



Social Work in Germany: Between a Nation State Focus and Transnational Horizons

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INTRODUCTION

In many countries of the Global North, social work developed from historical roots in religious, neighbourly, and moral support to become its own profession (Rehklau & Lutz, 2011, p. 11). In Germany, social work gained recognition as a profession in the early twentieth century and had its precursors in voluntary activities devoted to poor relief. The origins of social work go back to what was termed the “social question”. In the course of the far-reaching social process of industrialisation, the living conditions of the people underwent fundamental changes. Social risks such as poverty, immiseration, and job loss through illness were to be alleviated by sociopolitical support measures. Originally rooted in communal poor relief, over the course of its history, social work in Germany evolved into differentiated fields of practice. The concept of a professional support system exported from Northern countries in the course of their colonial appropriation of the countries of the South, where other forms of social work were not infrequently suppressed as a result. Only gradually are paradigm shifts, such as those being debated in the context of indigenisation, emerging as indications of a growing awareness of the multiple forms taken by social work worldwide (Straub, 2016).

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This paper reflects on the historical development of social work in Germany with its intrinsically heterogeneous strands of traditional social assistance; it also explores the contributions of other countries that influenced the development of social work in Germany. Even though social work is conceptually framed in Germany as having a national scope, it has always maintained transnational links to other countries (Treptow, 2004). The purpose of this paper is to engage in historical reflection (Köngeter & Reutlinger, 2014, p. 455) and trace the ways in which transnational interpretations of social work concepts came into being. After giving a brief historical outline, we will present an overview of the present-day organisation of social work in Germany, which involves a variety of different providers and fields of practice. We argue that one of the future tasks of the social work profession will be to extend its scope of practice across national borders, since people's lives are increasingly characterised by greater cross-border mobility and since global problems can no longer be addressed by the efforts of individual countries alone.

HISTORY OF SOCIAL WORK IN GERMANY

The history of social work in Germany is not a history of linear progress. It is characterised by discontinuities, retrograde progress, and wrong turnings. However, it is necessary to review this history in order to distinguish new solutions from old mistakes (Hammerschmidt, Weber, & Seidenstücker, 2017, p. 7).

Since Germany has historically drawn a distinction between social service work (*Sozialarbeit*) and social pedagogy (*Sozialpädagogik*), the relevant aspects that come to the fore when we examine the history of the field may differ depending on whether we are viewing it from the perspective of social service work or of social pedagogy. Strictly speaking, therefore, we ought to speak of the *histories* (plural) of social assistance in Germany. While the roots of social service work are perceived to lie in poor relief, social pedagogy arose in the context of the youth movement—initially organised by young people themselves—of the early twentieth century. In our historical outline, we will consider both strands—social service work and social pedagogy—and stress that it is impossible to draw clear-cut lines of distinction between the two. Their histories, accordingly, are characterised not only by differences, but also by common factors (Eßer, 2018a). To highlight these common factors, researchers are increasingly adopting the term “social work” (*Soziale Arbeit*) as a blanket term for both social service work and social pedagogy (*Sozialpädagogik*). We endorse this practice. At the same time, various different terms have been used over the decades for different social activities. The words *Fürsorge* (welfare) and *Wohlfahrtspflege* (social welfare work) were widely in use in the past before being superseded by the new concepts of *Sozialarbeit* (social service work), *Sozialpädagogik* (social pedagogy), and *Soziale Arbeit* (social work). This multiplicity of terms demonstrates at a

glance that the field of social assistance is not uniform, but an amalgamation of different traditions (Münchmeier, 2018, p. 527).

Our historical outline begins in the middle ages. During the *early middle ages*, material poverty was highly regarded, since the Christian tradition viewed an ascetic life as signifying closeness to Jesus and his disciples. Material poverty was distinct from personal poverty; those who were defenceless and at the mercy of the powerful could receive support in churches and monasteries and from private initiatives. This form of charitable poor relief¹ was not, however, a systematic strategy for combating poverty. In the hierarchy of the social estates, the poor occupied the lowest rank and their situation in life was deemed to be fated. While they were the recipients of religious charity, such charity was not intended to bring about a structural change of their situation (Sagebiel, 2005). For the wealthy population, almsgiving was a means of absolving one's sins and attaining a place in heaven. Life on earth was not focused on the "here and now", but on the expectation of a life after death.

