



## **Alice Salomon (Germany), President 1928/29-1946<sup>1</sup>**

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*'You start thinking that all differences in possession and education could be changed immediately. (...) You start seeing everything in black and white and then comes the time when you are awake at night, sleepless, racking your brain over the shadows between. This is probably the hardest crisis you have to go through in Social Work, the deepest disappointment, when you lose ...the belief in a radical change, when you have to accept that you are only able to improve the state of affairs with economic and educational support.'* (Salomon 1916, 93f.)



### **1 Why should we know something about Alice Salomon?**

#### **1.1 One of the earliest feminist approaches to Social Work**

Salomon belongs to the known and nevertheless unknown 'pioneers' of social work in the world. She founded one of the first Schools of Social Work (Berlin 1908) and was the first president of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (1929-1937<sup>2</sup>). Her theoretical work however is almost forgotten or not really part of the debate about social work history.

This is partly due to her expulsion from Germany in 1937, partly it is the 'normal' destiny of female intellectuals (Staub-Bernasconi 1991). The lacking or superficial interest in her theoretical work led to many - still existing - prejudices about her definition of social work as a female, a 'motherly' profession. Studying her more than 350 articles and more than 30 (text-)books (see Kuhlmann 2000) reveals a great treasure of knowledge about the character and the methods of social work, about social and economic background factors of poverty and about the ethics of the social profession. Above all, Salomon's theoretical work represents one of the earliest and till today almost unique feministic approaches to social work theory.

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<sup>1</sup> This article was first published 2001 under the title "Historical portraits of important European leaders in social work: Alice Salomon (1872-1948) – Germany" in the *European Journal of Social Work*, Vol.4, No.1, pp.65-75, published by Taylor & Francis Ltd.. We thank the author, the Journal and the publisher for the permission to reprint the article in this supplement.

<sup>2</sup> According to Kendall Alice Salomon remained titular head of the International Committee of Schools for Social Work until René Sand took over in 1946. The Committee was renamed after 1954 and became the "International Association of Schools of Social Work" (cf. Kendall 1978, p. 177 and 182). (Footnote added by the editor)

## 1.2 A fascinating character

As a person, Alice Salomon had a rare mixture of intellectual and emotional gifts: she was down-to-earth, had a truly scientific nature - and was at the same time a passionate fighter against all sorts of injustice. From the beginning of her conscious life – as she wrote in her biography - she ‘always felt an urge to take sides with the underdog’ (Salomon 1944a, 321). Essentially the goal of her work – she says - was ‘to even out differences of class and opportunities: otherwise there could be no peace and no brotherhood.’ (Salomon 1944a, 321)

From childhood to old age she was full of energy, always busy in *doing* something to change the bad living conditions of women and children, first in practical work with a Charity Organisation Service and later on in organising better education programmes for social workers through national and international associations. She was very gifted in mediating and organising – today we would probably say, in social management. She was the one to translate ideas into action.

Salomon had a strong charismatic influence on young girls, being a kind of a female ‘leader’, at a time when it was still the normal destiny of women to obey either their fathers or their husbands. Her lectures were an ‘attraction’ (Jüngling and Roßbeck 1994, 60). Her message was: there is something to do outside the family, because state, economy and society, made by men, are not well run. War, exploitation, child labour, unjust women’s wages – all this can only happen, when women have no political influence – so Salomon one hundred years ago.

## 1.3 An outstanding biography

Alice Salomon was born in April 1872 in Berlin, one year after the foundation of the German Empire, 60 years after the emancipation of the Jews in Prussia. Her father was a businessman in the leather trade, comfortably-off, but not rich; both her parents were Jews but not religious.

The family of her father lived in Prussia since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; the grandfather of her mother had been a Christian who converted to Judaism and had been killed in a Pogrom in Vilnius (Lithuania).

Together with her sisters, Alice Salomon went to a Christian school nearby (founded by Huguenots). She enjoyed it very much and took also part in the religious lessons, which was incidentally one of the main reasons for her baptism in 1914.

