

## **Challenges for social work in modern Russia: problems and future prospects**

### **Towards the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of social work in Russia**

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#### **Abstract**

This article began working on the exchange of research papers with the Kazan State University. The collaboration with the Chair of Intercultural Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Bologna, was launched on March 2010 with the visit of Professor Liliya Yagudina. We hope that this cooperation will continue developing on the issues of relations between ethnic minorities, the evaluation of university systems, the problems inherent to social services and welfare. The purpose of this article is to attract attention to modern social work in Russia and to create a body of knowledge of its development for the comparative follow-on research. The article has six sections: 1. Social work as a synthetic, integrative, interdepartmental profession; 2. Main characteristics of Russian social services network; 3. Large families as an object of social work; 4. The teenager-mothers' support centers: prevention and rehabilitation; 5. Social work problems which need a solution; 6. Some directions for the actions needed to solve Russia's social work problems.

**Parole chiave:** social work, social service

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When considering how to adequately judge the contemporary social situation in Russia, one general observation immediately comes to mind. It concerns the rela-

tionships between an object under consideration and information regarding that object.

These relationships in Russian society are complex rather than easy or simple; reality and appearances, words and deeds, facts and their evaluation, points of view and objectivity, are examples of this complexity. The most evident example of this observation was the failure of the majority of analysts to predict the sudden and complete disintegration of the Soviet Union.

With the end of this period of the closed Soviet society, during which all relevant information was under tight state control, and the transition to an open Russian society, the problem of the relationship between appearance and reality did not evaporate but became even more complicated. One can say without much exaggeration that many current evaluations of the social situation in Russia are, at the very least, cautious; more often, they are overtly critical and pessimistic, even bordering on doomsday prophecies.

But the critical question persists: to what extent are we observing real deterioration, or are we simply seeing an explosion of negative information regarding persistent problems rather than an actual increase in the magnitude of those problems? For example, is there a real explosion of crime in Russia, or is there instead only an explosion of information about such crime? Moreover, to what extent are the negative features of the contemporary social situation in Russia the result of the politics of reform, and to what extent are they the inevitable consequence of the Soviet Union's totalitarian past? (Olson, 2003)

Under the former regime, the strength of the Soviet Union was exaggerated, while its true weakness was underestimated. Similarly, today the deficiencies and shortcomings of Russian democracy are sometimes exaggerated and its strength and vitality are seriously underestimated.

No doubt, it is difficult to be an absolute optimist in Russia, and still Russians should not give up hope. No, we are not going to idealize the market economy or its social consequences, moreover many of them are still unknown to Russian people. But to believe in a better future for the country, one has to realize that Russia is experiencing today the greatest challenge since the USSR break-up in 1991. Due to the effect of free market economy and post-modern industrialization, many social problems have increased in Russia. Hence, the dialectics of social development in this country sooner or later had to bring to life a fundamentally new profession called upon to give social assistance and support to people, to humanize social and cultural environment. It did happen so in 1991 when the profession of "*Social Workers*" was introduced.

It may seem surprising that in Russia, with its exuberant people's national traditions of charity and humanism, in Russia with its practical experience of social work in abundance, social work as a profession was officially registered only in March-April 1991. It happened at that time because during the Soviet period it had

been pointless to create a system of social welfare for the Russian population since totalitarian regime declared an unprecedented history of social protection of the Soviet people. But the absence of the social work system, based on scientific research and social public programs, and the lack of highly qualified specialists in the social work sphere facilitated the appearance of this profession (1, 4).

No doubt, the whole Russian educational system is undergoing a gradual reform. Today, more than 100 colleges and universities in Russia train specialists for social work. Social work education has become nowadays one of the priorities of higher professional education in Russia.

