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Habituation, Coercion, Education: Labour in the History of Social Welfare

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1

According to Judeo-Christian tradition, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). Today, this Old Testament vision seems more relevant than ever. Labour stands at the centre of public and professional discussions on integration and exclusion. Already emerging in the mid-1970s, unemployment has taken root and has resulted in what is known as base employment. Terms like "the new underclass" (Kronauer 2002, 27-71), "the useless," or the "redundant" (Castel 2008, 19) characterise current economic and social structural change. Since the 1980s, the hitherto relatively balanced working society, securely underpinned by the welfare state, has been said to be entering a period of crisis. At the same time, integration into the labour market has become immensely important in Western European societies since the 1990s. The re-individualisation of social risks (Castel 2009) has made the work imperative the prevailing dictum. Investments are aimed at human capital and at increasing employability, less at direct transfer payments. Within social welfare and social insurance schemes, this approach becomes evident in forcing beneficiaries to render services in return for benefits. Transformation towards an activating, investing, or even post-welfare state can be observed throughout Western European countries. Giuliano Bonoli has suggested that this development has also reached Switzerland, albeit in a "light" version (Giuliano Bonoli, quoted from Nadai 2010.)

This article assumes that the role of social work within the new paradigm of the welfare state has hitherto been barely considered from an historical perspective. It thus aims to foster critical reflection on this issue. By reappropriating history, it seeks to open up new perspectives within the ongoing debate on activation policies in the field of social work. It focuses on three case studies concerning the significance of male and female labour in nineteenth- and twentieth-century welfare. To this end, the results of our own and other research were drawn upon (Hauss 1995, Lippuner 2005). Further, data from a recently completed research project were subject to a secondary analysis.[1] Gender was defined as a central category. The interest in these historical case studies stems from the rapidly changing debates within social work since the 1950s; these debates are surveyed in the opening paragraph of the following section. After that the cases are discussed within the context of the history of labour, the changing relationship between the welfare state and the labour market, and the accompanying shifts in gender arrangements. These shifts establish the historical context for a discussion of the case studies. The basis assumption underlying this discussion is that an historical awareness enables critical reflection on the profession's dependency on social policy and labour market developments. History raises our awareness of the thought patterns guiding institutional action in certain directions. The various points for discussion

[1] Ziegler, Beatrice/ Hauss, Gisela, NFP 51, Swiss National Science Foundation Project 40 – 69130/1. Urban Welfare in the Sway of Eugenics, Gender and Medical-Psxychiatric Discourses of Standardisation in Bern and St. Gallen (from the End of World War One to the 1950s).

resulting from the three Swiss case studies presented here, in a country whose welfare state emerged only hesitantly, are relevant to debating social work in Europe, even if Switzerland is but one example of the many exceptions among European welfare states.

2 Social work and the labour market: new debates within the theory and practice of social work

Transformations in social and labour market policies have prompted a broad debate within both the theory and practice of social work. Both vigorous and critical, this debate focuses on both labour market and socio-political changes, and on the positioning of social work within this field (Böhnisch 1994; Böhnisch/ Schröer 2001; Lorenz 2006, 137-177; Anhorn/ Bettinger/Stehr 2008, Leskosek 2009, 1-6, Ferguson 2009, 81-98, Leskosek 2010). The restructuring of the welfare state in terms of neoliberal principles changes the point of departure for social work. According to Walter Lorenz, this shift occurs particularly because in no country has social work managed to overcome its dependency on the existing welfare regime (Lorenz 2006, 165). Exclusion, poverty, and the great emphasis placed on requiring individuals to secure their livelihood through work, even in times of hardship, are issues that raise a host of new questions, which were scarcely discussed during the times of full employment. In the age of Fordism, theories and concepts of work could be neglected. In those days, social work focused on comprehensive education and training. Concepts adopted from the United States, such as casework, group work, and community work determined college syllabuses (Maier 2009, 17). Social work at the time can be described as a "social infrastructure for coping with life" (Hering/ Münchmeier 2000, p.231). It functioned largely beyond socio-political and material security systems (Rauschenbach 1999, p.28). Socially, work and thus access to a source of income were secured. Until the end of the 1960s, job security, continuous employment relations, and income increases within progressive Western industrial societies ensured that social work could position itself as a form of compensation in relation to production. Capitalist societies demanded something that would balance the requirement to work. Modern welfare states responded to this demand by creating free spaces or ‚protectorates' where the commodification of social relations could be held at bay (Esping Andersen 1990). Against this background, social work managed to considerably extend welfare provision into the areas of reproduction and education. This is no longer the case. Walter Lorenz gets to the heart of the changes accompanying the restructuring of the modern welfare state: "Social work is becoming an instrument of commodification, of increasing the market value of human labour and personal transactions, even care itself. Social relations are to be transformed into commodity transactions on which a globalised digital capitalism depends, and the absorption of social services themselves into a limitless commodity market is but one sign" (Lorenz 2006, 138).

