

## THE SOCIAL WORKER AS A COGNITARIAT OF THE THURD WAVE

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**ABSTRACT:** THIS ARTICLE AIMS AT LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL WORKER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONGNITARIATE FROM THE "THIRD WAVE" / ALVIN TOFFLER/. IT POINTS OUT THAT WHATEVER CHANGES HAPPEN IN THE COMMUNITY LIFE, THE SOCIAL WORKER WILL KEEP THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS/HER PROFESSION PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE SOCIALLY DEPRIVED.

**KEY WORDS:** SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL POLICY, CRISIS, SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES, AUTOMATIZATION, ROBOTIZATION, COMPUTERIZATION, PEOPLE AT DISADVANTAGE, SOCIALLY VULNERABLE GROUPS

*„THIRD WAVE“ is a research on the history of humanity by Alvin Toffler. The history is described as passing through three waves, each of which possessing its own specific structure, its motion logic and its historical change velocity.*

THE division of the human history in three civilizational streams - the three waves of change - is a division of the history in periods, which requires special techniques of simplification and synthesis. "Third wave" is a philosophy of history, which is after the power and the succession in the motion course of the different types of communities and their culture. These flow into every separate individual so that they could be than recreated in their everyday routine. However when the community and the culture are in a state of crisis or in a state of revolutionary change little can the habits of the elders be trusted and so new social technologies have to be elaborated.

ALVIN Toffler points at many symptoms of crises in today's world: the governments of most nations are full of politics who can't take effective decisions and in fact don't rule; the traditional "nuclear" family can't incorporate the pressing new styles of family life and has actually lost its part in the communal life; the economy can no longer be provided for by the mass production of products and is thus being demassified; etc. People are turning their backs to the old industrial institutions and intensively pear into the future. In historical plan the industrial and agrarian community passes the rapids of change in a different pace.

THE first wave of change- the agrarian civilization needs thousands of years in order to play its part in history. This is the time when the human lives in a very close relationship with the earth: completely obedient to its peculiarities.

THE second wave of change- the industrial civilization; it exhausts its intensity only in a few centuries: the individual frees him/herself from the natural dependences, but in a way again runs the danger of sinking in it by robing the nature of its riches.

**WHAT** is happening today is the third wave of changes- Toffler claims that this one is at least as deep as the industrial revolution with the only change being that it is passing way faster. As Toffler suggests, humans won't treat the nature as if it was made to serve them. In return it will reveal new secrets which will change their whole understanding for logic, reasoning, time and space.

**TOFFLER** show how the new technologies allow the ready-made product to appear for a short period of time. The production cycle can be changed more flexibly and more often. *Together with this the production functions of the humans and the nature of their labor also change often and fast.* On the other hand, the migration becomes more frequent which losses the human attachment to one location.

**EVERYTHING** radically changes when an immaterial object such as information assumes a vital role in the human life. What will happen to a community where the information grows in geometrical progression? What will happen to the economy when today's meaning of the term "property" gets erased? The processes flow in different pace- some faster; some slower; some might even give the impression of going back to the past.

**TOFFLER** believes we are on the verge of a new era of synthesis. The economic regions or enterprises based on the economics of the third wave blossomed; the ones based on the economics of the second wave faded away. Four groups of interconnected industrial branches are now heading towards a large scale growth and will most probably become the spine of the third wave industry, bringing major changes in the economic authority and in the social and the political regime. The electronics and the computers clearly formulate such interconnected group. Besides, the shift towards the industries from the third wave will be highly accelerated by the energetic crisis, as many of the industries lead us to processes and products described as having insignificant energetic needs.

**THE** magnitude for such a progress- its meaning for the future of evolution itself- puts us in front of the ultimate need to start guiding this progress. Giving up or leaving things as they are means extinctions for us and for our children. The catalog of all disasters connected to technology in the last years shows that most of these are connected with the technologies of the second and not the third wave. The reason is obvious: the technologies of the third wave haven't unfolded on a wide front. Many of those are still in embryo state. Still we can see the danger of the electronics' smog, the battle in the cosmic space, the drop of genetic materials, the interference in the climate and what can be called an "ecological battle"- for instance the deliberate provocation of earthquakes by simulating vibrations from a distance. There are many other risks and dangers connected with the progression towards a new technological base.

