Social Work, Social Politics and Justice

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*"The disaster does not primarily lie in people and in
the way that they perceive the circumstances,
rather in the circumstances that doom people
to powerlessness and apathy – circumstances which
they could, however, change"*
(Adorno, 1966, p. 189).

I.

When Karl Marx writes to Friedrich Sorge in his letter of the 19.10.1877, regarding his critique of the opinion of his opponents Dühring & Co., that one must deal with "a whole crowd of immature students and pompous doctors who claim to give socialism a 'higher, ideal' turn, that is to say, to replace the materialistic basis (that demands serious, objective study if one wants to operate on it)… with modern mythology by means of their goddesses of justice, freedom, equality and fraternité" (Marx, 1973, p. 303; cf. Schiller, 1993, p. 199 onwards), this thus refers to fundamental problems with the concept of "justice" up until today. As the debate shows, it concerns the contextualization of the term "justice", its meaning in historically concrete as well as socio-political circumstances, and therefore a social analysis that is both representation and critique. Essentially it also concerns the question of the relationship between ideas and reality and the development of standards of historical systematic 'nature' out of social frameworks (see Frey, 1978; Theunissen, 1989).

In this sense, justice is a relational concept which is to refer to the regulation and the quality in relationships of the members of a societal formation, and thereby it refers to further concepts: in principle to "justice" and "inequality". This is a framework of which Amos was aware (cf. Fleischer, 1989) and which is still relevant today on account of prevailing injustice since the (written) beginnings of social political reflection and social critique in the form of scandalizing social relationships (see Sennett and Cobb, 1973; Moore, 1982).

In light of current discussions about globalization and neo-liberalism, one must remember actual existing circumstances and conditions that directly affect living conditions on a global as well as local scale: "The general commercialization of all words and things, of body and spirit, nature and culture, worsens the prevailing social inequality. Although the global production of staple foods exceeds the demand by 10 percent, each year 30 million people starve and 800 million suffer from malnutrition. In 1960 the richest 20 percent of the world's population possessed three times the amount of income of the poorest 20 percent; today this quota has risen by twenty eight fold. Out of the 6 billion people who live on our earth at this moment in time, not even 500 million are able to be described as well off; the other 5.5 billion remain in poverty. The wealth of

the 358 richest people exceeds on a value basis the aggregate yearly income of 2.6 billion people (45 percent of the world's population)" (Ramonet, 1999; see also Ramonet, 1998; Todd, 1999; Saul,1997; Duchrow, 1997; Fornet – Betancourt, 2000; Stiglitz, 2002).[1]

The search for alternatives to these circumstances concerns the question of the social place of discourses about justice and suitable democratic policy, which are necessary more than ever today (cf. Castells, 2001, p. 297); this goes beyond Marx's criticized idealisms and any binary opposition to justice and equality that is not en vogue at the moment (cf. Krebs, 2000; Pauer-Studer, 2000; Bowles and Gintis, 1998; Green, 1998; Ritsert, 1997)[2].

Social work as (an essential) form of social practice is essentially linked to these problems (cf. Kunstreich, 1997, p. 18 onwards; Sünker, 2000) and this is significant for the question of its genesis and validity; for it is specifically conveyed as a discipline and a profession and included in socialization processes, which is expressed in a historically determined and therefore hard-fought way in the sociality of the problem areas on which it is to work. The question of the political productivity of social work, which has great relevance for democratic theory and democratic practice concerning matters of justice, equality and inequality, has a double cause: on the one hand it is always exploited for "prevailing" causes in hegemonic disputes – in what Chomsky (1998, p. 12 onwards) calls "class war" from above-, on the other hand there are disciplinary as well as profession theoretical and political positions that emphasize potential emancipatory dimensions of social work and make them the source of their ideas (cf. Sünker, 1995).

In light of this it is evident when Michael Reisch (1997, p. 80) states that politics, social politics and social work are indissolubly linked to each other. Accordingly he explains: "Yet, politics and social work have been intertwined even before the profession had a name. Unless we recognize how politics shapes the creation of many of the social policies and institutions we often take for granted, we will never comprehend the intrinsically political nature of the work we do" (Reisch, 1997, p. 81).

In the context of this approach social work, which is referred to in German and international debates, is a politically immanent form of social practice (cf. Müller and Otto, 1980, p. 8 onwards). This political immanence of social work is the antecedent of all other conditions – even taking the discrepancies between politics, social politics and social work into account (cf. Sünker, 1989). The ontologization of social aid to existential "care" and "public welfare"

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[1] For an analysis of current class relationships and their consequences for the living conditions and life styles in the German context see the view of Vester et al.: "Contrary to the assumption of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck it is not the milieus that are in decline today. The class cultures of every day life are much more extraordinarily stable owing to the capacity for change and modification. What erodes are the hegemonies of certain parties (and fractions of intellectuals) in socio-political situations. Therefore we do not have a crisis of milieus today (as a result of the change in values), rather a crisis of political representation (as a result of the growing distance between elites and milieus)" (2001, p. 13; cf. Vester, 1998). See also as to international debates about class structure and "decline of politics" the works of Marshall et al. (1997), Wright (1997) and Boggs (2000); as to the consequence of racism for welfare state regulations, their negation, cf. Quadagno (1994) for the USA and Gathiram (2000) for South Africa. In this context a critical treatment of Landes and his "culture theory" would be necessary as an explanation of poverty and wealth in the world (1999).

