

"Why is Social Work in Russia the  
Way it is or the History of the Social  
Work Formation in Russia"

# Stages of the Social Work Formation in Russia

- approximately IV-X c. – archaic period
- X-XII –the period of princely and church-monastic aid
- XIV-XVII –the period of Church-government assistance
- XVII-XIX –the period of state social care
- XIX- нач.XX –the blooming of public and private charity
- XX век (1917-1991) –the period of state social security
- XX-XIX (1991 –present time) –the development of professional social work

# The Archaic Period



Tribal and community forms of assistance and mutual aid appear and develop among the Eastern Slavic tribes.

The main forms of assistance of the ancient Slavs were religious, communal-tribal and household ones.

# The Archaic period. Cult Forms of Aid.



They are associated with the myths of the ancient Slavs, belief in Gods. The gods regulated the life of the Slavs who prayed and asked for help.

The Magi (priests, shamans) predicted the future and acted as judges





There were various joint forms of worship of the gods (holidays, days of the ancestors' remembrance). Slavs believed that the ancestors helped them. That's why, in honor of their memory relatives helped the poor.

At the joint celebrations in honor of gods or in honor of military victories, it was common to treat the poor, people with physical and mental disabilities, orphans. It was believed that they were very closely connected with the gods. They could not be hurt. It was necessary to help them, otherwise you could offend the gods.





# The Archaic Period. Communal and Tribal Forms of Aid.



In ancient times, the Slavs had infanticide - the old and the sick were taken to the forest and left there to die or dropped into pits or drowned. In this way Slavs survived, got rid of the weak.

Later age got associated with wisdom and experience. The elderly became respected people, they were helped: They were given land for growing food and haymaking, invited to live and fed in the homes of relatives and neighbors. Lonely elderly people could take orphans to live in their homes, take care of them. When the orphans grew up, they took care of the elderly.



## The Archaic Period. Economic forms of assistance.



The basis for these forms of assistance - mutual assistance and aid. The assistance was of collective nature. If you don't help a neighbor in need, you will get no help. Therefore, the Slavs jointly cultivated the land, built houses together, shared agricultural livestock.





After a joint economic activity, as a rule, the Slavs arranged treats or holidays. The rule was as follows: after a joint work - a joint meal.



# The Period of princely and church-monastery aid



In 988 Christianity was adopted in Russia . The traditional forms of assistance and mutual aid were preserved but now to help the needy was a requirement of Orthodoxy.

Russian princes at that time were strong rulers. In X-XII centuries the princes themselves organized and distributed the aid, held feasts during the holidays where they invited the poor, brought food to prisons, gave money to ransom the captives and to help people in case of famine or epidemic.

With the adoption of Christianity in Kiev Rus monasteries began to appear. To help build them was also a job of the Prince who gave public money for this cause..



The monasteries began to perform 4 functions: treatment (when they opened hospitals, and later pharmacies); providing the poor with food, clothing, money; education (the first schools were opened in the monasteries); control over the lives of the population.



## XIV-XVII –The period of Church and State Assistance



This period is characterized by three forms of assistance: the monastic system of care, the state system and the first manifestations of private charity.

Monasteries are continuing their charitable, social and educational activities. Monasteries helped people during the Mongol-Tatar yoke in Russia.

The Russian princes continue their engagement in social activities, and later the kings started doing it as well, both as personal charity and making government decisions of a social character.



During the epidemics, Ivan the Terrible would order to organize defensive barriers, issue decrees on providing assistance to the fire victims and the poor.



Boris Godunov sets fixed prices for bread.



Mikhail Romanov orders to give land to the children and widows of the killed soldiers.



Fyodor Alexeevich, the elder brother of Peter I, issues a decree banning professional beggary, a decree on the opening of homes for homeless children where they were taught reading, crafts and sciences.



# XVII-XIX –the Period of the State Social Care



Peter I:

- Issues a decree banning professional beggary and punishment for begging
- Obliges the provinces to open hospitals for the disabled and elderly, orphanages, the analogues of the English workhouses for men and women
- Orders to give education to children, both from the rich families and the poor ones

Catherine II:

- In 1775 established special bodies of management of the social sector in the provinces - public charity orders.
- Developed medicine.
- Was actively involved in the charity work herself (for example, supported the opening of the Smolny Institute for noble maidens) and approved of the charity done by the nobles.







- Maria Feodorovna, wife of Emperor Paul I:
- Establishes the first Russian charitable society. Social services such as orphanages, schools for the blind and the deaf, schools for boys and girls from poor families, free canteens, a gymnasium for girls were in all the provinces.

Alexander II, in the framework of the city and county reforms, establishes control over the social institutions in cities and rural areas.



# XIX-beg.XX –the period of the flourishing of public and private charity



The Imperial family was personally involved in charity.

The nobles received orders (awards) for the charitable activities.







The charity was both public and private. Charity societies were engaged in the public type of charity : Императорское человеколюбивое общество, Общество попечения о раненых и больных воинах (позже – Российский красный крест) и частной – ей занимались дворяне, купцы, состоятельные горожане. The Imperial Philanthropic Society, the Society for the Care of Wounded and Sick Soldiers (later the Russian Red Cross). The private charity took care of the nobles, merchants, wealthy citizens.

. Thanks to charity, homes for orphans, schools for children, almshouses and hospitals, etc. were opened.

The disadvantage of the charities was that they were often unprofessional in nature.



# XX century (1917-1991) – the period of state social security



After the revolution, all pre-revolutionary social institutions were closed. State institutions began to appear instead. All types of assistance became the state ones. Primarily, the assistance was granted to workers and soldiers of the red army. Some of the types of assistance were: unemployment benefits, pensions for the military and workers, etc. All kinds of assistance were paid by the state. All social institutions were funded and managed by the state. Education and medicine were free for all.



After World War II, the state established pensions for all citizens of the USSR, organized vocational training and employment of disabled person. The disabled and the elderly are starting to provide social services at home for free.

Large families and single parents, the disabled receive benefits. The orphans are placed in state orphanages. At the time the term "social work" was not used in the USSR .



XX-XIX (1991 – present time) – the development  
of professional social work



- In 1991, after the collapse of the USSR the system of state social welfare begins to change.
- In the 90-s the state remains fully responsible for the social policy. Benefits to the poor, state pensions of different categories, unemployment benefits, benefits to disabled persons and veterans were introduced.
- Public nursing homes, orphanages, employment centers started to emerge.
- At the same time, following the example of foreign countries, non-profit organizations are beginning to open up in Russia which were involved in social work with the disabled, orphans, unemployed, prisoners, etc.
- In 1991 social work as a profession was introduced in Russia. Social work schools were set up in universities and colleges to train social work professionals.
- Since the second half of the 2000-s up to the present, social legislation has been changed as well as the practice of social work.
- Today, social services are provided by both for-profit and non-profit organizations which can be free or not.