



Challenges for Modern Social Work in Russia: Problems and Prospects

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	<i>Challenges for Modern Social Work in Russia: Problems and Prospects</i>
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Volume and Issue Number:	<i>Vol. 3 No. 1</i>
Manuscript ID:	<i>31005</i>
Page Number:	<i>5</i>
Year:	<i>2000</i>

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Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Winter) by the Center for Social Work Research at 1 University Station, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. Journal subscriptions are \$110. Our website at www.profdevjournal.org contains additional information regarding submission of publications and subscriptions.

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ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org

Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact

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Introduction

When considering how to judge the contemporary social situation in Russia, one must be concerned with the relationships between appearance and reality, and between an object under consideration and timely information about the object. One observation that comes to mind here is that, in Russian society, such relationships are likely to be complex and opaque rather than simple and obvious. The most evident example of this observation is that the majority of analysts, including those in the United States Central Intelligence Agency, failed to predict the sudden disintegration of the Soviet Union before it happened in the summer of 1991.

With the end of this period of the closed Soviet society, during which all relevant information was under tight state control, and with 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, and some even border on being doomsday prophecies.

The critical question, however, persists: are we actually observing real deterioration, or are we simply seeing an explosion of negative information regarding persistent problems? For example, is there truly 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 the inevitable consequence of the Soviet Union's totalitarian past? (Olson, 1998).

Under the former regime, the strengths of the Soviet Union were exaggerated, while its true weaknesses were underestimated. Similarly, today

the deficiencies and shortcomings of Russian democracy are sometimes exaggerated and its strength and vitality are seriously underestimated (Ekonomicheskie I Sotsialnie Peremeny: Monitoring Obshestvennogo Mneniya, 1999).

Although it is difficult to be overly optimistic about conditions in Russia, Russians should not give up hope. To believe in a better future for the country, one has to realize that Russia is experiencing today the greatest challenge since the USSR dissolution in 1991. Due to the effect of the free market economy and post-modern industrialization, many social problems have increased in Russia. Hence, the dialectics of social development in Russia eventually had to bring to life a new profession called upon to give social assistance and support to people, to humanize the social and cultural environment. This happened in 1991 when the profession of Social Work was introduced.

It may seem surprising that in Russia, with its national traditions of charity and humanism, and with abundant practical experience in social work, social work as a profession was officially registered only in the Spring of 1991. This happened then, rather than earlier, because during the Soviet period it was pointless to create a system of social welfare for the Russian population since the totalitarian regime had officially declared an unprecedented history of social protection of the Soviet people. The absence of a 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 (Clague & Rausser, 1998). Today, more than fifty colleges in Russia train specialists for social work. Social work education has now become one of the priorities of higher professional education in Russia.

The purposes of this article are to discuss the state of social work as a profession as it exists in Russia today, and to create a body of knowledge for

comparative, follow-up research. To these ends, the article first examines social work as a synthetic, integrative, interdepartmental profession and then goes on to look at the main characteristics of the Russian social services network. It next examines large families as an object of social work, followed by an exploration of teenage-mothers' support centers and their roles of prevention and rehabilitation. After a brief examination of social work problems in Russia that need solutions, the article concludes with the directions for actions needed to solve Russia's social work problems.

Social Work as a Synthetic, Integrative, Interdepartmental Profession

From the very beginning, social work in Russia developed as an integrative, synthetic, interdepartmental profession. Social work practice is effective only when social workers combine and integrate the potential of governmental and voluntary institutions, eliminate disconnection between them, and direct them toward the possible solutions to problems of any individual and his or her family and community.

Social work theory in Russia is based on a number of ideas (Social Work in Russia, 1998). First is the idea that it is 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 aberration—moral, physical, mental, social, etc.

Another concept is the idea of going 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. Another point to social work is creating and providing opportunities for personal self-develop-

ment, realization of personal creative abilities and inclinations, and to motivate clients' efforts to solve their own problems. Additionally, individuals, families, and communities are presumed to be a priority of social work in Russia. There is also the idea that society and the state should direct the efforts of the various social institutions in Russia 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.

Revival of Russian charity traditions also plays a role in the country's social work theory. It used to be common for Russian industrialists and the wealthy to be involved in charitable activities. The names Morozov, Demidov, Rukavishnikov, and Smirnov are famous not only for being those of national entrepreneurs, but also as important contributors to the education, culture, and charity development in Russia before the October Revolution in 1917 (*Tendentsii i Perspektivy Razvitiia Ssotsialnoi Sfery*, 1999). During the Soviet period, however, such sponsorship was unwelcome if not forbidden. As a result, today's Russia has very few charitable organizations and non-governmental institutions that support social programs, and some especially underprivileged population groups, such as pensioners, children, and invalids, find themselves 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; generally, such cooperation between government and non-government organizations has been mutually beneficial.

Cooperation between social services and the church is an issue in Russian social work. Russia today is undergoing a period of lost ideals and spiritual degradation. The Russian Orthodox Church, however, remains an important force in Russian society and culture. Thus, one possible way to integrate social work into the community and at the

same time revive the community's spiritual life is to establish a closer cooperation between the Church and social service agencies.