[2] Critique of egalitarianism, which is (once again) popular, has well-known precursors, particularly in the context of Marxism-bashing, who suffer from confusing equality with egalitarianism; see the famous views of Heine and their analysis by Kreutzer (1970). Another problem that can only be briefly mentioned here refers to the problem of "solidarity", which is to be associated with justice and equality (cf. Ignatieff, 1993; Mäder, 1999).

(Heidegger, 1953, p. 121; Scherpner, 1962) is just as socio-politically orientated as the once modern education theory of social aid to the group-dynamic directness of concrete "relationship work" or the henceforth modern talk of the "activating state" through its respective form of social politics.[3] It is indeed (still) active politicization or, passively, de-politicization in the contexts of communal and/or central politics. If it is right that the most general functional reference point for state politics is the reproduction of capitalist social formation[4], orientated by private capital exploitation and free wage labor, then social politics, and social work is affected by its consequences, is the mechanism for the production of "willing workers" with help of the liquidation of pre-capitalist social orders in the form of enforcing a "market society" (Polanyi, 1978, p. 225 onwards). The respective specific form and content of these processes of politicization and the de-politicization of social work must be broken down, explained and strategically worked on in the context of the respective historically limited, conflict prone or catastrophic solution or non-solution of this problem which is therefore independent of power relations and hegemonic disputes.[5]

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[3] The problem of common sense, which is formulated in philosophic tradition, is concealed here as a question of the rationality of social relationships: In the context of Theunissen's interpretation (1982) of Hegel's philosophy of law as a theory of civil society, from formulations to the development of the relationship between abstract or formal up to concrete generality (as a basis for a theory of the inter-subjectively conveyed existence of subjects) the limitation of the members of civil society is to be thought of through civil society: "Civil society liberates its members from the "necessity of nature", however only formally, for it fixates them onto certain purposes at the same time. …, the apparent civil change is thus alienation, alienation of the individual from itself and from other individuals. Civil society 'alienates' individuals 'from each other' (§ 238) by alienating them from themselves. To elucidate this alienation is first of all to perceive what it means when abstraction becomes a quality of interpersonal relationships" (Theunissen, 1982, p. 377)

A perspective arises from the negative condition that is given to individuals' form of existence: "For formal generality is formal in that it does not allow individuals to be themselves, rather it subsumes them in exchangeable exemplars (cf. Logik, II, p. 290 onwards). In that, it forms the most extreme contradiction for generality that exists in and for itself. (…) If one is to believe Hegel's general dialectics schema, then what is 'negative' reaches its turning point by reflecting on itself and thus refers to itself as negativity. The formal generality that is implemented in civil society does not take up the position of something so negative" (Ibid, p. 378).

[4] This stipulation is (unfortunately) not yet out-dated; rather it is constitutive for the analysis of the present social formation. Cf. Castells' models (see Stern, 1999), who would currently have to be the leading social theoretical and political analyst of the recently achieved stage of capitalism: "In this book the rising up of a new type of social structure is discussed, which accordingly manifests itself in various ways according to the different cultural and institutional realities on this planet. This new social structure is connected to the appearance of a new type of development, of informationalism that is historically characterized by the re-structuring of capitalist production methods at the beginning of the twentieth century' (Castells, 2001, p. 14 r, s).

"Under the conditions of network society capital is globally coordinated, work is individualized. The struggle between the most diverse capitalists and diverse working classes has been subsumed under the fundamental contradiction between the naked logics of capital flow and the cultural values of human experience" (Castells, 2001, p. 534; cf. p. 297 onwards). And he clearly names problems and consequences of this situation: "Yet there is an extraordinary gap between our technological overdevelopment and our social underdevelopment" (Castells, 1998, p. 359). Also: "Yet, if we make the same mistakes as we made in the twentieth century, using technology and industrialization to massacre each other in atrocious wars, with our new technological power we may well end life on the planet. …To prevent the evil effects of biological revolution we need not only responsible governments, but a responsible, educated society" (Castells, 1998, p. 353).

[5] Therefore the de-politicization of social aid qua "ontologization in the context of the relatively clear cut and comparatively still frictionless "segmentation of the work market can be explained under the conditions of specific German corporatism; the de-polization strategy of "pedagogization" however is only made plausible in the context of a cumulation of crisis tendencies of the welfare state, on the one hand induced by a "change in values" etc. and through the constant "fiscal crisis" on the other, which does not face any clear political alternative- at least not to a

The genesis and validity of social work, in the context mentioned here, refer to contributions to the developing and processing of the 'social': be it as an enforcement of particular ideas about normality – common, normatively interfaced, through the emphasis on "good intentions" but in fact a contradiction to the securing of power (cf. Margolin, 1997; Pelton, 1989), or even through co-operation in developing social alternatives to the dominant relations – often interfaced by including discourses about the problems of social justice (cf. Sünker, 2000; May, 1997; Schaarschuch, 1995).