At the Kazan Academy of Social Education (G. Muchametzyanova – is the President), we train future social workers and offer a variety of students clubs and organizations where students have a greater chance of meeting people with shared interests and values that will help them be professionally socialized. Moreover, we have organized the Academy Center of students' volunteers - "The Students' Order of Charity". This Center is more than a sort of students club or coffee bar. Its aim is to promote strength, respect, and value of cultural diversity that is very important for future social workers.

### **Social work as a synthetic, integrative, interdepartmental profession**

From the very beginning, social work in Russia has been developing as an integrative, synthetic, interdepartmental profession. Social work practice may be effective only when social workers combine and integrate the potential of governmental and voluntary institutions, eliminate disconnection between them, and direct them towards the complex solution of the problems of any individual and his/her family and community.

The theory of social work in Russia is based on some conceptual ideas (4, p.49-50):

1. Easier to prevent the social illness than to cure it. The social policy strategy coordinates the efforts of all social institutions which are focused first and foremost on eliciting and eliminating the causes that could engender numerous social problems but not on fighting their consequences. Timely preventive measures should be taken to avoid various types of aberrations - moral, physical, mental, social, etc.
2. From social assistance to social self-help and self-protection. Social assistance is not a charity sop. It is based on the concrete needs of particular social groups and communities which require their direct participation. Social workers help people to help themselves.
3. The main point of social work is to create and provide opportunities for personal self-development, realization of personal creative abilities and inclinations, and to motivate clients efforts to solve their own problems.
4. Individuals, families, and communities are the main focus, priority of social work.

5. Society and the State, by no means replacing the family, should direct the efforts of different social institutions to consolidate families. Social workers enhance a family's potential, normalize the relationships between the family members and the interaction between the family and its closest environment, and obviate difficulties connected with the deficiency of human contacts, to create good will and a humane, merciful atmosphere in the family socium.

6. To revive the former Russian charity traditions. It used to be common and normal for Russian industrialists and rich people to be involved in charitable activities. The names of Morozov, Demidov, Rukavishnikov, Smirnov, etc. are famous not only for being founders of national entrepreneurship but also as important contributors to the education, culture, and charity development in Russia before the October Revolution in 1917 (1, 5).

During the Soviet period, the sponsorship was not welcome and it was even forbidden. As a result, today there exist very few charitable organizations and non-governmental funds that support social programs. The underprivileged population groups - pensioners, children, invalids – are without any social support or protection. New relations had to be initiated and organized between governmental and non-governmental institutions to provide help to the needy people. In general, the cooperation between government and non-government organizations is mutually beneficial.

7. Cooperation between social services and the church. Russia today is undergoing a period of lost ideals and spiritual degradation. One of the possible ways to revive the community's spiritual life is to establish a closer cooperation between the Church and social service agencies.

8. Investigate and practice the international social work experience. The attitude towards the international social work experience is ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a tendency to believe that abroad all possible means to solve social problems have been already found out, and there is no need to look for something new. This tendency manifests itself mainly in education and deals with the appearance of many western-styled schools, like community colleges, lyceums, and so on. On the hand, there exists the opinion that Russian social workers don't have to study foreign experience because our problems are specific, and the American experience won't help us. The well-known joke goes that every country prefers to make its own mistakes in the area of social work.

No doubt, both of these positions are polar. The truth lies somewhere in the middle.

9. A social worker's functions are defined to include being (1, 3):

- diagnostic. A social worker is responsible for some sort of "social diagnosis." He/she studies clients' psychological and age peculiarities and personal abilities, interests and the circle of their personal contacts, their liv-

ing conditions. The social worker then attempts to reduce negative influences and problems;