The debate within social work foregrounds the dependency of social work on labour market and social policy restructuring. Social work as a profession is represented as having little autonomy. Within the profession, one looks outward from the "inside" as it were, and locates the causes for the impending loss of professionalism in the restructuring of social policy and the labour market. Social work thus becomes a plaything of current transformations. Where recourse is had to the history of the profession, one searches for pioneers, for social movements and institutions, that could serve as models for countering current developments towards deprofessionalisation (see, for instance, Ferguson 2009, 81-98). This article adopts another perspective. It approaches the history of the profession in terms of its ambivalent relationship with human labour. Closer scrutiny suggests that social work has an ambivalent legacy in this respect. While welfare institutions conceived of work as preparing individuals

to lead their own lives, in such establishments labour was often associated with coercion, disciplining, exploitation, and punishment. This raises a critical and troubling question: does the history of social work contain patterns of thought and action that are not that far removed from the new paradigms of the welfare state? Do affinities exist between current activation practices and their underlying rationales (Schallberger 2010) and historical patterns of thought within social work? Both a glimpse at the history of labour and welfare, and the following case studies, reveal that a conscious reappropriation of the history of the profession makes available a critical potential, where ambivalences cannot be disregarded.

3 Securing a livelihood through work or welfare? The long history of current discourses

The relationship between work and welfare is currently being recast. Human labour is attached outstanding significance as a basis for securing a livelihood and as a prerequisite for social integration. The prevailing capitalist structure of employment is the result of a centuries-long development during which individuals eventually internalised what resembled a work ethic and from which they could wrest some sort of positive meaning. In pre-bourgeois society, work was slave labour and held out not the slightest promise of good fortune – unless it was understood as the reward granted in heaven. Originally, human labour was associated with tribulation, distress, and suffering. Seen thus, it was a result of the Fall of Man, and enabled individuals to expiate their sins. Martin Luther was among the first to anchor work in human nature: "man is born to work, just as a bird is born to fly" (quoted from Negt, 295). The transition to the socially prevailing definition of work as a key category both for endowing the individual subject with meaning and identity and for social cohesion occurred only gradually. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, the onset of factory-like labour – according to Karl Marx – combined with a Protestant work ethic – according to Max Weber – meant that the concept of work climbed ever higher in the hierarchy of cultural values. Human labour became important for the creation of social wealth. It was as such understood increasingly as a process involving the internalisation of work discipline, time efficiency, and parsimony. It became a means for regulating feelings, affects, and aggression. Marx observes:

"It takes centuries ere the ‚free' labourer, thanks to the development of capitalistic production, agrees, *i.e., is* compelled by social conditions, to sell the whole of his active life. his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life, his birth-right for a mess of pottage" (Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, Section 5).

At the end of the eighteenth century, the free labour market prevailed over the regulations established by feudal rule, craft guilds, and bonded labour. While property had hitherto safeguarded existential security and livelihoods, in the transition to liberal modernity labour became the starting point for wealth. Hannah Arendt refers to the "sudden, magnificient rise of poverty from the lowest and most despised level to the most highly esteemed activity" (Arendt 1981, 92). With the Enlightenment, self-responsibility and individual working capacity became central: individuals were now supposed to take in hand their own social circumstances and consider their cognitive maturity and their material welfare as their own personal affair. However, early nineteenth-century pauperism and the miserable working conditions imposed upon wage labourers during early industrialisation called for the social question to be renegotiated. To ensure social cohesion, social contracts between property, security, and labour had to be drawn up. The emergence of the welfare states reshuffled prevailing conditions: a sphere of negotiation arose, in which social issues assumed a new significance (Castel 2008, 236 – 282).