The dialectics of the institutionalization of Social Work, classically explained as "aid' and "control" which began with "care of the poor" in the transition from the Late Middle Ages to the Early Modern Age in the cities, are respectively to be reconstructed in a historically systematic way, that is to say, to be broken down within their lines of development, continuities and breaks in order to gain insight into the socio-political dimensions of a social practice behind whose changing form and content one can decipher leitmotifs which are centered in the enforcement of the "work"6 principle in the context of the development of capitalist relationships – not only historically, but also validly up until the present (cf. for example Sachße and Tennstedt, 1980, pp. 23-84; Fischer, 1979).

The reluctance, let alone the incompetence, of the mainstream in disciplines and professions to recognize that politics is inherent of social work has not only turned this into sub-worker existing relationships, or into the supporter of reproduction processes of social inequality in a class structured civil capitalist society, but also into a division in the profession itself: "There is a big split in the field between social workers who are interested in clinical practice. The former tend do be oriented to and interested in practical social supports and public service. The clinicians tend to be more interested in individual diagnosis, interpersonal development, treatment processes, and the uses of the therapeutic relationship" (Specht and Courtney, 1994, p. 100; cf. p. 163 onwards).[7]

II.

1. The constitutive conditions of social politics and social work can be found at the beginning of the modern age in its way that justifies historically concrete social conditions in Hegel's analysis of civil society in his "Philosophy of Justice" and there fundamental principles of socialization are broken down and formulated in their consequences for the members of this society, their living conditions, relationship modes, conscience and morality. The starting point is formed by his representation (Hegel, 1955, §§ 108 onwards) that in civil society the connection between its members was only found on the exterior, and is thus conveyed through the market principle. The result is that "the way Hegel conceives the entire civil society in a logical reflection means that he conceives the independence that individuals have inside themselves to be idiosyncratic independence that have logical reflection as opposed to independence that exists for its own sake, everyone's reliance on everyone else, civil society as a connection of independent individuals, a

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great extent.

[6] Regarding the "work question" as a problem of the sociality of work and existence see the distinctly opined works of A. Gorz (1989; 2000).

[7] Cf. Popple's view (1985, p. 565): "On the one side were the mainstream social workers who pursued their traditional goal of professionalisation. They … followed an individual-change, therapeutic model of practice … On the other hand were social workers whose careers were generally a direct result of the country's economic problems. (…) [They] were more interested in effectively implementing public welfare programs than in doing therapy with clients … The latter was sharply critical of the former group's professional aspirations".

system of universal dependence' (§ 183)" (Theunissen, 1982, p. 371).

Hegel's conclusions are crucial for social politics in light of the consequences of this form of independence for individuals and their atomization in the system of "universal dependence": "The sinking of a great mass under the measure of a certain form of substance that regulates itself as one that is necessary for a member of society, thus existing as a loss of feeling of justice, legality and honor through its owns actions and work, is produced by the conviction of the populace, which then, at the same time, is accompanied by greater easiness, concentrating incomparable wealth in few hands" (Hegel, 1955, § 244; cf. Polanyi, 1978, p. 146; Zander, 1973).[8]

The processing of this situation is complex on account of its consequences for those who dominate and those who are dominated and it makes clear the prominent meaning of social mediation principles and mechanisms in a very concrete way that, at the same time, illustrates the system's borders: "If the richer class is directly burdened (…) with maintaining the masses heading for poverty on the level of their decent way of life, then the subsistence of the needy would be assured without being conveyed through work, which would go against the principle of civil independence and the feeling of independence and honor of its individuals; or else it would be conveyed through work (through an opportunity for it), which would increase the amount of production in whose abundance and lack of comparatively self-productive consumers there exists the evil that only increases in both ways. Herein it is evident that in the excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, that is to say, does not possess enough of its own wealth in order to affect the excess of poverty and the conviction of the populace" (Hegel, 1955, § 245).

The relevance of the principle of "work" and the perception of justice that is embodied in it are represented here as a leitmotif in two senses: for one it represents the basis for a historically specific form of production measures that lead to inequality; secondly, however, it is valid to recognize that this embodiment means the crucial progress in the mechanism of rule in active awareness because direct force is no longer, or not always, required. Social work is essentially

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[8] Capital logistically Marx showed this with reference to Sismondi's analysis: "What he sees to form the basis of this is in fact the conception that new ways of acquiring this wealth must correspond to the productive powers, material and social conditions in the creation of wealth developed in the bosom of capitalist society; the fact that the only civil forms are transitory and contradictory are the ones in which this wealth always receives a contradictory existence and, at the same time, always emerges as its counterpart. It is wealth that has poverty as a requirement and only develops by developing this poverty" (Marx, 1968, p. 51).