Unfortunately formal schooling for German girls at that time ended at fifteen. Afterwards her life became a boring and fruitless waiting period. Her only option was to become proficient in fine needlework. She therefore felt ‘reborn’, when, six years later in 1893, she joined a Junior League, the ‘Girl's and Women's Groups of Social Assistance Work’, a group enlisting girls for unpaid service in philanthropic activities.

For some years she worked in a shelter for schoolgirls and with a Charity Organization Society.

Her intellectual ‘mother’ at that time became Jeanette Schwerin, a member of the board of the ‘Society of Ethical Culture’ in Berlin and of the National Association of Women. Schwerin brought Salomon in contact with the ideas of social reform and women’s liberation. Salomon now started to read English social philosophers like John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle (see for example Carlyle 1894 and Ruskin 1905) and was influenced by the German so-called

'armchair socialists' like Gustav Schmoller and Adolph Wagner (see Schmoller 1908; Wagner 1912). Then, in 1899, when Salomon was 27, Schwerin died and Salomon's life changed in many ways: she became a member of the board of the National Council of Women (as a successor to Schwerin) and she took over the chair of the Junior League where she started the first annual training class in social work.

Soon she realized that her private studies were insufficient to meet the challenges of her new obligations. And although German women were still officially denied access to university, Salomon received special permission and became a student of '*Nationalökonomie*', a mixture of political economics and social science. She received her Ph.D. in 1906 with a thesis on the inequality of wages of men and women. In 1908 she transformed the annual classes of the 'Groups' into the first German regular school of social work and became president and teacher of the school. In 1909 she became Corresponding Secretary of the International Council of Women (ICW) and was from now on in contact with the leading women in many different nations like Jane Adams, Lady Aberdeen etc. (Salomon 1936).

During World War I she worked with the National Service of Women, organizing war welfare services and working - in spite of her many scruples - in the War Office. After the armistice and the revolution Salomon's work proved crucial for the formation of the profession of social work in Germany:

- she founded and became president of the National Association of Schools of Social Work (1917-1933),
- she founded and became president of the 'Academy for Social and Pedagogical work of Women', the first post graduate school for social work (1929-1933).

During this time she wrote many textbooks for social work, for example 'Introduction to Welfare Work' (Salomon 1921), 'Introduction to German Society: economics, state, social life' (Salomon 1922), 'Social Diagnosis' (Salomon 1926a), 'Social Therapy' (Salomon and Wronsky 1926b), 'Education for Social Work' (Salomon 1927). In the early thirties she started a family research project about the economic and social value of the work of women in the family (Salomon 1930a).

In 1928 Salomon was asked to take over the chair of the division on social work education during the International Congress of Social Work in Paris. At the end of this congress the leaders of about ten different schools from Europe and USA decided to found a new association. This was the beginning of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), which was officially founded a year later in Berlin. Alice Salomon became president until she was forced to give up her work in 1937. On the occasion of her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1932, the Prussian state honoured Alice Salomon with a medallion and she received an honorary Ph. D. by the Medical School of the University of Berlin. In 1933 she lost all her professional positions and honours because of her Jewish ancestors and in 1937 she had to choose between leaving the country and deportation to a concentration camp. She emigrated to the United States, where she died in New York in 1948. During her last years in America (especially during World War II) she suffered not only from being parted from her German friends, relatives and former tasks (Wieler 1987) but also from having to witness the destruction of all that she had struggled for (Salomon 1944b).

## 2 Salomon's concept of Social Work and Social Work Education

### 2.1 Social justice –key to Salomon's Social Work theory

An almost unspoken precondition of social work is the ability to identify social problems and to acknowledge the suffering of disadvantaged people. Salomon was very gifted in describing the needs and problems of poor people and comparing them with the life circumstances of the middle-class students she had:

*'We are sitting in a room with carpets, pictures and so on, while outside there are working men in the winter cold without sufficient clothing and women sitting in attic rooms bent over sewing machines to give their children at least a bit of bread'* (Salomon 1912, 71).