The dissolution of the medieval estates began in the *early thirteenth century*. Towns were no longer obliged to pay duties to the clergy and princes and began to grow into centres of commerce and trade. More and more indigent people moved to the cities to look for work. In the *late middle ages*, population growth, along with wars and pestilence, caused a change in attitudes towards poor people and beggars and led to the reorganisation and secularisation of poor relief. The city of Nuremberg introduced a poor registry in 1370. Other cities followed suit, assessing and registering the poor among their population. Poor residents of the cities were issued pauper's papers and qualified for municipal welfare measures. People from other parts of the country and those who were not thought to qualify for assistance, since they were able to work, were not entitled to such aid. Those who were apprehended by the constables without their pauper's papers were expelled from the town. This measure shows that poor people were increasingly targeted by measures aimed at ensuring public order. As the social interpretation of poverty began to change, poverty was no longer regarded as ordained by God, but as a vice brought on by the sufferer's own fault. Work, in contrast, came to be regarded as the expression of a successful life and personal responsibility, as the Protestant work ethic began to gain traction.

The *sixteenth century* saw the gradual reorganisation of poor relief all over Europe. The Bridewell workhouse was established in London in 1555, while additional workhouses followed in Bristol and elsewhere. These English institutions were copied in continental Europe. In 1595, the city of Amsterdam opened a reformatory (*Tuchtthuys*) for men. The inmates were predominantly beggars, but also included those who were destitute or disabled as well as convicts (Wendt, 2017, pp. 23–26). The concept subsequently spread to Germany, where workhouses were established in Bremen (1609), Lübeck (1613), and Hamburg (1620). Work was used as a disciplinary measure for poor people, who were tested in the workhouses for their fitness for work.

The punishment for begging in the streets was forced labour; poor relief was now geared towards discipline and “education” by means of work. Thus, it would be a mistake to regard these combined prison/workhouses as early expressions of middle-class social welfare policies. Rather, they were places where people were confined and segregated from the rest of society (Wendt, 2017, p. 27).

The “social question” acquired increasing urgency at the *dawn of industrialisation*. Technical innovations, such as the invention of the steam engine and the railway, triggered the rapid expansion of industry, and more and more people moved from rural areas into the cities, where they were employed with low wages in the new factories. However, not all of them found work. In the densely populated cities, the numbers of homeless people increased and famines ensued. In the *mid-nineteenth century*, wealthy urban residents called for a solution to the problem of the poor and demanded social reforms to foster social peace and prevent a “class struggle”. Various German cities adopted what was known as the “Elberfeld system” as a new poor relief strategy. The cities were divided into small precincts, each of which was in the care of a volunteer almoner (i.e. local public official responsible for managing and administering social assistance) who lived in the precinct and cared for the people and families assigned to him. The almoner answered to the overseer of the district into which his precinct fell. The system was first introduced in 1853 in Elberfeld and spread rapidly thanks to its success. However, finding volunteer almoners was difficult in the large mass slums, which had their own specific and complex problems that differed from those of the areas where the middle-class families lived. The “Strasbourg system” emerged as a refined version of the Elberfeld system. The division of cities into precincts remained in place, but the Strasbourg system supplemented the volunteer almoners with paid professional almoners. The Poor Law authority was established as the administrative unit. For the first time in the history of social work in Germany, a distinction was drawn between practical, hands-on agencies and administrative, decision-making bodies in social assistance (Lambers, 2010, p. 149). Concurrently with municipal poor relief efforts, the churches and associations also laid the foundations of professional activities in the field of social assistance. The Protestant Church negotiated a division of labour with the municipal authorities and undertook to look after individual cases and to provide special institutions like orphanages and maternity homes (Hering & Münchmeier, 2003, p. 33). Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808–1881) founded the “Rauhes Haus” in Hamburg in 1833. One of the earliest facilities of the charitable organisation Diakonisches Werk in Germany, it was fundamentally different from the correctional institutions and workhouses that were widespread at the time. Wichern’s aim was to give young people prospects for the future. In 1843, he opened an educational facility for training “Brothers”, later termed “Deacons”. In the Catholic Church, nuns were among the first in Germany to receive training in the field of poor relief

and nursing and to pursue these activities on a professional basis, also opening orphanages and schools.