The fact that Hegel's view is furthermore "historically saturated" is also referred to by Fernand Braudel with his remarks about the division in the society of the 16th century as a consequence of the development of monetized economy and the beginnings of capital accumulation (Braudel, 1994, p. 156). See also his description and the analytical consequences: "In short, there are many poor people, many live in poverty – a large proletariat for which the science of history is gradually providing a place according to the requirements of difficult research projects. A proletariat that burdens the entire activity of the century and whose weight is becoming more and more pressing in the course of the years. On this ground a persistent brigandness is flourishing – a real social revolution which is taking an endless, unproductive course. For in the end the general misery settles the conflict: it mercilessly throws the poor and destitute back to the starting point. In Spain it is down to two factors: the survival of the old wealth and a stronger decline in population that both produce a strange social class, a proletariat that is similar to the plebs of Ancient Rome. Poor people who have always lived in poverty, no hopers from the cities as they have become famous through picaresque novels, muggers, real and fake beggars, all the gente del hampa and the hampones, the vagabonds – all these people have stopped work, admittedly only after the other side, that of work and employment, did not want to have anything to do with them… This is not only true for Spain, but also for the France of the religious wars, the Italy of Sixtus V. or for Turkey at the turn of the century: The burden of the poor and miserable is becoming so heavy that it alone announces a brutal economic turnaround – a turnaround from which the miserable do not gain a thing on either side if the Mediterranean" (Braudel, 1994, p. 164 r, s.).

involved in this development as a socio-politically founding practice, even if, according to Mollenhauer's interpretation in his "genesis study" (1959, p. 121), it makes the diagnosis of "culture decline" instead of thoroughly looking into the circumstances; it sees its perspective to be in the regeneration of "peoples' lives", and thus answers, in a way that diminishes culture, political economical problems of class and rule formation.

2. Bismarck's invention of the respective introduction of the social security principle presents a crucial moment of hegemonic politics in political debates and is directed at incorporating the working class into the predominant system, as those affected, thoroughly in Hegel's sense with reference to the social mediation principle and to possible forms of awareness, the discrepancy between insurance and care of the poor becomes crucial as a delimitation and exclusion mechanism – also qua an image of justice (cf. Gerstenberger, 1981). What Steinmetz calls "Regulating the Social" (1993) assumes a division of the wage-related and poor people in the lower classes because social politics and social work have to cooperate in the process of "proletarizing" (cf. Lenhardt and Offe, 1977); this is not able to be enforced without resistance, particularly in the realm of the 'social' "Welfare-state policies are centrally concerned with this realm" [of the social, H.S.] (Steinmetz, 1993, 1) which is found between the state and civil society and, in its meaning, is to essentially refer to problems of the organization of social relationships as well as of the relationships of apparatuses of power over the individual – thus it concerns here formation processes of power and resistance (cf. Hobsbawm, 1984).[9]

3. National Socialism, the German form of fascism, causes the destruction of the civilly founded and enforced welfare state, as a principal based on general demands, even if these are not always or not carried out without friction. What is primarily called social work is socially abruptly instrumented as "peoples' care" in order to enforce and secure national socialist rule, for the benefit of many German elites, and is used to secure this by means of terror and/or by suggesting generality; always in the interests of what is called 'race hygiene' – in fact it concerns 'good conduct' in the 'educational state' for fascist purposes; above all, the capacity to make war (cf. Sünker, 1994).

The development is possible on the basis of a process of nationalization of society, which accompanies the atomization of individual existence with simultaneous involvement in the 'people's society', which then leads to an abolition of the discrepancy between politics and (social) educational theory (cf. Otto and Sünker, 1991).

The centre of the discourse that connects social politics and social work is therefore the problems of 'preclusion', which are socially and profession politically relevant, "however they offer the gateway to thematicizing the economic dimensions of social problems by ideologically increasing the problem: Since it "is not about the wellbeing of the individual, rather of all people', ideologems from inheritance biology and race hygiene play the central role and then

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[9] Accordingly ideas that Carlson and Apple (1998) stated for views of educational policy can be used on social politics and social work politics as societal politics: "Even with the necessary criticisms of the unequal power relations surrounding education and the larger society, we need to remember that schooling was never simply an imposition on supposedly culturally/politically inept people. Rather, educational policies and practices were and are the result of struggles and compromises over what should count as legitimate knowledge, pedagogy, goals and criteria for determining effectiveness. In more abstract terms, we can say that education has been one of the major arenas in which the conflict between property rights and person rights has been fought" (Carlson and Apple, 1998, p. 11; see also Bowles and Gintis, 1987).

concretely lead past talk of 'useless creatures' and of the necessary outsourcing of 'asocial elements' to selection practice; to selection processes that take on forms of selection and elimination" (Sünker, 1994, p. 87).

On the whole one can confirm, with reference to T. Masons' analysis: "There was an attempt to conceal resulting abolition of the welfare state by a 'caring affectation' of the regime that hid the real existing combination of 'care' and 'suppression', however it revealed itself again in the socio-politically fundamental idea, which is constantly re-emphasized in all programmatic areas, of 'people's society as a performance society'" (Sünker, 1994, p. 85). Justice as a regulative idea as disappears in this time.

III.

With the post fascist era begins the expansion of a society regulation, formed by the welfare state on the basis of responsibility constituted by the state, and of conflicts; analyses are directed at the state as "hard fought terrain" (cf. for example Hirschman, 1993; Fabricant and Burghardt, 1992), its stately constitutiveness (cf. Meiksins Wood, 1995; Ronge and Weihe, 1976) and/or they see it to be determined by the "social state postulate" (Hartwich, 1977)[10]. In this debate about social security and welfare, in the context of questions about the securing of loyalty and legitimation, social work becomes the 'fire brigade' when dealing with social problems and predominantly cures the symptoms. In any case, ideas of social and political justice are always definitive, or directive[11]; they show the embedding of this form of social practice in hegemonic disputes and refer to ideas of social order, of coexistence.