**IN this new "era", the social worker can't be a part of the highest, hierarchical layers of society.** *The social worker will be the one fighting for the rights of the socially disadvantaged and for those deprived from the most "basic", because of the social-economic situation in which they and/or the society are in.*

**THE** social worker will continue the mission of the social work, which in spite of starting as charity with the help and participation of wealthy people, turns into a world-wide known applied activity practiced by specially trained professionals (cognitariat). The nature of the profession of the social worker cannot be identified with the governmental structures in society. It is focusing at the socially oppressed and aims at supporting them.

**THE** social activity which is realized by *this part of the cognitariat of the third wave – the social workers*, will continue to be opposing to the relation state/policy- social rights, as well as the instrument for realizing the social wellbeing in society.

**IN** this context it is necessary to ask the question: **Is it possible for the robotized labor to replace the social worker in future?**

**HOW** will the automatization of labor and the need for human resources be influenced in the next decades? *How big is the possibility that the machines will replace the normal workforce and the social workers in particular?*

**IN** the beginning of the XVIII century- the century in which the industrialization commenced, new machines, mechanisms and devices, leading to decrease in the number of workplaces. This on the other hand releases strong social processes, which fire away the Marxist paradigm to the top of the social life. Nowadays the modern informational and communicational technologies induce the same effect- computers substitute for a lot more manpower than the first looms ever did.

**WHAT** will people do if the computerization starts replacing great volumes of manpower? An example for this will be Apple Inc., which hopes to open the very first completely automated factory within 5 to 10 years.

**THE** manpower substitution is already moving outside the production realms. Some examples can be seen in the supermarkets: a person monitoring the monitors of the self-service check outs takes the place of the traditional cashier. For those afraid that the automatization concerns especially the unskilled workers a quick answer would be to train people for "better" workplaces. In spite of this the technological advancements now also threatens "better" jobs. A great range of specialized work places could be the next victims of the technological changes.

**THE** optimists claim that despite this with the computerization a lot new work places will be created. For instance train drivers, data analysis specialists, robotics engineering etc.

**SOME** symptoms of this future could already be seen nowadays. In Twitter- gigantic social media, the employment rates are very low: the company only consists of 400 employees. Therefore, it is hard not to arrive at the conclusion that the "technological" unemployment will continue to grow as more and more people become unneeded.

**THE** optimists might say that the pessimistic imagination of some people is too limited and they can't imagine the full range of great new work possibilities that the automatization will create. On the other hand, maybe the imagination of the optimists is the limited one and that is why they can't imagine one other scenario- a world, where people are enjoying the outcomes of the automatization and the possibilities for more free time resulting from it.

**IN** the context of what has been said so far, we can discuss if the modern technologies could replace the social workers and their engagement. Already in the beginning we can assert that the social worker will not be replaced by a robotized labor or some other type of automatization but he/she should prepare for the inevitable changes awaiting in the near future. Why is this so?

**THE** main argument is linked to the nature of the social worker's *activities*. *These include the communication between the social worker and the indigent* aiming at building up a pre-notion for the advancing risk and the measures which need to be taken in order to

overcome it. *These activities could not be realized via computer technologies.* The technology cannot take the place of the following: the conversation between the social worker and the client; the formation of a partnership; the definition of the arising problem and discussing it; etc.

**UNLIKE the social worker, the automation and the high technology can't include the negotiation elements or display of empathy.**

**BUT** at the same time the social worker must regulate and adapt his/her work to the new technologies, which will give him/her the ability to both improve his/her work and to relive his/her client's condition.

**IN this sense the question arises: What will be the place of the social worker when forming the future individuals?**

**WITH** the experiences made, which come as a supplement to the experience from the past, our century is turning to a genuinely radical for the development of the human civilization. Nevertheless, it is striking that despite all the radical and revolutionary theories of philosophers and scientists we still haven't managed to create a society of logic, a world belonging to the individual and completely different when it comes to human qualities. Who is to blame for the failure of so many efforts to create a human world where everybody can live a life of dignity with no destructive rivalry or simply put a world of compassion from everybody towards everybody?

**THE** ontological social point of view understands the single person as a social creature with anthropological origin and embranchment. The social and anthropological nature of every person is two sides of the same coin. The main qualities of a person are: creative work, intelligence (intellectual self-consciousness), conviviality, universality and freedom. Moral also could be added to the progress of human evolution.