According to Salomon it is more a kind of emotional intelligence social worker should have to feel the injustice of those comparisons and to demand more social justice in the world.

But what is the nature of social justice? Will we ever be able to build a society on social justice? According to Salomon social justice is the final aim of social work; nevertheless she was aware that we shall never be able to reach this aim. All 'utopias' of social justice are closely affiliated to dictatorships or are not working (see her critique of Robert Owen: Salomon 1932, 14; and her critique of the 'final solution' of social problems in Nazi Germany: Salomon 1983, 279ff.)

Though social justice can never be reached, its achievement should always be attempted. The precondition for this is to have the same rights for men and women, for all classes, ethnic minorities or other disadvantaged groups. One of the main problems in achieving more social justice is the fact that human beings are equal and different at the same time. Treating all persons in the same way could therefore also be unjust (for example having no special labour laws for pregnant women or expecting children to earn money, see Salomon 1903a)

Without the analysis of the existing inequality and the belief that this status quo needs to be changed towards peace and social justice, social work loses its identity. In the radical perspective of Salomon, 'social' does not mean all what refers to society (societal), but an idealistic social conscience that acknowledges the interdependence of human beings, fights against the philosophy of individualism and is convinced that mutual aid is the law of life (Salomon 1923). According to Salomon, without this ethical commitment social work could be done by any state clerk.

### 2.2 Production and consumption makes people dependent on one another

According to Salomon's anthropology the responsibility for your neighbours is not a special task of social workers but for everyone and this not only for idealistic, but also for very material and economical reasons. Human beings depend on one another, even if they do not notice any dependence. In pre-industrial times production and consumption of all goods took place in extended families, everybody was aware of what the others were doing for their survival. The economic structure of an industrial society makes its members blind for what others are doing for them. We eat meals, use electricity, read newspapers and we dress ourselves, but we do not know the producers of these goods: are they paid according to their importance and their every-day needs (Salomon 1909)? Salomon said that we are responsible for the exploitation in the sweat-shop industries by wearing clothes that were produced there - yesterday in our neighbourhood, today in the so-called Developing Countries. She felt that one should not profit from the work of others if one does not give back an equivalent to

society, because we are not only responsible for what we do but also for what we fail to do. Everybody is part of the chain of life, receiving and giving care, ideas, culture and knowledge (Salomon 1933, 723) and there is ‘no need that takes no revenge on those who ignore it’ (Salomon 1922b, in: Muthesius 1958, 197).

### **2.3 A liberal capitalist economy causes an unjust distribution of work and wealth**

In 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany there had been revolutionary social changes due to the process of industrialisation, urbanisation and the vanishing of extended families. Traditional structures of social support and security broke down and the state had neglected to build up new ones. The official policy of the Prussian state was to rely on the self-healing power of a free market.

In contradiction to this position Salomon argued that the liberal capitalist economy is an unjust exchange that has to be controlled by the state because the state represents common interests (see the concept of the German ‘*Nationalökonomie*’).

The economic development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had created two classes: the propertied and the non-propertied. The non-propertied class is not free; working men and women depend on the work they get. Free work contracts are a lie according to Salomon. A free economy means exploitation of those who have nothing but their labour to sell. At the end of the long chain of exploitation one can find women and children. So Salomon fought also for fair wages, supported strikes of women workers and demanded labour and child protection laws. For a short time she thought about joining the socialist party and had also contacts with August Bebel (the leader of the German socialist party, see Bebel 1892). But she decided against this, on the one hand because she believed in the progress of social reforms (instead of a violent revolution, which was the aim of the socialistic party till 1914) on the other hand because she thought that the patriarchal family was not a product of capitalism. In socialism – she thought – there might be still no equality between men and women and the dominance of men in the Socialist party made her sceptical.

In Salomon’s concept of social work understanding of the social conditions of the underprivileged class is crucial. Knowing about the unjust economic system social work can no longer be a kind of charity but has to be defined as a human right. In contrast to other theoretical approaches of that time in Germany, which defined social problems as being purely of an educational nature (Nohl 1919) or as a question of a personal lack of the abilities to adapt (Klumker 1918) Salomon emphasises the responsibility of the economical and political system.