In the *late nineteenth century*, more and more social services became established. The Freiburg-based Caritas Association, founded by theologian Lorenz Werthmann in 1897, was involved in various spheres of social assistance for seasonal workers, sailors, beggars, alcoholics, and disabled people. Additionally, it established kindergartens, corrective training facilities, protection for girls, nursing programs, and women's work. On the level of the state, Reich Chancellor Otto von Bismarck introduced social insurance. Medical insurance was established in 1883, accident insurance in 1884, and disability and old-age pensions for workers in 1889. Unemployment insurance followed in 1927. Bismarck's reforms focused on two issues: firstly, preventing workers and their party-political organisations from overthrowing the social power structure and secondly, disburdening the state coffers from the high costs of poor relief. Henceforth, two support systems existed side by side: sociopolitical aid on the one hand and individual poor relief on the other.

Finally, *World War I* led to an increased demand for professional social work (Lambers, 2010, p. 154). War relief for families without fathers and aid for surviving dependents of soldiers increased the number of people qualifying for social assistance. Until 1918, Germany defined itself as a liberal constitutional state dedicated to minimal intervention in social and economic processes. In 1918, however, there was a fundamental change (Schilling & Klus, 2015, p. 34). The Prussian Ministry of Public Welfare was established as the country's central welfare authority. Various laws were passed concerning the care of war invalids and dependents of fallen soldiers, small social pensions for victims of inflation, and youth welfare. The term *Armenfürsorge* ("poor relief") was replaced by *Wohlfahrtspflege* ("public welfare"). Some institutions that remain in existence to this day such as the youth welfare office (consisting of administrative services and what was then known as the youth welfare committee, now the youth aid committee or *Jugendhilfeausschuss*) were established during this period. With the Weimar Constitution of 1919, the new state consolidated its ideas of public welfare in a parliamentary constitutional and welfare state. It was in this spirit that the women's movement, which had been growing and fighting for recognition since the mid-nineteenth century, came into play. It was modelled on the political women's movements that had been active in France since the late eighteenth century (Lambers, 2010, pp. 146–155). In particular, the social reformer Alice Salomon campaigned for the participation of middle-class girls and women in social assistance in Germany and helped to launch an independent training system. Salomon became a member of the "Girls' and Womens' Groups for Social Assistance Work" in 1893 and launched Germany's first Women's School of Social Work in Berlin in 1908. She also founded the International Committee of Women's Schools of Social Work in 1929. Her first textbook for welfare worker training was published in 1926. Salomon was highly active in transnational

networks and organised international congresses and exhibitions (Homfeldt, 2004, p. 5). At the culmination of her work, she served as the first female president of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (Healy, 2001, p. 29).

Salomon was powerfully influenced by the settlement movement, which had spread to the USA from its origins in London and also influenced social work in Germany. Proponents of the settlement movement sought not only to provide individual support for poor people, but also to effect social reforms and bring together poor and affluent people in order to foster mutual recognition and long-term improvements in living conditions (Köngeter, 2013, p. 81). The first settlement house, Toynbee Hall, opened its doors in London in 1883/1884. Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr discovered the concept in London, translated it into the context of the USA (Köngeter & Reutlinger, 2014, p. 459), and, in 1889, founded Hull House in Chicago. In Germany, the concept inspired not only Salomon, but also the Protestant pastor Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze, who founded the Soziale Arbeitsgemeinschaft (SAG) in Berlin in 1912. At approximately the same time as the work of the women's movement and the settlement movement, middle-class young people came together in the early twentieth century to form the youth movement. Actors in the field of social assistance adopted certain principles of this youth movement, such as the idea of (self-) education by a group, and developed concepts of reform pedagogy and the social pedagogy movement (Wagner, 2009, p. 111). The beginnings of the middle-class youth movement are generally dated to 1901, the year in which the *Wandervogel* youth groups were formed. This middle-class youth movement rebelled against school, parents, and society. They met for hiking trips and frequently subscribed to a romanticised view of nature. Distinct from this movement were the associations of working-class youth, which arose for political reasons and protested against poor working conditions. For these young people, urbanisation and industrialisation had brought numerous disadvantages (Münchmeier, 2018). The activities of the working-class youth movement were often international in scope, while parts of the middle-class youth movement had a nationalist, ethnic German focus. Like the international, emancipatory ideas of social work, nationalist and racist philosophies were in circulation across national borders. For example, the German anti-Semite Wilhelm Marr (Bruns, 2011), after spending several years in North and Central America in the late nineteenth century, approved the colonial racist division of people and the derogation of black people that he had encountered there. Associating binary, racialised modes of thought in terms of black vs. white with the anti-Jewish discourse in Germany, he constructed a kinship between Jews and black people and, thereby, sought to legitimise their devaluation.

