

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR SOCIAL WORK

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## FOREWORD

THE present transition stage of education and training for social work promises to be only less significant than the inauguration of systematic training in this field by the establishment of several schools for the purpose about eighteen years ago. Among the conditions which have given rise to this situation and thereby have occasioned the following study and report, two may be mentioned.

During the recent World War social work in this country underwent a great and sudden expansion. The American Red Cross instead of devoting itself chiefly to emergencies or to relief demanded by sudden catastrophe, undertook a comprehensive service of aid and counsel for families of men in the Army and Navy. New types of disease such as the war neuroses called for new types of training and service. The demand was imperative for workers of many kinds and provision had to be made for the emergency. Special schools and institutes were organized. There was a general unsettling of fairly well-established standards.

Meanwhile new agencies were offering more or less extended courses in preparation for social work. The original schools were established in

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large cities and in close connection with philanthropic agencies. They were not the outgrowth of academic expansion. But during recent years the growth of the social science departments in colleges and universities, especially in state universities, has had as one feature the development of courses which aim at least to supply a background and basis and in some cases to offer practical training in the field of our study.

Partly perhaps in consequence of these changed conditions, various schools for the training of social workers began to consider the need of clarifying views and of improving methods through conference and discussion. Questions which thus arose seemed to suggest that the time was opportune for a study of the situation, and the Russell Sage Foundation was invited by the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work to provide for such an inquiry. The Foundation agreed to do so and asked the author of this report to make the study. He began the work in the autumn of 1920 and continued to carry it on until the close of 1921. The report does not attempt to evaluate or criticize individual institutions. It aims rather to discuss the problem of education and training, and leaves to the various schools and their friends the question of deriving suggestions for their own problems. And within the field thus marked out the aim and plan have been restricted by the time that could be spared to this study from other duties. It seemed wiser,

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therefore, to select for consideration certain important problems, than to attempt a comprehensive survey. Many, though by no means all, of the institutions which offer preparation for social work were visited; many individuals were consulted, and the report has profited by their wisdom and experience.

I am under obligations to so many who have given liberally of their time and counsel that I hesitate to single out any for personal mention. I must content myself with a general acknowledgment of the great cordiality and generous cooperation shown by all with whom I was able to confer—the General Director and staff of the Russell Sage Foundation, officers and teachers in the schools, leaders in various lines of social work, colleagues in colleges and universities.

JAMES H. TUFTS.

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## SUMMARY

THE study is divided into two parts: Part I, The Field of Social Work; Part II, Problems of Education and Training. The outstanding issue in the two parts is one, although it is differently formulated. Stated in terms of the field in Part I, the issue is: Accepting as fairly well defined a considerable central group of activities, how far may social work wisely extend to various specified border fields, and, more important, how deep shall it go in its exploration and its methods of treatment or prevention? Stated in terms of education and training, in Part II, the issue is: Accepting as undoubtedly necessary a certain type of training for the fairly well-defined agencies of relief, aid, and administration or oversight, shall the institutions engaged in giving preparation stop with this conception of their task, or shall they aim at so broad and thorough an education and training for at least a minority of their pupils as shall fit them for the larger and profounder tasks which may be conceived under the analogy of social engineering or social statesmanship? Shall they undertake study of the fundamental forces of human life, of the ultimate values of human welfare, and of the great institutions of

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human society in order to meet that larger responsibility which no other profession than social work at present seems to accept?

Many specific problems are given consideration, but they are believed to be in nearly every case subordinate to this central issue. In the long run, the recruiting of the profession, the relation of schools to universities, entrance requirements, the length and nature of the curriculum, methods of instruction and of practice work, the administration of fellowships, all involve the main question.

An appendix to the body of the report presents certain statistics which indicate what salaries are now being paid in typical departments of social work, and how far both college education and later professional study are likely to receive recognition in terms of salaries.

A second appendix presents registration statistics from institutions which offer preparation for social work.