However Salomon argued that social work is not the same as social politics. Politics is one way to change injustice; social work is another. Unlike her socialist friends who believed socialism would make social work superfluous, Salomon was convinced that many problems that do not depend on material circumstances will always remain: for example orphans, old age, illness, personal problems, etc. Social work on the other hand is much more than the carrying out of new welfare laws; it should act as a motor for social development and adapt welfare to changing needs.

Nowadays in our phase of capitalist development (without the competition of socialism), a development that led to structural unemployment, to a global ‘supermarket’, to the breakdown of national controls over economic developments and to the crisis of the Welfare State Salomon’s conviction of the social responsibility of those who have possessions is as relevant as it was at the beginning of the last century.

## **2.4 Social work and gender**

### **2.4.1 Poverty as a female problem**

In all her writings Salomon had a special perspective on women: mothers, girls, widows, working women. Working women suffered, according to Salomon, double oppression both from their employers and from their husbands. For her the capability of giving birth was the main difference between men and women. This put working women at a disadvantage in the labour market. They are on the one hand not able to sell their whole working time and on the other hand they have either to serve their husbands at home or to earn money for their children too (as a single mother, widow or wife of a husband with low wages). This is the reason until today why poverty worldwide is mainly a female problem.

This was even more a problem at a time, when an ‘uncontrolled physical urge of men’ (Salomon 1912 in Heinemann 1912, 5) forced women to give birth to babies they could not feed. Contraception was almost unknown and wives were not allowed to say no to their conjugal duties even if they had already many children. This was one mostly unspoken factor of the high rate of infant mortality. Unlike today, motherhood was not only a separate period in life, but many women were constantly either pregnant or nursing babies. Most wages of working class husbands did not allow the wives to leave their work for a long time.

After working 11 hours women of the working class were additionally obliged to do housework. Some husbands left their families without getting divorced officially (because it was too expensive) or spent their wages only on themselves. The records of public and private charity organisation contained thousands of such cases (Salomon 1927, 155). Nevertheless there was a tradition especially in public welfare to ignore the special needs of women (Salomon 1912b, 16), for instance if they hold an idealistic idea of ‘family’, are happy if a domineering father returns to his wife and forget that this means the oppression of women and children (Salomon 1930a, 15).

To give another example: a mother was convicted for manslaughter through culpable negligence because one of her children fell into a wash-tub and drowned during her absence. The mother claimed innocence because she had to work to feed her children. Salomon defended her in an article: the alternative would have been to starve. Public Welfare should be blamed – so Salomon – because Berlin had not enough crèches and day care centres (Salomon 1896).

### **2.4.2 Social work as sisterly help: solidarity among women**

According to Salomon, it was also the responsibility of women of the propertied classes to support women of the non-propertied classes and thus work for the reconciliation of the classes.

The rich and educated but idle women should transfer their ‘motherly’ love from their home to the community. But this (often criticised) concept (see for example Simmel 1981) was not grounded in biology: Salomon argued that women live in a milieu of care and education because society expects them to bring up the children. Men delegate family work to women and in the family environment an attitude develops that is different from that of the male ‘objective’ position (Salomon 1927: 154). But society suffers, argues Salomon, if the logic of care is only delegated into the private sector. She demanded a maternal politics comparable with the concept of Sarah Ruddick (1989) that is based on the mothering life practice of women.

This means that in Salomon's concept the nature of social work is a compensation and socialisation of private care. It turns the private work of women into the public and makes it visible.

## **2.5 Social Work as a Profession**

As Salomon had found in her doctoral thesis female labour mostly suffered from being not a real profession with formal education. So she tried to organise good schools for women who wanted to do social work and demanded even a salary for field work during the studies. Nevertheless she was convinced that social work by volunteers should always be an integral part of this field and that also volunteers should have the right to being educated in social work.