Therefore social work has been in disunity up until the present: for one it is certified as being on the way to normality (Lüders and Winkler, 1992), on the other hand, being one of the most important guarantors of social state achievements, it is heading towards the maelstrom of a "welfare state crisis". In this sense, the current German situation is not yet comparable with US-American circumstances, which are thematicized as the "War against the Poor" for good reasons (Gans, 1995; Katz, 1989).[12] However, in light of what is often called a 'reduction or reconstruction' of welfare state achievements that still provide an essential basis for social politics and social work, crises also determine political, societal and social constellations in Germany.

In this situation it is very reasonable to envision the conditions of social work, youth aid and social services as they are phrased socio-politically extensively and challengingly for the profession in § 1 of the Social Security Code I. It says: "The legislation of the Social Security Code is to create social benefits including social and educational facilities in order to implement

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[10] Krölls introduces a concurrent interpretation when he states, on the basis of a position that argues for constitutional law and theory, that the constitution contains exactly the same guarantee as that of politically organized capitalism, "that specific system of contradiction in civil competitive society that is based on the social contradiction between capital and work and is directed at the purpose of abstract production of wealth (Krölls, 1998, p. 5).
 Against what he calls "legal socialism" he poses his perception of the task of the social state, which he considers to be that of "guaranteeing the socialization mode of property society, centralized in the concept of competition" (Ibid, p. 393). He can also formulate the theory in the following way: "the analysis of the guarantee content of constitutional law will result in the state, through giving practical validity to the constitutionally codified principles of economic order, implementing the function principles of capitalist production methods' (Krölls, 1988, p. 39).

[11] For this reason one may talk of a "breach of justice" in everyday political debates.

[12] The close connection between welfare state regulations and social power and inequality becomes clear in these US-American analyses - particularly with their catastrophic consequences for the standard of living of the population living in poverty that is affected by this (cf. Schram, 1995; Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1996).

social justice and social security. It should aid in securing a humane existence and creating equal conditions for a free development of personality, particularly for young people…". At the same time, for one condition it is stated "that the social services and institutions required to fulfill the tasks that are mentioned in paragraph 1 are opportunely and adequately available". In § 17 of the Social Security Code I the benefit workers are furthermore obliged to work towards (i) each person entitled to social benefits receiving these opportunely, comprehensively and quickly, (ii) having the social services and institutions necessary for carrying out social benefits available to them opportunely and adequately and (iii) access to social benefits being created in the most simple way possible.

With this socio-legal/socio-political context relevant connection points for welfare state orientated social work are named; these include consequences for a political-professional self-conception as well as essential tasks and working strategies. Again, it becomes clear here that socialization processes form the starting point for theory and practice of social work in their consequences for the members of civil-capitalist society as individuals. Therefore the place for social work is to be repeatedly reviewed in the conflict between the individual and society and in its (diverging) references to social normality, and how conditions of existence and life risks define their social or socio-political role or how they let it be defined (cf. Mollenhauser, 1959; Sünker, 1989; 1995).

In this context the important change in theory and practice of social work and social politics is to be remembered first of all, which is noted as being the transition from intervention to benefit management. At the same time it is valid to adhere to the awareness of the contradictory constitution of the welfare state and to the associated consequences for socialization.

André Gorz states in his social analysis (in a way that is reminiscent of Hegel's analysis and its condition of the consequences) a "deficit in sociality that is characteristic for liberal capitalism" and further explains that the welfare state, which Pierre Rosanvallon more accurately called the 'social etatism', must be perceived to be a society replacement that has guided economic growth and the functioning of the market in the absence of a society capable of guiding itself during the twenty five years of Fordistic capitalism, has institutionalized the collective bargaining of the class compromise (renamed 'social partnership') and made the development of economic rationality socially tolerable and materially sustainable over the barriers that it placed in its way. "However, it (this deficit) was never a producer of society and neither was it able to be so. (…) The redistribution or rededication of a part of the produced wealth, undertaken as indirectly and invisibly as possible, was the state's business without any kind of bond of solidarity experienced between individuals, levels or classes being tied. The citizens were not the active subjects of social etatism; they were its objects of administration by being tax payers and beneficiaries subject to contributions" (Gorz, 1989, p. 261).

IV.

Discourses about justice have an essential reference point in Gorz' view and do not proceed idealistically or abstractly, rather promote the conception debate in the necessary historical concrete approach: "A conception of equality that is sensitive to responsibility can be distinguished in a crucial aspect from the real world of the welfare state. It begins with a state of equal distribution of social means and opportunities. The capitalist welfare state on the other hand provides the unequal distribution of income, wealth and socio-economic positions of power and strives for additional corrections" (Ladwig, 2000, p. 604; cf. Krölls, 1988; Postone, 1996).