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The history of social work is strongly intertwined with the emergence of the welfare states. Integrated into welfare state structures, and within the welfare triad (Esping Andersen 1990), social work faced the market and the family as the bearers of social risks. Within this triad, of state, market, and family, who or what should cushion social risks? The European welfare states and their specific structural configurations differed in terms of their decommodification: to what extent should the lawful entitlement to benefits and support enable individuals to temporarily withhold selling their labour, for instance, in order to meet their duties and obligations as educators and providers? In Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, for instance, the welfare state was designed in support of a strong breadwinner model. The current recasting of the key relationship between work and welfare, and the replacement of the breadwinner model with the "adult worker model," is hugely important for women, who remain the principal carers and householders (Lewis 2001).

However, it was already before the emergence of the welfare state that social work played an important role in the distribution of social risks among the obligation to work, the entitlement to state benefits, and the reliance on private and family support systems. History suggests that the relationship between welfare and wage labour was strained already long before. While a strong tradition of welfare provision existed for those unable to work due to illness or old age, support for those able to work, but who do not earn their own living, was already contradictory at the end of the Middle Ages. At the time, there was mention of "strong beggars," who were urged to work. In what follows, I discuss three instances of welfare history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These examples date from the expansion period before the welfare state. Thus, this article aims to close a gap in the current debate, which refers predominantly to the age of the welfare state in order to introduce changes. This approach falls short, as I show below.

4 Orienting welfare towards securing a livelihood through work: three Swiss case studies

The relationship between welfare and work changed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, depending on temporal and institutional contexts; during this period, the notion of "work" had various meanings. This becomes clearer from a historical approach to three concepts of welfare action, both at different times and in various local contexts. A *first* concept of work emerges from studying early nineteenth century rescue establishments (*Rettungshäuser*). Following in the tradition of pietism, education to and through work in such facilities was an important means of "saving" children and youths, who were thus believed to be able to escape moral decay in a society moving away from Christian faith. Established by charitable organisations, mid-twentieth century forced labour institutions represent a *second* concept of work. Here, work was used as a means of "reform" or improvement. Housed in closed institutions, youths and adults were forcefully habituated to pursuing regular work in order to provide for themselves later in life. The practices of early twentieth-century municipal welfare authorities point to a *third* concept of work. The work, and thus the income, of those afflicted by poverty lowered municipal welfare costs. In cases where individuals were no longer able to earn their own living, the authorities sought to shift the resulting welfare costs to institutions outside the municipality and to expel the poor from the municipality's area of jurisdiction. Costs were thus passed on to what were often small and impoverished municipalities or village communities, from where the families of the poverty-stricken originated. Thus, working and earning one's own livelihood became an important precondition for remaining at one's chosen place of residence.

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4.1 Early nineteenth-century rescue homes

Among the important institutions for the education of "poor and destitute children" in Switzerland and southern Germany were the rescue homes established in the tradition of pietism. The early nineteenth-century rescue home movement, which resulted in the founding of numerous, closely linked facilities in Switzerland and southern Germany, brought together concepts of the Christian Mission, Christian Heinrich Pestalozzi's notion of education, purposeful rationality, and the first efforts to professionalise lessons, school teaching, and education (Hauss 1994). Rescue home education was embedded in an intense discourse on the education of the poor, wherein the association of educators of the poor played an important role (Sutter 1994). Mass poverty, so-called pauperism, was interpreted in terms of Christian values as an expression of the moral decay of society, that is, as an alienation of wider circles of the population from Christian faith. Rescue thus grasped the human being as a whole and consisted of the individual taking personal steps of faith. Publications of the rescue home movement described educational, reformatory work vividly as "swamp ditch labour." Educating the poor was compared to cultivating swampland, laying drain gullies with the help of labour literally considered dirty, moreover which could not be undertaken "without excrement and uncleanliness" (Zeller 1830, 72). Education through and to work was considered a principal means of drainage.

Within the institutional community, prayer and work were seen as a unity, as divine service. Of equal value as prayer, work was also meant to be anchored in the relationship with God. As a service to God, work was oriented not merely towards human recognition, but also a means of teaching lower-class girls and boys to learn to enjoy work and to derive pleasure from it, irrespective of acknowledgment and income. Following the principles of the well-known Swiss educator Heinrich Pestalozzi, the purpose of such work education was not to remedy poverty and to make life easier. Status-oriented reformatory education aimed at assigning pupils to their places on the lowest rung of society. They were meant to learn to cope with "menial circumstances" and to grow accustomed "to working for and serving others" (Zellweger 1870, 11ff). There was no place for advancement or social climbing in this concept (Zellweger 1870, 11ff). Work was described in terms of agricultural images, such as "heavy ploughing," or gardening, where "rivers of sweat" would pour off the forehead (Zeller 1825, 1824). Work thus nurtured modesty and prepared individuals for existential hardship. There was no place for idleness and great needs. Habituation to work was meant to steer poverty in a good, orderly direction, and thereby render it tolerable as "respectable poverty" lived in humble circumstances. While work education trained young boys as farm labourers, girls and young women were groomed for gainful employment as maids. Ursula Hochueli (1999) quotes a former occupant as saying that "one was sent away to serve, and was not asked whether or not it suited one" (p. 262). Upper-class households inquired at such rescue homes after suitable maids, and thus these institutions quite pragmatically supplied the gender- and class-specific labour market with a meagerly paid workforce.