- organizational. A social worker organizes various kinds of activities; exerts influence on the way people spend their leisure time; helps to find jobs; renders assistance in professional orientation and adaptation; coordinates the activities of youth groups and associations; and exerts influence on the interaction between a client and medical, educational, sports, and legal institutions, societies and charities;
- prognostic. A social worker participates in programming and prognosticating the process of social development of neighborhoods and particular communities and activities of various social institutions that are involved in social work with a client;
- preventive and socio-therapeutic. A social worker takes into consideration and sets in motion social, legal, and psychological mechanisms to prevent and overcome negative influences; organizes the process of rendering socio-therapeutic assistance to those who need it; guarantees the defense of human rights in society; and renders support to juveniles and youth during the period of their social and professional self-determination;
- communicative. A social worker favors involving volunteers as well as the whole population in social work, in mutual rest, business and personal contacts, collects information and sets interaction between different social institutions in their social work with clients; and
- protective. A social worker uses all the range of legal regulations to protect the rights and interests of a client. A social worker promotes applying measures of compulsion on the part of the state and exercising it with respect to persons committing direct or indirect illegal actions concerning the clients.

### **Main characteristics of Russian social services network**

Today social services represent a rather wide sector of the Russian economy.

In the Soviet society, official ideology underlined the achievements in developing social services when compared with that in the foreign countries. For example, according to the calculations carried out by the WHO, in order to have satisfactory medical care, there should be 28 doctors per 10,000 people. In 1985, this index in Russia was equal to 45. On the number of hospital beds per 10,000 people we outstripped all other countries: in Russia--135, in USA--53, in Germany--109, in Japan--124, and in Great Britain--74 (Mylnikova, 1998, Barr, 1998).

Nowadays, the social services consumers' interests are heterogeneous and differ among groups with different income levels and education, urban and rural populations, and households of different sizes. However, there is a common aspect in

the interests of all these groups. Namely, it is dissatisfaction with the quality of rendered social services and with the chronic deficit of certain services. In the first place, dissatisfaction is caused by the difficulties in getting free medical assistance guaranteed by the state. Long hours spent in doctors' offices, difficulties in getting specialized medical assistance, shortages of medicines, and deficit of hospital staff and its rudeness and corruption adds to it. Irritation is also caused by the scarce availability of cultural and recreational services and the deficit of social service agencies.

At the same time, there exists a rather extensive network of social and cultural institutions with restricted public access (so called special clinics and holiday centers). Access to these institutions is given depending on the citizen's position in the administrative body, large enterprise, or department, as well as on personal acquaintances, relations with officials of these social institutions, or people within the system of the state and the Parliament nomenclature. The network of these institutions has become known as special: special medical assistance, special pre-school institutions, special social institutions that belong to certain public organizations or ministries.

The level and quality of services rendered by these social institutions to this special population are much higher than those rendered within the network available for the people at large. At the same time, the services of special institutions, as compared with those of similar state social institutions, are rendered either free or at approximately the same and, sometimes, even at lower prices. As a result, the higher service level in special institutions is paid at an unequal expense and is not beneficial for the general population or distribution of public resources allocated to meet social services needs.

Today, the Russian population has the same attitude towards the state social services as existed in the Soviet society; this could be characterized as passive discontent. The population is not organized to express and defend its interests with respect to transformation of public health or social assistance, cultural, and educational services.

After the start of sweeping economic reforms, the importance of social assistance, health care, and culture turned out to be much less than obtaining cash income. According to surveys conducted by VTSIOM in February 2009, among the problems which mostly hampered every day life in Russia, 75 percent of the city-dwellers named low income, 28 percent--poor health and quality of medical assistance, 24 percent--fear of losing their job, 23 percent--hopelessness and lack of perspectives, 32 percent--every day life difficulties, 16 percent--fatigue and over-exhaustion, 25 percent--poor housing conditions, 19 percent--lack of free time, 37 percent--alcoholism of a family member, and 6 percent--difficulties experienced in their children's education and relations in the family.

In spite of the fact that social work is not very popular in Russia, and the efficiency of social service agencies is still low, in my article, we will dwell upon some interesting experiences and examples of social work practice with individual categories of people. These examples give hope and grounds for being optimistic about social work prospects in Russia.