The issue of how much emphasis to place on international social work experience and practice, especially on the American model, is debated in the Russian social work community. The attitude toward the international social work experience is ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a tendency to believe that all possible means for solving social problems have already been discovered abroad, and there is no need to look for anything new because there is nothing new. On the other hand, there is also the opinion that Russian social workers do not have to study foreign experiences because our problems are specific to Russia, and the American experience is thus irrelevant. The well-known joke goes that every country prefers to make its own mistakes in the area of social work.

A social worker's functions include being diagnostic, organizational, prognostic, preventive and socio-therapeutic, communicative, and protective (Social Work in Russia, 1998):

- *diagnostic*: a social worker is responsible for some sort of "social diagnosis." He or she studies clients' psychological and age peculiarities and personal abilities, interests, the circle of their personal contacts, and their living conditions. The social worker then attempts to reduce negative influences and problems;

- *organizational*: social workers organize various kinds of activities, influence the way people spend their leisure time, help clients find jobs, render assistance in professional orientation and adaptation, coordinate the activities of youth groups and associations, influence the interaction between a client and medical, educational, sports, and legal institutions, societies and charities;

- *prognostic*: a social worker participates in prognosticating the process of social development of communities and neighborhoods and also helps program the activities of various social institutions that are involved in social work with a particular client;

- *preventive and socio-therapeutic*: social workers take into consideration and set in motion social, legal, and psychological mechanisms to prevent and overcome negative influence, organize the process of rendering socio-therapeutic assistance to those who need it, guarantee the defense of human rights in society, and support juveniles and youth during their social and professional self-determination;

- *communicative*: a social worker favors involving volunteers and indeed the whole population in social work, and through communications with volunteers, clients, and information enables interactions between different social institutions in their social work with clients; and

- *protective*: social workers use all the range of legal regulations to protect the rights and interests of a client. A social worker promotes fair and consistent measures on the part of the state in order to secure justice, for example with respect to persons committing direct or indirect illegal actions concerning their clients.

The Main Characteristics of the 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 of foreign countries. For example, according to calculations carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO), to have satisfactory medical care, there should be 28 doctors per 10,000 people. In 1985, the USSR had 45 doctors per 10,000 people. The number of hospital beds per 10,000 people, Russia, with 135, outstripped all other countries: the United States had 53, West Germany had 109, Japan had 124, and Great Britain had 74 hospital beds per 10,000 people.

Presently, the social services consumers' interests are heterogenous and differ among groups with different income levels and education, urban and rural populations, and households of different sizes (Babish, 1998, *Ekonomicheskie Reformy v Rossii*:

na Poroge Strukturnykh Peremen, 1999). However, all of these groups have one concern in common, namely, dissatisfaction with both the quality of social services and with the chronic deficit of certain services. In the first place, dissatisfaction is caused by difficulties in getting the free medical assistance guaranteed by the state. Long hours spent in doctors' offices, difficulties in getting specialized medical assistance, shortages in medicines, and the deficits of hospital staff, with their 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 agendas.

The quality of services rendered by these social institutions to this special population is much higher than that rendered within the network available for the population 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 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 it is not beneficial for the general population or the distribution of public resources allocated to meet social services needs.

Today, the Russian population has the same attitude toward the state social services as existed in the Soviet society; this could be characterized as passive discontent. The population is not well organized enough to express and defend its interests with respect to the 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 1999 (Ivanov, 1999), among the problems which most greatly hampered everyday life in Russia, 75 % of the city-dwellers named low income, 28% said poor health and quality of medical assistance, 24% said fear of losing their job, 23% said hopelessness and lack of perspectives, 32% said everyday life difficulties, 16% said fatigue and over-exhaustion, 25% said poor housing conditions, 19% said lack of free time, 37 %

said alcoholism of a family member, and 6% said 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, this article will examine some typical 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 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 cannot ensure an adequate level of health care for their children. This can negatively affect the reproduction of the population.

By the end of 1998, families with three or more children represented 72% of the total number of the families who lived under the poverty line. Real income of families with children had dropped by 30-40% by comparison to the income level at the end of 1991 (Semya v Rossii (Family in Russia), 1994, No.1. p.84-85). 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 demographics of three of Russia's major cities, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Novosibirsk, dictates that any family having three children or more is considered large. They are entitled to some benefits. However, this inconclusive kind of measure falls short of improving the demographic situation at large. Last year, for example, the number of deaths exceeded births by 187,000 for the first time since the Second World War. This situation comes about as a result of reckless government

policies, with regard to families in general, and large families in particular.

In order to help large families, first we need to identify their problems, typical needs, and requirements. I myself 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 parents who have large families 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 parents' experience, while the majority acts by intuition.