**THESE** characteristics endowed in every human become active within society. The history of putting these characteristics into practice is the history of humanity itself. Together with the development of culture the human creates conditions for the commencement of an endless process of development of the main human characteristics; the main human capacities. The development of the main human characteristics throughout history is the development of the human essence through art as the most important quality of all. The human becomes a cultured creature thanks to its artistic capabilities. This is the foundation for the development of all other characteristics.

**IN** spite of this the content and the functionality of its dynamic and social characteristics depend on:

- A)** The interpretation which nowadays society gives to these characteristics;
- B)** The frames for their unimpeded development which society creates, because of their usefulness;
- C)** The stability of the system and the society as a whole, but also of the individuals, who constitute it; of the development which struggles to overcome or break the social barriers, which stand on the way of a trouble-free human characteristics' progress.

**HOWEVER,** *the interaction between human and society is unthinkable without the development of a moral conciseness, which will make the people create this society and give it flesh and bones through their social behavior and through their social and personal lives. This can only happen in a society, where the human is a normal form of self-realization as a*

*social individual.* Otherwise the development of the basic characteristics where art is being predominant, with no availability of an universal humanitarian frame of reference, which acts as an inner power on everyone, which can endanger the rapprochement of society to a point where its existence will be put in jeopardy and consequently the existence of the kind itself.

**ONE** of the main roles of the social worker in the future will be to keep the *balance between the individual needs and the social prosperity.* He has to put into action the regulatory norms of the social life towards his client, so that he can feel meaningful and not repudiated.

### **THIS IS THE FUTURE!**

**TO** sum up and finalize the current writing the following could be said: The development of the social work in the field of science is comparatively insignificant compared to this of sciences like mathematics, physics, medicine, astronomy, etc., which doesn't mean that its contribution to human history is insignificant. The human is a social creature and for this reason advance (he and his civilization) in a joint frames while interacting and confronting with others, but always within the boundaries of society.

**THE** social work- as a theory and in practice is yet to begin its significant development and together with this the profession of the social worker will grow in importance. The need of resolving social problems on an individual and/or social level is not something new- it goes hand in hand with the development of the human civilization throughout its different phases. The socio-political circumstances and changes, upon which the modern world rests, cause, dismiss and/or change the nature of the needs, which however always emphasize on the prosperity, the advancement and the self-realization of the human and society as a whole.

**DESPITE** the new facts accompanying the socio-economic changes characterizing every period the social problems have the same nature but a different "substances". Widened social problems during defined time periods in in specific geographic territories return to the same or different places due to a change of conditions (in the civil wars periods or during political agitation the prostitution turns into a social plague due to the social consequences from it). So the international, global character is formed. The same character as the one of human needs although they differ in form, intensity, location and the period they belonged to. The social work together with the application of methods and techniques aims at satisfying these needs- according to the humanitarian nature of science and of the social activities as a whole.

**THE** social worker and its practice address a wide group of social problems and phenomenon. He/she works with children, elderly people, handicapped people, drug addicts, abused women, emigrants and refugees, mentally ill people, people with incurable diseases and many more. To this the fight with poverty, social disconnection, racism, discrimination and prejudice, unemployment, illiteracy, inequality etc. can be added.

**ALTHOUGH** the meaning and the value of the social work, practiced by the social worker are proven and every country around the world has contributed for the development and enrichment of the methods through which it is been carried out, there are some strata of society for which the social work has hardly touched, some which it is not dealing with at all and some which it has limited intersection with.

**A** very important question about the future development of the social workers concerns the educational institutions where they are getting their training. There the meaning of their educational internships has to be intensified. They should get a deep contact with the social

work and not engaging them with administrative duties, because of a lack of personnel and mistrust in their potential.

It is possible that in the next 30 years new areas in the social work practices will arise. The opinion of the author of this monograph is that the number of the social workers in the different organizations and agencies will increase as the need of their services and their presence as a whole is yet to rise. This will be an expression of correlation between the social work and the subsidizing of projects connected to it. There are enough convincing evidences that this will be one of the main investment areas (for more that 7-8 years the NPOs are being subsidized all over the world and are developing a wide variety of social activities with worldly recognized results) in the coming years and one of its main principles will be the prevention. Prevention of everything “unwanted” in a modern, civilized society.

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