### **Large families as an object of social work**

It has been a long time since we have proclaimed public care for large families without any actual care being provided. In fact, both children and their parents have often been left to cope with extremely complicated educational, psychological and economical problems unaided.

Today, practically all families with many children can be included in the low-income category of the population. They have no opportunity to provide an adequate level of health care for their children. This can negatively affect the reproduction of the population.

By the end of 2008, families with three and more children represented 72 per cent of the total number of the families who lived under the poverty line. Real income of families with children have dropped by 30-40 per cent by comparison with the income level at the end of 1991. In this connection, their wish to preserve the old health care system, especially taking into account the underdevelopment of the medical insurance system and uncontrolled replacement of formerly free services with paid ones, seems to be quite understandable.

The current demographical situation in Russia's major cities (Moscow, St.Petesburg, Kazan) dictates that any family having three children and more can be considered as large. They are entitled to some benefits. However, this inconclusive kind of measure falls short of improving the demographic situation at large.

In order to help large families, first we need to identify their problems, typical needs, and requirements. We have repeatedly asked some parents why they decided to have their third, fourth, fifth, or seventh child. Their typical answers were: "To get an apartment from the government..." or "I don't want to work anymore..." Only 14% of parents with 6 or 7 children said that their third-born child was a desired one. The rest did not want that baby.

Over 60% of big family parents have incomplete secondary education and are employed as unskilled workers. There is a social danger that children from such families may increase the number of vagabonds and other representatives of the risk group. There are some schools that have to deal with as many as three deviant family generations, i.e. the parents, their children, and their grandchildren. It may be one of the reasons that the public prestige of families with many children is rather low in society. On what basis does a large family have to bring up their children? In fact, only 16% of parents make any use of educational knowledge, some of them use their own parents' experience, while the majority acts by intuition.

However, the situation with social assistance towards families with many children has been improving during the last three years. Nowadays in Russia, each big city has several specialized medical –psychological-educational-social centers for big families. These centers coordinate the activities of all social workers (pedagogues) of the family type under the common leadership of the community social welfare center in order to develop a coordinated and long-term policy aimed at helping big families.

The school stands at the top of the list (education, upbringing, financial support), followed by the social security committee, health and legal institutions, and the Juvenile Delinquency Inspectorate. All these organizations are cooperating with families, and this work is coordinated by social workers.

### **The teenage-mothers support centers: prevention and rehabilitation**

Another important aspect in social work practice in Russia is the development of social work with women.

The situation of women in Russian society is usually not regarded as an independent issue for social policy-making (and for research). Instead, only the "woman's aspect" of specific social problems (for instance problems of unemployment), or particular factors influencing the situation of women are issues. Theoretically, the Russian literature goes no further than general principles and recommendations on ways to deal with the woman problem: by "achieving de jure and de facto equality between men and women," "emancipation of women through their participation in social production," and "the transformation of every day life."

The recent years have brought drastic changes in the young female way of life. As a result of the sexual revolution, Russian society has become more permissive with regard to early and pre-marital sexual relationships which often lead to early pregnancies.

The percentage of young mothers under 20 years old has increased from 28.4% to 47.8% over the last 30 years. Every year, about 1,500 girls have a baby before they reach the age of 15; 9,000 do so at the age of 16; and 30,000 are 17. The proportion of babies born by mothers under 18 years of age averages 2.3%. Early pregnancies cause a number of the following problems:

Teenage ignorance of contraceptive techniques increases the number of early (legal) and late (illegal) abortions.

Unprepared for their pregnancies, teenage expectant mothers are prone to multiple complications which often result in premature births and miscarriages.

Being psychologically immature, some teenage girls are absolutely unprepared for their duties and responsibilities as mothers.

As a result of the above mentioned things, there appears to be a growing number of abandoned children who have to live uncared for and to face evils including child abuse and aggression. Early motherhood is often aggravated by difficulties in



family communications and educational and professional training problems. Social problems frequently lead to psychiatric and individual disorders and early addiction to drugs and alcohol.