From the perspective of societal politics, social politics and social work the awareness of the contradictory constitution of the welfare state has immediate consequences for social practices that are inferior to the regulation of social relationships and take form or end in the form of 'attitudes': "Slowly but surely we are turning back towards a state of little factual tolerance of primary discrimination. The obligation to justify unequal life prospects is denied more and more often; not only towards social 'strangers', but also towards the poor and those marginalized by their 'own' society. With incredible stoicism we allow millionaires to save on taxes while other people have to go without false teeth. When those who are better off look at the losers, neo-feudal characteristics can be ascertained: we have our bags filled or our apartments cleaned by them and still feel their presence as more of an annoyance, their appearance to be in bad style or threatening. Those who desire greater equality under this impression are soon to hear that they are really only envious. I think, however, that this accusation reveals in any case a perverted moral conscience of the person who makes it" (Ladwig, 2000, p. 607; cf. Ehrenreich, 1992; Ignatieff, 1993)[13]

It is indeed questionable what may conceptually and practically oppose the view "each for his own, God against all", which characterizes the present situation of profit-making at any price and is established today in the type of socialization of finance capitalism (cf. Castells, 2001, p. 527 onwards) – thus demonstrating the prolongation of the classical problems of 'egoism and common welfare' that are inherent of civil capitalist society. Forst presents a specific set of objectives capable of justification, if it does not only refer to the sphere of circulation, when he states: "principles of justice protect ethic autonomy through rights to personal self determination, on top of that they represent principles of process and political rights of citizens' political self determination as well as principles of social justice that help to implement personal and political freedom. As well as this they must be satisfactory for the moral criteria of peoples' recognition. A conception of justice is itself 'autonomous' and justified as a conception of practical reason if it unites these contexts of justice. Such a theory lies beyond the question of the priority of what is ethically good or morally correct; it unites the priority of reason just as much as an inter-subjective perspective of the 'contexts' of people and society in which one can reasonably (and critically) speak of the priority of what is good, subjective rights, what is generally justified or morally correct" (Forst, 1994, p. 412).

With this background of the problems of universalization and ability to generalize, from this positioning, whose socio-critical funding will still have to be defined and concretized, there arises, as a perspective with which the shortened arguments about "Communitarians" and Liberals" must be overcome, "…'the fact that general moral norms with a general demand for validity must be justifiable for everybody and thus for all people as people; the fact that political decisions that lead to legal norms are above all to be justified to all citizens; the fact that the law accordingly raises a general legitimation demand that makes scope for people's freedom of action possible and, at the same time, limits it and thus may be questioned in political discourses; and, finally, the fact that ethical questions are identity questions about what is good life that are not to be answered on their own, whose answers, however, must not be 'publicly' justified in a moralistic or political way. The principle of practical/reasonable justification requires a distinction of practical questions with reference to these four contexts of inter-subjective

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[13] This idea also shows once again the mistake of linear progress thinking: today's "rich" are also subject to Amos' social critique.

justification" (Forst, 1994, p. 436).

The general problems are prolonged if one perpetuates the relevant thematicization of lifestyle as a relationship between self-determination and independence, particularly in the context of social politics and social work, for "a person renounces their self respect when he or she renounce their right to self-determination, their right to bodily inviolacy and to a life that is worth being called the life for which 'I' am responsible. … To lose one's self respect means not asserting one's claims to be recognized as a self-determining person – not to assert one's claim to be recognized as a moral entity to which others must justify themselves" (Forst, 1994, p. 434).

The fact that this is not primarily a problem of individuals, rather it is connected to fundamental structural conditions, is pointed out by Bowles and Gintis particularly when they emphasize the hindrance of self-determination by the present prevailing capitalist 'order': "This work is animated by a commitment to the progressive extension of people's capacity to govern their personal lives and social histories. Making good this commitment, we will argue, requires establishing a democratic social order and eliminating the central institutions of the capitalist economy. So stark an opposition between 'capitalism' and 'democracy', terms widely held jointly to characterize our society, may appear unwarranted. But we will maintain that no capitalist society today may reasonably be called democratic in the straightforward sense of securing personal liberty and rendering the exercise of power socially accountable" (Bowles and Gintis, 1987, p. 3).[14]

These structural problems are found in debates about the practice of social work, whose basis and perspective – above all under the heading of "self-determination in social work" (McDermott, 1975); owing to the structure analysis suggestions for a new conceptualization have arisen in the socio-political context and the prevailing relationships are supposed to be thematicized and altered with a "policy of what is social" (Editorial Office of "Contradictions", 1989).

The discourses about "self-determination in social work" are immediately able to refer to and specify our conditions of theoretical justice, and at the same time they clarify how heterogenic the mixed situation presents itself. As well as the dispute about the question of "whether", immanent problems can be stated for that of "how", as McDermott mentions: "But whether the obligation to refrain from coercing or manipulating the client should be regarded as stemming from a fundamental right of the client as a human being, or merely as a pragmatic or technical principle for achieving certain social work goals is the point at which the controversy breaks out. And the issue is further complicated by the fact that those who acknowledge that the client has a right to self-determination tend to disagree on whether it is a right to self-determination in the ordinary sense of this word or some idealized version of the concept" (McDermott, 1975a, p. 7).

This dispute between representatives of the self-determination approach and its critics has lasted into the present. Vehement advocates of the approach such as Gilbert and Specht, who include in their justification the position from the critique of the "advocacy approach", assume the following idea: "Instead, the old-fashioned, ethical social worker perceived that his clients, although perhaps social victims, were nevertheless self-determining people who, given appropriate respect, support and opportunities, could decide what was in their best short-term and long-run interests". In this manner they reach a conclusion that is socio-politically and profession-theoretically highly remarkable, "there is a broad area of social work practice in which

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[14] This view can be incorporated with Galtungs' definition of "structural violence": "Violence is present when people are so influenced that their current somatic and mental realization is less than their potential realization" (1975, p. 9).

clients are capable of making choices but are not always knowledgeable about opportunities available for exercising a choice. Professional can facilitate client self-determination by maximizing these opportunities' (Gilbert and Specht, 1976, p. 292; see also Ignatieff, 2002, p. 92 onwards).

