

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORK

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Education for Social Work by Jesse Frederick Steiner

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JESSE FREDERICK STEINER

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PREFACE

The unusual demand for social workers during the past few years, together with the increasing recognition of the importance of professional standards in social work, has directed attention to the necessity for more widely extended training facilities, that would be easily accessible to workers in all sections of the country. The need for workers during the war was met by the establishment of emergency training courses usually under the auspices of departments of sociology in colleges and universities. In a number of instances these brief training courses have developed into a more extended program of training for social work, which is gradually taking its place as a permanent feature of the university curriculum.

This new development in the field of training for social work inevitably called into question the adequacy of prevailing standards and methods of training and at the same time aroused serious doubts as to the advisability of bringing professional training under the control of university leadership. The fundamental question at issue was whether professional education is a professional or educational matter. Other professions have faced this same issue and their attitude toward it has largely determined their degree of success in attaining adequate standards of training. It is to throw light on this problem in the field of social work that this study was undertaken. And however inadequate the discussion may be from other points of view, its main purpose will have been achieved if it helps to bring about a growing recognition of the scientific basis upon which the structure of social work must be built.

This study was undertaken by the writer during his period of employment by the American Red Cross as National Director of Educational Service. In connection with his duties in that position

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unusual opportunities were presented for studying at first hand the work of the different training schools, as well as the varied nature of the positions the trained social worker would be called upon to fill. Acknowledgment is here made of the many courtesies extended and help given to the writer both by his colleagues in the Red Cross and by the leaders in training for social work in the universities and professional schools throughout the country.

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA
April, 1921

J. F. STEINER

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