signs of mental ill health. Individuals may be stressed out with worry stemming from many sources and coping badly. Know how to refer them to appropriately located services.
- Be aware of social isolation, not only among older people, but also families with young children, adolescents and adults who are confined to their homes, many of which will have limited space. What else can they do? Going for walks and keeping a 2 m distance from other adults may be possible and helpful.
- Respond sensitively to people who may be worried about their own, their children, their family's or their community's futures. Community uncertainty may be heightened in situations where job losses are high.
- Counselling and grieving and bereavement counselling may be crucial to some people who may experience being deprived of some of their taken-for-granted activities as a loss that they grieve over. Each response will be individual and you should be equipped to understand this. If not, call on someone who does to come with you/go in your place.
- Social work academics and practice teachers should be aware of student poverty, especially as many of them would have held jobs in the catering and leisure industries, and these outlets have closed for now.
- Keep track of where you have been and whom you have been/come into contact with. Make sure this record is always known to your office and on your laptop/mobile phone so that it can be shared with those who need to know. This is particularly important in contact tracing should you become ill.

Finally, stay calm, stay safe, and keep your social distance.

If you have suggestions based on your experience and wish to share these, please contact me at: lena.dominelli@stir.ac.uk

Thank you!

Sharing Our Stories: Making Visible Social Work's Contribution to the Covid-19 Outbreak

Social work educators, researchers, students, and practitioners are often the unsung heroes in any disaster. IASSW knows that many in the profession have worked tirelessly, often at great risk to themselves given the lack of protective clothing, to safeguard human well-being, children and older people in this corona virus pandemic. Nearly every country is affected, and IASSW thinks that it is important to collect our stories so that we can share them and learn from each other. To this end, IASSW is calling on all those in the profession who wish to, to send in their stories of the work they have done to support others survive Covid-19, and hopefully, ultimately thrive. These stories would initially be shared through the IASSW website – you can write in your own language, and ultimately, we might be able to get a publisher interested in a publication. Please write in with your stories. Thank you.

Lena Dominelli

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Chair, IASSW Disaster Interventions, Climate Change and Sustainability Committee'