### **2.5.1 Volunteers and Professionals**

Salomon mentioned five reasons for the necessity of volunteers:

- It would be too expensive, too bureaucratic and formalized to meet all social needs of a society without volunteers.
- In capitalist societies volunteer social activities are able to mediate between classes.
- Volunteers are more likely to criticise the status quo than public employees.
- Modern society needs citizens' initiatives: doing something in favour for the community will encourage responsibility.
- Volunteers have a rich background of different professions and gifts which bring new perspectives into social work (Salomon 1917, 42ff.).

Volunteering – so the conclusion of Salomon – is not a primitive phase of social work that has to be overcome but represents the social conscience of civil society and an additional form of social work. Many social workers could improve their work if they would encourage and educate volunteers. The danger is, however, the abuse of volunteer work as a substitution of professional work.

### **2.5.2 Methods of Social Work**

The main difference between professionals and volunteers is, next to the knowledge about laws and society, the qualification in methods. The strength of social work is, other than in other helping professions like law and medicine, a perspective that sees persons in their entirety (Salomon 1928, 9). Salomon distinguished material and personal areas of responsibility. Material tasks in social work are:

1. The finding and arranging of money, housing, education, special institutions or organisations;
2. The creating of a network for relief actions;
3. The arrangement of the social environment: adapting the external circumstances to the needs of the client.

Salomon was aware of the fact that point three is sometimes impossible for social work. For example, what can social work do if there are no jobs or no cheap flats?

But she was also convinced that there is always something to start with, because she believed that even though the social context produces many disadvantages people are not only the product of their surroundings but also free and responsible for their lives. Therefore the personal tasks are also very important in social work:

1. Empathy: nobody will share their problems with a person they do not trust. To inspire confidence you need to initiate a process of visiting and advising and the gift of compassion.
2. Professional Distance: there is a limit to compassion. Social workers always deal with the shadow-side of society and therefore they have the duty to care also for themselves to save their capacity for work (Salomon suggested a sabbatical break).
3. Empowerment: the main method to change the lives of clients is to encourage and enforce their will, to 'free their energy' (Salomon 1926a, 5) best by help for self-help. Above all social work should support clients in dealing with life-crises: for example suddenly being a widow, becoming a mother, having moved house and so on.

A precondition for professional social work is the social diagnosis, a representative interpretation of the external and internal life circumstances of the clients. Social diagnosis is always a hermeneutic process and therefore one will never be able to follow 'rules'. Nevertheless there is the duty of distinguishing between facts, statements by neighbours, opinions, circumstantial evidence and so on. Social workers have to be educated in recognizing their own prejudice and bias and in dealing with them (Salomon 1926a, 16f.)

### **2.5.3 Social Work as a science and social work education**

In contrast to those sciences which have the task to describe or to analyse (like philosophy or sociology) Social Work as a Science is obliged to think about action. The science of social work should use all disciplines from medicine, psychology, pedagogy to social and political science, if these disciplines can help solve social problems. Maybe sociology and pedagogy are more important than others, but the only hierarchy Salomon would have accepted was the pre-eminence of ethics – according to her statement that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is no longer possible to do social work only with the heart, but also not without it.

Salomon was convinced that modern science had already gathered a great deal of knowledge about the reasons of poverty, illness and injustice, but that there was an increasing gap between knowledge and action, between scientific and personal responsibility. Knowing more, she states, does not lead automatically to better action. Salomon said that it is not only important *what* you know, but to what *use* you put your knowledge. She criticised Germany which, though leading in medical science, nevertheless has one of the highest rates of infant mortality (Salomon 1903b und 1930c). Social work education should therefore always attend to ethical questions behind neutral scientific subjects, because one cannot find scientific but only ethical reasons against social injustice (she refers to the dispute about Darwin, Malthus and Kropotkin, see Kropotkin 1987).



But social work is not only a practical but also an intellectual profession: social workers have to decide and their decisions may have serious consequences for the lives of their clients. Therefore social work education cannot be only in-service training. Although Salomon emphasised and integrated a weekly four-hour field work period in her curriculum, social science and formal knowledge was the basis at her school in Berlin. Above all social workers should be educated in economics to understand the economic background of social problems (Salomon 1927, 93). Other subject areas were sociology, psychology, pedagogy, social politics and knowledge about welfare ('*Wohlfahrtskunde*').