So, teenage pregnancies are a fact of our social life. However, the country's health, social security, and education services are totally unprepared for providing effective aid and support to young mothers. It is obvious that providing different types of social assistance to young mothers presents a problem of extreme state importance. This problem is addressed in our social programs geared to three definite tasks:

- to prevent early pregnancies,
- to provide comprehensive support and special treatment to expectant young mothers, and
- to mold teenage-girls' abilities as mothers.

As a part of the social programs, a charity contraceptive service was established in Moscow and other big cities. This service is available at a number of colleges and universities.

The next part of the Program consists of the establishment of the Teenage Family Planning and Contraception Centers to provide the following services for expectant mothers:

- identifying their early pregnancies;
- analyzing their family and social situations;
- protecting them against unfavorable social, psychological, working, and ecological pressures;
- preparing them for motherhood;
- helping them solve social problems related to their pregnancies;
- monitoring their pregnancy to detect any pathology in the fetus's development;
- keeping them fit to have a safe delivery;
- detecting any anomalies in the development of the fetus and to terminate pathological pregnancies, should the need arise;
- anticipating and preventing cases of unwanted babies by providing psychological and social support;
- detecting, preventing and correcting psychiatric disorders;
- preparing the family to accept a young mother;
- training them in basic baby care and hygiene;
- consulting on contraception, family planning, and abortion.

The Teenage Family Planning and Contraceptive Centers are based on a consulting service named "Family and Marriage" and functions as a youth club involving young volunteers, the church, and cultural and recreational programs.

We also have specialized centers that create conditions for social rehabilitation and readaptation of young mothers and their babies to restore parent-child relations. The Rehabilitation Center includes a specialized children's clinic, a holiday shelter "Mother and Child," an orphanage, and a social patronage service. The Rehabilitation Center performs the following functions:

- providing the family with social, legal, psychological, and medical aid;
- monitoring and improving family health;
- detecting and correcting any behavioral anomalies in young mothers;
- securing the social rehabilitation of young families in a crisis situation;
- protecting the young mother from social situations leading to psychological traumas;
- helping young mothers continue their education and find jobs;
- providing moral support to preserve families.

### **Social work problems which need a solution**

The main problems of the social work development which require a solution for its further evolution include six areas. These areas consist of the lack of funds available for social work, erosion of state responsibility, impractical utilization of funds, decrease of the quality of and charges for free services, polarization of the sectors, and non-state tax allocation to charities. Until these problems have solutions, the future of the social institutions that belong to industrial and agricultural enterprises remains unclear.

First, insufficient allocations of budget funds for the normal performance of social service institutions is aggravated by the instability of public finance. The decline of share of the federal budget expenditure allocated for the social services was accompanied by arrears of payments and, finally, failure to fulfill the adopted decisions on the volume of financing. As before, the public's high dependence on budget allocations remains. As a consequence, regions under very grave financial conditions have arisen and will continue to arise in the future.

There remains a considerable lag in wages between social workers and those employed in other branches of the economy. Because of this lag, highly qualified specialists have left their positions with the traditionally "free for general consumers" education, social services, health care, and cultural institutions to join the commercial sector. Thus, the general public's access to high quality services has been sharply limited. Neither state measures of financial support of these sectors nor efforts of some funds and associations do not allow the level of the average salary in social services to rise to the level of wages in the Russian commercial sector.

Second, an erosion of responsibility of the state authorities for the situation in social services has taken place. In Russia, a considerable administrative decentralization in the social services occurred. Since 77 out of 89 subjects of the Russian

Federations receive budgetary subventions, the volume of financing the social services considerably depends on decisions made by the Finance Ministry. At the same time, neither the Finance Ministry nor the Government is responsible for the changes in volume and quality of social services rendered to the population. In its turn, local authorities take off responsibility for the worsening situation in the social sphere, saying that the major part of taxes is sent to the federal budget, and the amount of subventions from the federal budget is getting smaller. The same situation is reproducing itself between the regional, municipal, and district administrations. In reality, the financing of the social services still remains considerably centralized, but responsibility for allocation of these funds and their utilization is not strictly defined.