4.2 Forced labour reformatories in the mid-nineteenth century

Established in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a further institution in the struggle against morally conceived poverty were the forced labour facilities for youths and adult men and women. These facilities have been studied in-depth by the historian Sabine Lippuner (Lippuner 2005). Administrative channels were used to commit individuals to forced labour institutions, thereby bypassing the judiciary and legal system. Together, the deprivation of freedom and forced labour amounted to imprisonment; compared to detention in a penitentiary, those housed in such reformatories experienced conditions as extremely harsh.

Such closed facilities were premised on, and legitimated by, the discussion on pauperism in charitable circles. Not only was pauperism understood as the spreading of impoverishment among large spheres of the population but also as a comprehensive process of social change. While associated with social and economic developments, it was also interpreted in moral and religious terms as a sign of decay, that is, as a lack of civilisation. "Undignified poverty" was related to "slovenliness," "indolence," "debauchery," "recklessness," "immorality," and "hedonism." Lippuner describes the "paraphrastic capacity" of these terms. Also, she argues, the same holds true for these terms as for "excess," which Arlette Farge and Michele Foucault identified as the keyword of the eighteenth century: "It seems to combine the entire profligacy of the world, without ever pausing to indicate the precise meaning or true content" (ibid, p. 36). It is easy to recognise a critique of the work-, consumer-, and sexual behaviour of the working classes here, indeed one distinct from communism and socialism. According to Heinrich Tuggner, forced labour institutions express "the profound belief in moral armament through work" (Tuggener 2002). The deficient moral disposition of those committed to educational and correctional facilities served as a starting point for the concept of "reform" or betterment, which in turn presupposed the notion of human "improvability," that is, that individuals could be educated and moreover possessed the "faculty for perfecting themselves" (Rousseau, quoted from Lippuner, p. 45). Finding sustainable solutions to poverty therefore required not only the repression of undesirable behaviour but equally a shaping of the individuals concerned, besides ensuring they were brought to reason and were willing to acquire new patterns of behaviour. According to the advocates of forced labour institutions, this was firstly a matter of "awakening active diligence and industriousness," secondly of "combatting sensual desires and growing accustomed to humble circumstances," and thirdly of guiding inmates towards "a Christian, moral ethos" (ibid., p. 46). This educational programme was implemented by means of a strictly regimented daily routine, whereby the activity or occupation itself was less important than its regular practice. Not what kind of work but rather how it was performed was paramount. The purpose of the intended "betterment" was to ensure that the poor endeavoured to honour their duty of "self-sufficiency" – as Johann Jakob Vogt, a contemporary welfare theorist, put it. Forced labour institutions were "self-sufficiency facilities" because their purpose was "to educate the individuals placed in their care to engage in voluntary self- sufficiency by virtue of better discipline" (Vogt 1853/54, 172, quoted from ibid., 36). The duty of self- sufficiency applied to men and women alike. In the context of poor relief, the increasingly influential model of the middle-class family, in which the father was the breadwinner, was not enforced. The anticipated gainful employment of women could lead to dramatic conflicts, such as separating lower-class children from their families in order to utilise female labour to maintain family livelihood.

4.3 Case studies in twentieth-century guardianship authorities

Research on early twentieth century municipal welfare (Hauss/ Ziegler 2007/ 2008/ 2009/ 2010) clearly reveals that society expected men to assume the role of breadwinners and that women would pursue gainful employment to contribute to maintaining the family household. Analysis of the public guardianship case files of a medium-sized Swiss town (St Gallen) in the period 1920-1950[2] illustrates the great importance that municipal welfare attached to men as breadwinners: "Drinks, doesn't work" (1920: Case 2), "unsuitable for work" (1928: Case 7), "no staying power at work" (1928: Case 1). In cases where men failed to fulfil their role as