And last but not least, social work education should produce a special professional ethics with three main demands:

- Do not abuse the power you have over your clients, but also use your chance to influence them to improve their situation.
- Social Workers are not allowed to influence their clients to achieve external aims, but only to achieve the personal aims of the client.
- It is not allowed to make a moral judgement of a 'weak' client. In social work you will always find a non-transparent mixture between destiny, guilt and needs (Salomon 1922b, 19).

### **3 Salomon's attitude towards international cooperation**

As we have seen in part 2, social justice between rich and poor, men and women was the central idea in Salomon's concept of Social Work and it is not surprising that international cooperation is an integral part of this concept: social justice knows no boundaries, it is not a national but an international affair. Social work education should foster an awareness for these interchanges. Every student should know about other countries and should be able to compare the national development with the international.

From the very beginning Salomon herself was very well informed about developments and debates in other countries. Her first important intellectual influence came from England and already in her very first article in 1896 she criticized that Berlin had only three crèches for children while Paris had already 51.

Being an active member of the International Council of Women she learned to use the experiences of the social movements in other countries for national progress in social reform. Oppression of women was an international phenomenon, therefore the struggle against it should also use international cooperation. What was right for Women's Liberation – so Salomon – is also right for the social reforms. The economy started to organize in an international context and so social work should do likewise. Social injustice was (and still is) a consequence of an unjust economic system that operates worldwide. Salomon's lively exchanges with international colleagues and friends (like Jane Addams in Chicago) were twice interrupted through World War I and II. During the short period of growing international cooperation between 1918 and 1933 she became a leading person in the emerging process of international cooperation of social work and social work education.

Her international contacts after 1918 first had caused a lot of conflict with the nationalist part of the National Council of Women, where she was a member of the board. The other women tried to prohibit her international work and that was a reason for her to leave the board of the

German Council in 1920 after 20 years of cooperation. This was really a hard decision, but Salomon was convinced that international solidarity between social workers and women was the only way to prevent war in the future. International work - she said - is like social work - work for the welfare of mankind. Social conscience has no boundaries. In a lecture in Washington in 1923 she invited all social workers of the world:

*'As social workers we are united in the conviction that the world cannot be redeemed, that it cannot be freed .... until the ideal of solidarity is accepted by all, until those who are strong renounce climbing to the top of the ladder, the steps of which are made of those whom they have trodden down and crushed during their ascent; until those who are strong will be willing to bear the burdens for the weak.'* (Salomon 1923, in: Muthesius 1958, 208)

In the following years Salomon published a many international comparisons, for instance about housing in the Netherlands, child protection in Norway, rural education in Denmark or the centralisation of social services in Sweden. In 1937 she published the first international survey of social work education in the world (Salomon 1937). She gave an overview of more than one hundred schools and analysed their curricula. The existing differences – she said – were a consequence of the different social needs, different societies, histories and educational systems in each country. Even though there were many parallels in the curricula (and in the fact that social work all over the world was a female profession) she warned against levelling the differences and bringing all schools into line. On the contrary she encouraged every new school to adapt their curriculum to the needs of their own country.

As already mentioned, Salomon was the chair of the first International Congress of Social Work in Paris 1928 and became first President of IASSW. She also was active in preparing the Second Social Work Conference in Frankfurt (Germany) in 1932. During these congresses social workers and social work educators from many parts of the world, mostly from Europe, discussed questions that are still topical today, for instance how important the different sciences are for social work. They discussed professional ethics, methods, volunteering and gender issues (Salomon 1928a, 3f.; Dietrich 1929, 244; Première Conférence 1928, Volume II).

In cooperation with the board of the IASSW<sup>3</sup> Salomon started to discuss the foundation of a European School for Social Work and succeeded in initiating two summer courses – one in Belgium (1934) and one in the Netherlands (1935). They also discussed common research projects. As we all know this process was interrupted by World War II.