The impractical utilization of funds allocated for social services is the third area requiring attention. Public finance instability and the inability of higher authorities to assume responsibility for changing the situation and guaranteeing the provision of public services maintained the illusory hopes of the sectoral and territorial managing bodies. These bodies hoped for an increase of budget financing and prevented the realization that the former strategies of financing and management should be revised. They were trying without success to preserve the maximum of achievements that social services had won at the end of the eighties.

Fourth, the uncontrolled erosion of free social services is currently taking place. The quality of social services rendered to the majority of the population is getting worse; replacement of free services with paid ones is taking place; possibilities in getting quality services are diminishing for the poor groups of the population, and their influence on those who render these services is also falling.

Under the former system, groups of potential outsiders could access to quality services of health care by turning to the Party and Soviet authorities. At present the citizens' appeals to Party authorities are impossible while appeals to elective authorities bring no results.

As a consequence those strata of the population which on the one hand need medical and social assistance services and on the other hand have the least economic opportunities to use them were deprived of effective institutional means to advance changes in the health care and social support situations. Their interests are not represented in the mechanism that regulates the provision of medical services to the population. The character of these groups (i.e., indigent) makes very doubtful the possibility of their spontaneous creation of organizational forms of behavior in power structures (Zhiltsov, 2007).

Fifth, a polarization of sectors occurred. The general public was on one side and those working for elite consumers with high incomes were on the other side.

Finally, the institutional conditions and tax policies have not stimulated an increase of the share of non-state funding of social services. The task to stimulate social institutions to search for new sources of financing and encourage the development

of non-state funding, invariably declared in the program documents of the government, has not been supported by taxation policies. Under the legislation in force the amount of funds transferred by enterprises and banks to charitable groups and social and cultural institutions shall be subtracted from the taxable profit; however, this amount is limited to 3 percent of the organization's profits. As international experience shows, the allowances should be 5 to 10 percent to effectively stimulate philanthropy. The tax policy with respect to social services differs depending on whether or not an organization belongs to the state. In 2008, the share of profits not subjected to taxation if it is donated to cultural institutions has been increased to 5 percent, but only if the recipient is a state institution!

### **Some directions for the actions needed to solve Russia' social work problems**

The actions needed to provide solutions for the Russian social work problems can be divided into four themes. They consist of stabilizing public funding, establishing a division of powers between administrative bodies, controlling budget expenditures, and financing by the state.

First, public funding must be stabilized. The state support for social services, including allocations out of the federal budget, must continue. Stable funding can be provided by:

- setting norms for the minimum public expenditure on social services, public health, education, and culture calculated either in cash per capita or as a share of GDP;
- widening the list of those public health, education, and cultural expenses which go under protected budgetary categories which are being financed in the first place.

So, setting minimum public expenditure norms has the best chance to be carried out. On the other hand, widening the list of protected budgetary expenses is more realistic. In various regions, local taxes have been introduced to support the upkeep of social services' institutions. Introduction of special taxes or the allocation of targeted tax incomes on public health, education, and culture would have been the best guarantee for the stable financing of social services. But, special interest groups and Finance ministry will speak against this procedure.