However, the situation with social assistance towards families with many children has improved during the last three years. These days in Russia, each big city has several specialized medical, psychological, educational, and 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 of 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 of 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 or 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 considered to be issues. Theoretically, the Russian literature goes on further than general principles and recommendations on ways to deal with how women are viewed in the Russian culture 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 everyday 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 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 (Ivanov, 1999). Every year, about 1,500 girls have babies before they reach age 15; 9,000 do so at age 16; and 30,000 at 17. The pregnancies can 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 problems, there appears to be a growing number of abandoned children who have to live uncared for and who face evils including child abuse and aggression. Early motherhood is often aggravated by difficulties in family communications, educational

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

Although teenage pregnancies are a fact of our social life, Russia'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 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 pregnancies to detect any pathology in their fetus' 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; and
- consulting on contraception, family planning, and abortion.

The Teenage Family Planning and Contraceptive Centers are based on a consulting service called "Family and Marriage," and function 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; and
- providing moral support to preserve families.

Social Work Problems That Need Solutions

The main problems of social work development, which require solutions for its further evolution, are in six areas. These areas are: 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 allocations 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 institutions are aggravated by the instability of public finance. The decline of share of the federal budget expenditure allocated for 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, problems with regions under very grave financial conditions have arisen and will continue to rise 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 for these sectors, nor the efforts of some funding and associations, have allowed 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 has occurred. Since 77 out of 89 subjects of the Russian Federation receive budgetary subventions, the volume of financing for 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 turn, local authorities shun 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 the allocation of these funds and their utilization is not strictly defined.

The impractical use of funds allocated for social services is the third area requiring attention. Public finance instability and instability 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 in 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; the replacement of free services with paid ones is taking place; possibilities of getting quality services are diminishing for the poor groups of the population, and their influence on those who render these services is also failing.

Under the former system, groups of potential outsiders could gain access to quality services of health care by turning to the Party and Soviet authorities. At present, the citizens' appeals to the 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, are deprived of effective institutional means to advance changes in health care and support situations. Their interests are not represented in the mechanism which regulates the provision of medical services to the population. The character of these groups makes doubtful the possibility of their spontaneous creation of organizational forms of behavior on power structures (Zhiltsov, 1998).

Fifth, a polarization of sectors occurred. The general public was on one side and those working for the 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, declared in the program documents of the government, has not been supported by taxation policies. Under the current 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% of the organization's profits. As international experience shows, the allowances should be 5 to 10% 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 1994, the share of profits not subjected to taxation, if it was donated to cultural institutions, had been increased to 5%, but only if the recipient was a state institution.

Conclusion: Some Directions For Actions Needed To Solve Russia's Social Work Problems

The actions needed to provide solutions for the Russian social work problems can be divided into four types. 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, educa-

tional, and cultural expenses which go unprotected by budgetary categories which are being financed in the first place.

According to Shatalin (1998), setting minimum public expenditure norms has the best chance of being carried out. On the other hand, widening the list of protected budgetary expenses is more realistic. In local regions, various taxes have been introduced to support the upkeep of social services institutions. Introduction of special taxes or the allocation of targeted tax revenues on public health, education, and culture would have been the best guarantee for the stable financing of social services. This might not be popular, however, with special interest groups and the Finance Ministry.

An introduction of public expenditure minimums on social services, public health, education, and culture is now being drafted by the government. In 1995, the President's message to the Federal Council said that "in the future, while forming a budget consideration for public minimum standards should be required – on the basic indices of living standards, expenditures on science, culture, education, health care, and ecology." The Russian government's program for 1996-1998, included, among measures to improve the mechanism by which federal aid was granted to the regions in 1996-1997, 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" (Shiltsov, 1998, p.45).

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

As public expenses render 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 identified; or

As expenses on the upkeep of the existing social

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

These two approaches can be combined and united. If standardization of expenditures is taken as a basis for the norms directed to the upkeep of the existing social and cultural institutions, then a problem would exist between the real volumes of budgetary funding 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 towards the upkeep of the social and cultural institutions. Nevertheless, the social services administrative bodies should elaborate upon 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 different levels of authority must be established. Regional authorities, who are constantly demanding that an increase in tax share remain in the regions, are interested in establishing these divisions. But the President and the government are not interested in it; their interests are 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 only a few lines, while substantiations presented by the ministries and committees take only a few pages. In contrast, in Sweden, the descriptions of 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 expenditures. For example, the finance minister recently declared in a TV appearance that "it is unnecessary to analyze and approve the budget in the State Duma in a 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 the employees of the ministries who distribute resources, but many beneficiaries of these resources (including social and cultural institutions, pharmaceutical enterprises, editorials, publishing, textbooks) are likely to oppose improvements in the decision-making procedure and introduction of public control. Among the advocates favoring stricter control over 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, or, at least, demonstrate the beginning of their realization. Overcoming the officials' resistance and securing an increased transparency in financing and administration will be easier to implement 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 stop spreading the allocated means, and to start financing public health, education, and culture on the basis of targeted programs.

In order to secure the normal functioning and the development of social work and social services, it is necessary to radically change people's attitudes. This change may be possible when the social and economic situations of the main part of the population have stabilized and there appears a trend toward real income growth. Only then, will it be

possible to turn people's consciences towards social problems. It may be necessary to carry out public relations activities to attract attention to the situation of the social work system in Russia.

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