[2]

breadwinners, harsh measures were adopted. Many cases extended over decades, and committal to closed facilities, often forced labour institutions, alternated with promises of betterment and official control (e.g., 1936: Case 1). In cases involving youths, the work attitude, particularly of male youths, was decisive for the measures taken by the guardianship authorities. The work attitude reflected an individual's "groundedness" and "stability." Sample assessments of male individuals included that "[he] cannot hold down any employment," "has absconded from various places of work," "refuses to grow accumstomed to regular employment" (1928: Cases 23/25/26). Educational measures were taken in an attempt to give young men "groundedness and stability." Where such measures were unsuccessful, individuals were either committed to institutions or allocated to farm jobs (Hauss 2010, 195).

Even though the sexual behaviour of girls and women was subject to official scrutiny and assessment, just as their ability to fulfil householding and child-rearing responsibilities, they were self-evidently assumed to contribute to securing the livelihood of their families. Elisabeth Joris und Heidi Witzig have shown in their study of the Zurich Oberland (the hilly southeastern part of the Canton of Zurich) that until the twentieth century factory work was a deeply rooted tradition among male and female members of working class families (Joris/ Witzig 1995, 204). For women, alternatives to gainful employment in industry were "outsourced forms of domestic labour," including work as a seamstress, laundress, sales assistant, waitress, or cleaner (Joris/ Witzig, Frauengeschichten 1987, 187). Up until the Second World War, however, the large majority of women from the lower strata were employed as maids (Atzbacher 2010, 205-224).

Analysis of public records impressively documents how the authorities obliged women to contribute to family income, that is, to bear the costs for their children if they were single parents. Compared to how the authorities dealt with men, women were also – albeit not exclusively – compelled to make a material contribution to the household. Not only was female labour under official scrutiny, but so too was the role of women in social reproduction and gender relations. For women, the aim of getting families or individuals off welfare assistance was thus associated with efforts to enforce middle-class educational, hygiene, and householding norms. The welfare measures described above thus had a dual orientation for women. While economic realities obliged them to pursue gainful employment, they were exposed to efforts to assert middle-class welfare and its core values by means of specific family and gender models. Welfare authorities believed that as maidservants women would both help secure their own livelihoods, albeit only marginally, and be trained to fulfil householding and educational duties according to the model of the middle-class family.

Poverty-stricken individuals who lost their employment where they resided, or who found no work, could be "repatriated" to their hometowns. Repatriation affected those who had not lived in a town for generations. With the emergence of territorial states and the municipalisation of welfare at the turn of the twentieth century, the mistrust of public administrations in the migrant lower strata had increased, and population control now tended to be more rigorous. Far removed from their hometowns, the poor were entitled to welfare only in certain cantons. If they suffered distress or became impoverished where they were living, their municipality of residence was not necessarily responsible for welfare provision. Instead, their family's hometown or so-called place of citizenship was obliged to provide assistance. Even though over a million citizens, that is, more than one quarter of the Swiss population, lived outside their home cantons already in 1930 (Armenpfleger 1942), it was not until the 1950s that the principle of residence generally superseded that of the hometown. For

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those seeking to avoid repatriation to their hometown – where they were often unwelcome –, regular gainful employment as a means of securing their livelihood became immensely important. Permanent employment became the antithesis of so-called "vagabonding." The absence of both longer-term employment prospects and family networks called into question the right of abode. The cases investigated show that in many instances individuals were consistently repatriated to their hometowns, regardless of their personal situation. Thus, single mothers were separated against their will from their children, who were placed in foster care in towns (Hauss 2010, 55-69). "Repatriations" were thus effective not as educational or correctional measures but through their obvious threat radius. As municipalities sought to minimise costs, contemporary notions of "beggar hunts" and "poor droves" vividly express how people were carted "to and fro like goods," as contemporary critics put it (ibid.).

5 Conclusions

Taken from various historical periods and contexts, the cases discussed here illustrate that social work was an important actor in the welfare triad (social benefits, labour market, family). Social welfare workers are involved on a case-specific basis in distributing the costs of social risks. In the cases studied, officials were responsible for enforcing obligations to work or for granting time-outs from the labour market. Furthermore, the cases investigated reveal that the experience of poverty, particularly for women with maintenance obligations, was strongly determined by this interaction. Over the course of history, the significance and function attributed to gainful employment by welfare authorities has changed time and again, depending on labour and social policy. Historical analysis of the relationship between labour and welfare illustrates various, and forever ambivalent, interconnections. While these raise the question about continuities from the past into the present, they may also be considered in conscious distinction from modern-day practice. Exploring the history of social work through labour reveals lines of tradition, in terms of both the long-rehearsed orientation of action and the underyling rationales for such action and the constraints thereupon; historical investigation thus helps us understand and question current routines, orientations, and classifications. In conclusion, exemplarly results from the case studies are extrapolated. These may open up new research questions and also serve as a basis for critical reflection and discussion on current social work practice.