After 1933 the German Welfare Schools that were members of IASSW tried to force the committee to dismiss Alice Salomon as president. It was really proof of the anti-racist attitude in the IASSW that they refused to do so, even though Salomon had lost all her positions in Germany.

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<sup>3</sup> Members of the first meeting of the IASSW had been – besides Salomon - Carl Mennicke and the Duchess Schulenburg from Germany, Mme Brunschvicg, Mme Vallé Génairon and Mme Fuster from France, Miss Macadam and Mrs. Stocks from Great Britain, Mme Wagner-Beck and Miss von Meyenburg from Switzerland, Prof. Helena Radlinska from Poland, Mrs. Marie Mulle from Belgium and Mme Necasova from Czechoslovakia. Two years later the IASSW had formed a secretariat. Members were: Dr. Breckenridge (USA), Mme Fuster (France), Miss Macadam (GB), Dr. Moltzer (Netherlands), Mme Mulle (Belgium), Mme Wagner-Beck (Switzerland) and Alice Salomon (Germany) (Salomon 1931).

#### **4 Conclusion: Why did Alice Salomon emphasise social justice and concrete action?**

Though there were many social activities both in Catholic and Protestant Churches in German history the interesting fact is that the main influences on professional social work came from men and women from a Jewish background. Even though Salomon was baptised in 1914 (and one should respect this decision) it is impossible to overlook the parallels between her ethics of social work and the ethics of the Jewish religion.

The 'Societies for ethical culture', founded in England, America, Germany etc., were one of the first associations that organised professional social work. In those 'Societies' many Jewish social reformers (like Jeanette Schwerin) were members. They did not want to replace religion with science or ethics but they tried to found a new ethics of *doing* the right things and criticised the 'old' religions as dogmatic and passive (Jodl 1912, 578).

They promoted social activities that broke with the tradition of alms and charity and demanded organised social work as a form of practical justice, as 'Zedakah' (cf. Schwerin 1894 in Fassmann 1996, 240f). Secular and professional social work was formulated as a critical review of ancient Jewish traditions, as a protest against the state-orientated, Protestant majority who neglected the question of social justice and emphasised individual 'belief' as the only thing that could rescue man.

Actions speak louder than words and in the Jewish tradition the real act (of helping) is more worth than thousands of right 'opinions'. Zedakah is a Hebrew word and means justice *and* welfare. Leo Baeck, one of the leading persons of the Jewish communities in Germany, says: 'Zedakah is the positive, the religious, the social justice' (Baeck 1960, 216) It is not passion of the moment, no sentimental, fruitless mood, but the respect of your neighbour in *doing* something for him. The status of the Jews as a minority in most European countries prevented, so Baeck argues, the development of religious dogmas and shaped a preference for the practice of religion in social acts above all because they needed mutual aid for survival (Baeck 1960, 7). Welfare then brought Jewish and Christian people together and in *doing* what the Jewish religion demands they could also live assimilated to their Christian surroundings.

The second question is, if Salomon's ethics of social work is a result of her female socialisation. According to Carol Gilligan, women develop a different moral attitude that she called 'morals of responsibility' in contrast to the male moral concept of formal rights. (For instance the question in the case of abortion for most men is, if the foetus has a 'right' to life. Women however ask, who will be responsible for the baby; Gilligan 1989.)

This hypothesis is reminiscent of Salomon's ethics of responsibility and of her definition of female attitudes that are produced in the work of caring. Both being female and being from a Jewish background may be reasons for the ethical foundation of Salomon's social work concept. And both positions, being Jewish and being a woman in the German society had one interesting parallel. It was a position of powerlessness. Against the background of this experience grew Salomon's conviction that violence is a bad and law is a good principle. Especially women (as Salomon learned in the wars) will always, due to their physical condition, lose in a free struggle for power Salomon 1919, 16).

Until today social work receives its main innovative influences through social movements by women or ethnic minorities (see for example 'Black empowerment', Solomon 1976), so that social work should stay open and be a cooperative partner to them.

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