An introduction of public expenditure minimums on social services, public health, education, and culture is now being drafted in the government. In the 2009, the President's message to the Federal Council said that "in the future while forming a budget obligatory should be consideration for the public minimum standards--on basic indices of living standard, expenditure on science, culture, education, health care, and ecology." In the Russian government's program among measures improve the mechanism by which federal aid was granted to the regions in 1996-1997 was the "introduction in the procedure of evaluating volumes of federal aid

to the regions more objective estimates of territories' needs in budgetary resources using differences in social and budgetary norms according to territory." (1, 4))

State norms which define the guaranteed minimum of expenditure on public health, education, and culture may be defined according to two different bases:

As public expenses on rendering a certain set of social, medical, educational, cultural, and recreational services per capita; at the same time, a list of services with their qualitative and quantitative characteristics must be defined; or

As expenses on the upkeep of the existing social services' institutions; at the same time, expenses on separate categories of expenditure of the social institutions should be standardized (i.e., expenses for salaries and buying medicines, materials, equipment, covering communal services).

One must note that these two approaches can be combined and united.

If standardization of expenditure is taken as a basis for the norms directed to the upkeep of the existing social and cultural institutions, then a problem exists between the real volumes of budgetary funding of social services and those volumes of expenditures which will be needed to cover substantiated norms. In the near future it will be difficult to get the government to approve the norms which define a guaranteed set of services rendered to the citizens and the guaranteed minimum of expenses directed on the upkeep of the social and cultural institutions. Nevertheless, the social services administrative bodies should elaborate such maximum desegregated norms and make sure that they are adopted at least as recommended ones. They may be used in order to substantiate suggestions on the necessary amounts of funds for social services from the Federal and local budgets.

Second, the division of responsibilities and powers between the bodies of power of different levels must be established. Decentralization of the system of state management and delegation of huge amounts of power and responsibility to the regional level in the social sphere require the definite distribution of functional duties in the social sphere between different regional levels of authority, and establishment of real correspondence between responsibilities entrusted to the managing body and those material and financial resources and organizational and managerial instruments that influence the allocation of these resources.

Regional authorities who are constantly demanding an increase in tax share which remains in the regions are interested in establishing these divisions. But the president and the government are not interested in it; their interest is to preserve dependency of the regions on federal subvention amounts and conditions of granting it.

Third, stricter control over budget expenditure is needed. It is necessary to provide for more transparency of financing and managing the system of public services provisions.

In Russia, when the budget is being approved by the parliament social services' expenses are given in details which take a few lines and substantiations presented

by the ministries and committees take only a few pages. In contrast, in Sweden the descriptions of the social services expenses are substantiated by a whole volume presented to the parliament.

Social services' administrative bodies and the Finance Ministry will be against an increased transparency of budgetary expenditure. For example, quite recently the finance minister declared in one of his TV appearances that "it is unnecessary to analyze and approve the budget in the State Duma in very detailed form. If certain resources are being allocated for culture, then the minister of culture himself decides how to spend it. He is responsible for culture, and let him decide what he will do with the allocated money." This position is convenient for the finance and culture ministers.

Not only employees of the ministries who distribute resources, but also many beneficiaries of these resources (such as social and cultural institutions, pharmaceutical enterprises, editorials, publishing, textbooks) will be opposing improvement in the decision-making procedure and introduction of public control. Among the advocates favoring stricter control over the public money disbursement in social services may be those political parties which in order to win the following election will proclaim slogans of introducing order in the state administration and a radical change in attitude towards social services. These parties will try not only in words but also in deeds to carry out these slogans, or, at least, demonstrate the beginning of their realization. To overcome the officials' resistance and to secure an increased transparency in financing and administration will be easier with the weak social services than with the military-industrial and agrarian lobbies. Finally, rational use of public finance must begin. While maintaining the role of the state in support of health care, education, and culture, it is necessary to revise the strategy of the state financing of these sectors. It is necessary to stop spreading the allocated means and to start financing public health, education, and culture on the basis of targeted programs.

### **Conclusion**

In order to secure normal functioning and development of social work and social services, it is necessary to radically change the people's attitude. This change may be possible when the social and economical situations of the main part of the population have stabilized and there has appeared a trend towards real income growth. Then it will be possible to turn people's conscience towards the social problems. It may be necessary to carry out special propaganda activities in a persuasive form that will attract people's attention towards the situation in the social work system in Russia.

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