Even if this approach is to be defended against critics (cf. Rothman, 1989) who emphasize the priority of professional decisions, the task remains to agree more accurately on its conditions; for McDermott's explanation makes it clear that the classical social control interest can by all means be concealed behind this position in the form of being "social functioning" or "socially acceptable", especially if this is linked to the idea that "a self-determined life is a virtuous one" (McDermott, 1975b, p. 125). The challenge in the principle of 'self-determination' exists consequentially for McDermott in seeing "a behaviour against the expectations of the society" to be legitimate. Thus he believes that "The function of the principle is to remind the social worker that he is not morally free to compel or manoevre another human being into acting against his own wishes without strong countervailing grounds for doing so" (McDermott, 1975b, p. 133).

When E. Tugendhat states that "human rights and justice are the 'two most important points of orientation for the moral evaluation of society's state organizations'" (quoted from Ritsert, 1997, p. 133), with this opinion he once again makes clear the importance that is given to a concept development in the area of social work and social politics beyond semantic views of problems and, at the same time, he implicitly refers to the realization problem.

This problem also forms a bridge to the debate about "Social rights and participation", which, in my opinion, is to be placed in an inferior position to the problems of self-determination – not only in social work – for the purpose of specification. On this topic U. Steinvorth says in a way that conceptually continues: "the demand that everyone should have the same scope for the actuation and development of one's assets could accompany the indifference of whether that person really actuates his or her assets. But the idea of equal freedom has never been understood in this way. It was always associated with a positive evaluation of the actuation of assets; without it there is no meaning. Therefore liberalism can lead on the positive idea of the development of the assets against the power of economic interest. This idea proves to guide action as soon as one realizes that the same access to the natural and mixed resources belongs to the same freedom. This condition forces the state, particularly when it is limited to the task of enforcing justice, to make decisions about which standard should be used to positively determine the use of these resources or the general interest that it is to serve. It needs such a standard when it has to decide which proportion of the available resources should go to which areas: health, education, security, social service, and which proportion should then account for the different departments within these areas" (Steinvorth, 1999, p. 276).

Steinvorth sees the "principle of the *democratic minimum*" to arise from this challenge. "This principle prohibits the distribution of resources under the standard that is necessary to secure the ability to take part in the culture and politics of one's own society. … The amount of resources that a society must spend on securing the education of each individual is not philosophically, but independently determined by a direct democratic majority decision: by a court that should concretize the content of the law to an elementary education, by a competent committee elected by the parliament or by an institution that is independent of the parliament and government and especially created to determine the democratic minimum. Philosophically one can still say that education should not convey arbitrary abilities and not in an arbitrary ranking order, rather it

should convey those that secure the ability for everyone to voice their political opinions; for without this ability one is excluded from all decisions that affect oneself and form the framework for one's self-determination; thus it should convey the ability to take part in the production process in which one can provide oneself with the material conditions of one's existence" (Steinvorth, 1999, p. 277).[15]

M. Walzer's thoughts are aimed at the problem of interposing social rights with the question of state under conditions of pluralism and equality and thus at the question of possible relationship conditions between the state and market when he states: *"No social good x should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good y merely because they possess y and without regard to the meaning of x"* (Walzer, 1983, p. 20; cf. also Bowles and Gintis, 1998; Wright, 1998).

In the centre there are questions about overcoming domination: "The aim of political egalitarianism is a society free from domination. This is the lively hope named by the word *equality*: no more bowing and scraping, fawning and toadying, no more fearful trembling; no more high- and mightiness; no more masters, no more slaves. It is not a hope for the elimination of differences; we don't all have to be the same or have the same amounts of the same things" (Walzer, 1983, p. XIII); and towards the "realists" he emphasizes: "A society of equals lies within our own reach. It is a practical possibility here and now, latent already, as I shall try to show, in our shared understanding of social goods" (Walzer, 1983, p. XIV; cf. Green, 1998).[16]

Fabricant and Burghardt outline in plain language what is concerned in this context, what is at stake for social politics and social work as well as for those involved as clients or professionals: "Generative social service has the potential to make citizens and workers stakeholders in a change process. This kind of investment is critically associated with opportunities to honestly name problems and struggle to effect change. The potential of this process also rests with the opportunity for service workers and citizens seeking services to take greater control of their lives by initiating and not simply reacting to change. It is through such engagement at the practice level (to processes of social reproduction) that the client, worker, and agency begin to make connections to larger struggles within the welfare state. As new tensions emerge and expanded possibilities for collaborative relationships are established, the ability of workers and clients to affect the accumulation-legitimation functions of the welfare state increases. This process is guided by the interaction among worker-client relations, agency need, and coalitional efforts.