In the history of social work, human labour is not an unequivocal term, but instead one that has been used in manifold ways: work was employed as a method of rescue or reform, and came with great expectations of human change. Pressing welfare-dependent individuals into mostly poorly remunerated employment, as well as educating young people to perform simple work tasks, were in other cases possibilities for saving welfare costs and for using the market to cover risks. Work served to place disadvantaged individuals on a labour market that required a specific kind of workforce. Human labour, furthermore, was related to the idea of social peace. Work education was deployed where individuals without incomes threatened to unearth social power relations and thereby endangered social cohesion.

The relationship between welfare and work was deeply interwoven with political discourses. In the twentieth century, this relationship offered potential for innovation and reforms. This became clear, for instance, in the struggle to establish the welfare state. Social rights allowed for uncoupling the need to secure one's livelihood from the labour market, even if only for a limited period of time. There was also a danger that the actual configuration of work and welfare would involve the enforcement of an unconditional obligation to work – as examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries illustrate – which had no regard for social

circumstances. Following Castel, such developments could give rise to new zones of vulnerability (Castel 2008, 360f).

History shows that social work made its presence felt quite forcefully as regards human labour. It linked poverty diagnoses with a willingness to work, which in turn became a premise for shaping the measures subsequently taken. Welfare, moreover, coupled the struggle against poverty with the obligation to work. In doing so, it possessed far-reaching powers, as well as a broad palette of measures, to divide individuals into "dignified" and "undignified" paupers. Measures ranged from subsistence security through reformatory measures to disciplinary measures, which those affected could also experience as punishment or as a deprivation of freedom to the point of imprisonment. Social work prepared not only men but also women for menial and unsecured employment. For instance, nineteenth-century institutions were aimed at supplying the labour market with poorly remunerated housekeepers or agricultural labourers.

Social work did not always operate within the law in utilising human labour for the labour market. Civil liberties were curtailed and individuals were forced to work without the right to a legal hearing. Those made redundant lost the right to choose their domicile. Welfare measures threatened to exclude such individuals from family and social life. Individual rights and often also the significance of social contexts of life were disregarded – with the aim of using the labour market to safeguard against social risks.

Based on their dual power, social worker could not only oblige women to work but also screened their parenting – and was as such heavily involved in gender relations and family models. Welfare thus adopted a twofold approach to women, and thereby promoted what Becker Schmidt has described as "the dual socialisation of women" in industrialised societies (Becker Schmidt 2003, p.114f, 2003b). It urged women to make available their labour to society in two ways: first, within the system of gainful employment; and secondly, within the sphere of private reproduction. From the turn of the twentieth century to very far into the century itself, there is striking dissimultaneity of labour and family models. While the middle-class model of the "breadwinner" became increasingly influential as a core model, it was not universally valid in welfare practice until after the Second World War. Both men and women were obliged to contribute to maintaining the family household. Notably, the welfare authorities imposed this principle on both sexes. At the same time, middle-class educational, hygiene, and householding norms became standard. Welfare thus dealt with women deemed worthy of assistance in an ambiguous manner. In many cases, orientation towards an unconditional obligation to work and towards core middle-class values about householding and family maintenance, sexual and consumer behaviour, served to legitimate the dissolution of families from the lower strata and to separate children from their parents to make what the authorities considered to be a more "reasonable" use of the working capacity of mothers.

In the context of current activation policies, social work is challenged to take up a position within the welfare triad (labour market, social security, family) about how the costs of social risks are distributed. The current tendency in Western European countries is to place the duty to work above everything else and to restrict social rights. This raises the troubling question whether social work is taking up age-old traditions long thought to have been overcome. Conscious analysis of, and critical reflection on, the legacy of social work, whether this be work education in rescue homes or forced labour in reformatories, or indeed repatriation by means of poor droves could also represent a critical potential. This could and perhaps should alert us to how swiftly and easily human dignity and individual rights can be violated within

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the contradictory field of tension between the obligation to work and the provision of welfare assistance.

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