With the rise to power of the Nazis and with the advent of *World War II*, nationalist mindsets became more entrenched and international exchange in women's networks and the international worker's youth came to an abrupt end. The Nazis installed the "Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt"

(NSV) as an organisation and replaced poor relief with “genetic and racial care” (Schilling & Klus, 2015, p. 40). Inhuman, destructive measures such as forced sterilisation and the murder of disabled people, homosexuals, and Jews aimed to protect the Nazis’ imaginary “Aryan race” from “unhealthy genetic material”. In many cases, people involved in social work both participated in and supported the murders and racist policies. Prominent representatives of the profession were murdered or forced to emigrate, including Alice Salomon, Adele Beerensson, Gertrud Israel, Hedwig Wachenheim, and Frieda Wunderlich (Paulini, 2013, p. 125).

After the *end of the war*, the social welfare system had to be rebuilt. Following Germany’s surrender on 8 May 1945, the country was divided between the occupying forces of the USA, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and later France. The main focus of practical social work was on caring for war orphans and war invalids, refugee services, and combating hunger and poverty (Hammerschmidt et al., 2017, p. 90). The surviving facilities of Caritas and Diakonisches Werk continued their activities. The “Hauptausschuss für Arbeiterwohlfahrt” (Main Committee for Workers’ Welfare) and the “Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der deutschen Juden” (Central Welfare Office of German Jews), which had been banned during the Nazi era, had to reorganise themselves from scratch.

In 1949, the occupation period ended with the *founding of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic (GDR)*. From then on, different social assistance structures developed in the two states. In East Germany, Caritas and Diakonisches Werk were supplemented by the “Zentralausschuss für Volkssolidarität” (Central Committee for People’s Solidarity), the central social welfare agency of the GDR. The Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), the GDR’s ruling party, believed that overcoming capitalism and social problems were the task of the state. Accordingly, there was a well-developed network of state care services such as crèches (Eßer, 2018b). However, young people who failed to live up to the goals of the socialist party, and those whom the state regarded as having behavioural problems, were committed to special institutions for reeducation.

In West Germany, the Red Cross and the Deutsche Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband developed additional welfare associations. The main associations of the Freie Wohlfahrtspflege² and a variety of other welfare providers came into being. Social service experts sought to build on the system of the Weimar Republic, whose social insurance and pension schemes they retained. The issue of insufficient funding for social work, which had already been a problem in the time of the Weimar Republic, likewise continued to exist. Practical social work modelled itself on methods imported from England and the USA, adopting the classical methodologies of help for individual case-work, group work, and community work. It was mainly German emigrants returning from the USA who brought these methods back to Germany with them. From the 1950s onwards, the various training institutions began to be remodelled into social work colleges known as “Höhere Fachschulen

für Soziale Arbeit” (Paulini, 2013, p. 127). Legal reforms followed, such as the Youth Welfare Act in 1961, which was reformulated as the Child and Youth Services Act in 1990. The Federal Social Assistance Act was passed in 1961/1962 as the precursor to the modern Social Security Statute Books.