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[15] The relevance of educational politics as social politics for the 'topic of justice' is made particularly clear here. Indeed it concerns, as the PISA study has shown once again, the reproduction of social inequality with the help of the education system, and concerns the consequences for the life opportunities and lifestyles as well as individuals' political awareness as members of classes in the course of their lives, it concerns systematically produced disadvantages and, at the same time, the 'degree of civilization' and the society's 'state of democracy' (cf. Sünker, Timmermann and Kolbe, 1994; Allmendinger, 1999; Sünker, 2002).

[16] Ignatieff refers to the mediation of civil rights and political struggles that enter a historically adequate conception of justice and he emphasizes: "The language of citizenship is not properly about compassion at all, since compassion is a private virtue which cannot be legislated or enforced. The practice of citizenship is about ensuring everyone the entitlements necessary to the exercise of their liberty. As a political question, welfare is about rights, not caring, and the history of citizenship has been the struggle to make freedom real, not to tie us all in the leading strings of therapeutic good intentions. I do not want to live in the 'caring society' beloved of Labour and SDP party political broadcasts, because it evokes for me the image of a nanny state in which the care we get depends on what the 'caring professions' think it fit for us to receive. I would much prefer to live in a society which struggles to be just, which respects and enhances people's rights and entitlements. The pell-mell retreat from the language of justice to the language of caring is perhaps the most worrying sign of the contemporary decadence of the language of citizenship among all parties to the left of Mrs. Thatcher" (Ignatieff, 1989, p. 72).

These conditions tightly fasten the 'politics of social services' to daily work experiences"
(Fabricant and Burghardt, 1992, p. 247 cf. also Parton, 1996; Mullaly, 1997; Walkowitz, 1999;
Sünker, 2000).

Consequently a continuity of problem areas and the necessity for systematic reflection in
discipline and profession is evident – irrespective of whether the respective emphasis can be
located more strongly in socio-analytical, political or socio-educational discourses. The question
of "justice" presents an essential challenge, however it unhinges – once again – the balanced
conception of a well-organized relationship between the individual and society; thus the "justice
question" is still a question of politics, political conscience, and political action – from the point
of view of potential subjects.[17]

In this context the significance of Reisch's request becomes insightful for discipline and
profession when he states: "The absence of a political framework for our practice has a
deleterious effect on our daily work, whatever the level of intervention or arena. First, it compels
us to accept the political vocabulary of others who may not share our values and social concerns.
Second, it compels us to accept the problem definitions of others, even to accept others' view as
to what constitutes a social condition worthy of attention. Third, it often leads us to accept as
inevitable the reality of fiscal austerity and place our professional integrity on the line by
attempting to deal with spiraling and increasingly complex human needs with shrinking
resources" (Reisch, 1997, p. 88)[18].

Counter strategies to the further enforcement of capitalist social formation on a global scale (cf.
Duchrow, 1997; Meiksins Wood, 1995) will only be successful if social work and social politics
stop their contribution to the reproduction of social relationships which are determined by

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[17] This subject perspective is to be referred to separately, although the question of types of socialization in the
respective special consequences for the relationship and society as well as possible alternatives is concealed behind
it. M. Schneider keeps this in mind when he speaks of the fact that it concerns the thought "and the necessity for the
definitive liberation of subjectivity through clear inter-subjectivity. 'Clear' means neither eternal harmony and being
free from conflict nor isolation from other forms of social interaction, rather the opportunity for a life history set free
from false social constraints that develop through education and the extension of humane object relationships with a
genre history of emancipation. Seen in this way, the civil revolution is still in its initial stages. Its revolutionary
energy has not yet diminished" (Schneider, 1980, p. 258). Kohlhammer's views refer to exactly this initial stage:
"The development of the civil-capitalist economy, the eruption of the French Revolution and the wars of world
historical scale that followed form the basis for individuals' experience of historicity, their progressive socialization
that is, at the same time, a process of their progressive privatism: a process of change of social awareness to be
followed by all Europe that has been particularly expressed in literature since the end of the 18th century"
(Kohlhammer, 1973, p. 10). Here one may say that "the particular individual's role in general history is perceived to
be an oppressive subsumption" (Ibid, p. 11; cf. p. 13, p. 20, p. 35 onwards).

[18] See also the views of Langan and Lee (1989, p. 7 r, s.): "One of the major achievements of the original radical
social work movement was that it questioned conventional practice in terms that pushed the interests of the client to
the fore, and as such *made sense to practitioners*. It pointed out, for example, just how frequently conventional
practice militated against client empowerment as well as against progressive social change.

For the most part the critics of radical social work have ignored the extent to which radical social workers are
steeped in practice. Many have been attracted to radical theory because they found conventional theory
inappropriate for practice in the real world. Too often such theory is remote from reality, denying for example the
impact of racism or the extent to which government legislation, particularly in the sphere of income maintenance, is
making social workers agents of punitive and repressive policies. Radical social work texts have been widely read by
practitioners, and practitioners have made important contributions to radical theory. More than half the contributions
to this collection come from people who are currently practicing social workers and all have substantial practical
experience. Most of the contributors make extensive proposals for practice in their particular field of social or
community work."

inequalities and injustice. Therefore it concerns their possible role in the critique of domination and realistic debate about domination and the circumstances of domination.[19]

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[19] A socio-theoretical perspective is offered here in the inclusion of the conception of "communicative freedom", as M. Theunissen introduced in his Hegel interpretation (1978).

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