In both East and West Germany, recipients of social services could be subjected to repressive treatment. The children’s homes of the 1950s and 1960s employed many people without appropriate training, and many of these institutions emphasised discipline and control. Not until the rise of the student movement of 1968 did widespread criticism begin to be levelled at restrictive conditions in social work. The movement of 1968 was active in many countries worldwide from the mid-1960s onwards. Its emergence in Germany coincides roughly with the founding of the so-called Extra-Parliamentary Opposition as a political protest movement in the mid-1960s (Steinacker, 2018). In the course of the “children’s home campaign”, students associated with the movement of 1968 liberated adolescents from children’s homes and offered them a place in their communes. They condemned the coercive and repressive measures to which children were subjected in homes and demonstrated for fundamental social and political change. The “sixty-eighters” were active in almost every field of social work. They established children’s shops and child welfare facilities, independent schools, self-governed youth and cultural centres, alternative educational projects, and small group homes as alternatives to institutional youth service facilities. The movement of 1968 caused social work to engage in increased reflection about social conditions and promoted the academisation of social work training (Eßer, 2018b). Universities began to offer courses in social pedagogy with greater frequency. From the 1970s onwards, the social work colleges were upgraded to Universities of Applied Sciences. Increasing numbers of young people attended universities and colleges. In East Germany, meanwhile, protests against the political system were increasing. The mass demonstrations of 1989 called for regime change along with freedom of opinion and movement and exemplified the peaceful revolution in East Germany. The protests culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. On 3 October 1990, East and West Germany were officially reunified. In the reigning climate of rapid change, opportunities for comparative reflection about social work methodologies and approaches in East and West Germany were missed. Instead, *German unity* led to a one-sided export of the “western system” to eastern Germany (Bütow & Maurer, 2018).

SOCIAL WORK IN GERMANY TODAY AND ITS DIFFERENTIATION IN THE NATION STATE

Social work in Germany is differentiated into a varied landscape of multiple providers. The term *Träger*, here rendered as “provider”, is a typically German concept referring to the way in which social work is organised and covers both *social insurance providers* and *providers of social services*. Social

insurance providers are the agencies that cover the costs of social benefits. These may be the state of Germany, the federal states, the local authorities, or the health insurance funds. Providers of social services offer practical services and receive funding from the social insurance providers. They are the responsible legal entities entrusted with running social facilities on the professional, financial, and personnel levels. Providers of social services may be publicly or independently funded. Public providers are the child welfare services, welfare agencies, and public health authorities established by the state. Independent providers include free, nonprofit providers and private, commercial providers. Free, nonprofit providers are the large welfare associations, churches, self-help organisations, and foundations. Private, commercial providers were established in larger numbers in the early 1990s. They are profit-oriented and lack the overarching organisational structures of the free nonprofits. They are particularly heavily represented in the fields of inpatient and short-term health care, but they are not present in every field of social work. Just as the landscape of providers is differentiated and, at times, confusing, social work takes place in a variety of different *fields of action*. These can be divided according to their target groups such as social services for children and adolescents, families, older adults, people with mental health problems, and people with disabilities. Similarly, they can be grouped according to the social problems they address, such as homelessness, illness, and poverty. At the same time, social work experts are active in a variety of institutions, such as daycare facilities, residential groups, educational facilities, and migrant services. The degree of intervention can also help to systematise the different fields of action. This perspective can be used to distinguish between *activities supplementing the needs of people* (e.g. in youth camps or self-help groups), *activities supporting the needs of people* (educational aids or accommodation for people without fixed housing), and *activities replacing the normal environments of people* (such as prisons or retirement homes).

The history of social work in Germany and, in particular, its instrumentalisation during the Nazi era, has illustrated the importance and indispensability of a sound ethical basis. According to Böhnisch (2016), the core of social work is providing support for people in their quest for subjective agency in critical life circumstances. Social work seeks to prevent social exclusion and enable social, economic, cultural, and political participation (Bettinger, 2011). This view is compatible with the definition of social work according to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2014):

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, Social Work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.

In the view of the IFSW, it is crucial to regard social work as a field rooted in human rights. Social work is dedicated to empowering people and to designing and researching social structures that foster human development with the goal of human well-being. This view has been adopted by the German professional organisation *Deutscher Berufsverband für Soziale Arbeit e.V. (DBSH)*. The DBSH is a member of the global umbrella organisation IFSW and IFSW Europe. Global social problems such as growing social inequality, poverty, natural disasters, wars, centres of conflict, and their concomitant migration and refugee phenomena illustrate the enduring urgency of cross-border communications in social work. In the early twenty-first century, social work in Germany (and elsewhere) is simultaneously encountering transnational solidarisation tendencies (e.g. with refugees) and demands for shoring up the nation state as a supervisory authority with the task of regulating and setting limits. Both the media discourse and the political debate are almost contemporaneously dominated in many countries of the world by the drawing of boundaries between “us” and “the others” based on racist discrimination and assumed “cultural differences” (Schmitt, Semu, & Witte, 2017). These problem areas can no longer be studied from the perspective of individual nation states alone, but must be examined in transnational networks and associations. They require the opening of social services and their work structures and patterns of action and interpretation.

TRANSNATIONAL OPENING OF SOCIAL WORK IN GERMANY

At the present time, the cross-border opening of social work is being discussed under the motto of “transnational social work” (e.g. Negi & Furman, 2010; Schwarzer, Kämmerer-Rütten, Schleyer-Lindenmann, & Wang, 2016). The terms “transnational”, “transnationality”, and “transnationalization”, which have been gaining popularity since the 1980s in the context of migration research in the cultural and social sciences in the USA, denote processes that extend beyond individual nation states while still being influenced by national framings. In contrast to an international perspective that compares social services in different national contexts and seeks to achieve a border-crossing dialogue of different concepts of social work, a transnational perspective (also) takes the perspective of its recipients into account. It reflects the multi-national contexts of lived social work experiences from the perspective of the recipients themselves and discusses cross-border processes whenever they unfold in the persons’ lives. Furman, Negi, and Salvador (2010, p. 8) define transnational social work as “an emerging field of practice that (a) is designed to serve transnational populations; (b) operates across nation state boundaries, whether physically or through new technologies; and (c) is informed by and addresses complex transnational problems and dilemmas”. Schwarzer (2016) conceptualises transnational social work as an approach that critically reflects processes of boundary-drawing and demarcation such as “belonging to a country” and “not belonging to a country”

as well as constructions of “us” and “the others”. Transnational social work “challenges the underlying – often stereotypical – thinking that there are people who belong and that there are fundamentally different people like migrants and refugees” (ibid., p. 7). The German legislature regards social work as being primarily a service whose sphere of competence for addressing problems lies mainly on the national level and in the narrower social environment of its recipients (see, e.g., the laws in Social Code VIII, Section 27). Imposing such national limits on social work was, however, foreign to the pioneers of the field in the early twentieth century. Social work is challenged to learn from its history of exclusion and the extinction of human beings as practised by National Socialism, and to do justice to its human rights mandate. Against the background of the transnationalisation of social, cultural, and lived experiences, it is necessary to ask to what extent the liberating, cross-border history of social work can become an aid to orientation in the “here and now”. For if social work wishes to do justice to its beneficiaries’ requirements for support, it is challenged to open itself across borders in a networked world. In addition to the need for legislation to enable the expansion of social work’s sphere of action, challenges can be formulated on (at least) three levels (Schmitt, 2016): (1) social work is required to perceive the significance of transnational processes and structures in the biographies of its recipients. Related to this is (2) the reflection of its own interpretive schemata and the development of a critically reflective diversity competence that reflects social work’s field of action and that transcends the boundaries of the nation state. Furthermore, transnationally reflective social work must (3) address the institutional structures of its own facilities and examine whether they are adequately addressing and reaching people in transnational living situations. Such reflection is becoming increasingly urgent at the present time. Not only the migrant and refugee movements of recent times, but mobile family structures and the pluralisation of life circumstances also require the broadening of nationally framed concepts of social work. An examination of the history of social work can make a core contribution to such broadening and shows that transnational contacts between leading figures in the field can serve as crucial aids to dealing with current challenges.

NOTES

1. Since the history of “charity” is linked to the emergence of social service work in the context of poor relief, we begin our outline of history *before* the emergence of a form of an institutionalised social assistance.
2. Today, the “main associations of the Freie Wohlfahrtspflege” have been amalgamated within the “Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege (BAGFW)” (“Federal Committee for Free Social Welfare”). The BAGFW comprises six main associations, each with their own organisational structure: (1) the Workers’ Welfare Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt, AWO); (2) the Caritas Association (Deutsche Caritasverband, DCV); (3) the welfare organisation

Deutsche Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband (“Der PARITÄTISCHE”); (4) the German Red Cross (DRK); (5) Diakonie Deutschland; and (6) the Central Jewish Welfare Office (Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland, ZWST).

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