

UDC 364.6:177.72](091)

DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863.1/31.213442>

Natalia MALYNOVSKA,

orcid.org/0000-0003-0861-603X

*Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Department of Social Work, Management and Pedagogy
Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University
(Mykolaiv, Ukraine) Natalia.Malynovska@chmnu.edu.ua*

Dmytro SAY,

orcid.org/0000-0002-0459-7030

*Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Social Work, Management and Pedagogy
Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University
(Mykolaiv, Ukraine) dmytro.say@chmnu.edu.ua*

CHARITY AS A HISTORICAL AND SPIRITUAL-MORAL BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Charity is a special type of social interaction which differs from the other types due to its optional institutional ties. On the one hand, charity is determined by an objective social factor, namely – the existence of those who need assistance – the needy and the objectively existing need for help from one party, and on the other hand – the subjective desire of the other party to provide such assistance. The phenomenon of charity is a stable concept. Its essence remains unchangeable under various social conditions and time periods, however, its forms of manifestation change and adapt to the specific socio-cultural conditions.

This is confirmed by the fact that charity has transformed from a purely subjective private phenomenon and a traditional approach within Christianity, to the functional direction of public policy and later public activity in the functioning of public organizations. This transformation was also reflected in the forms of manifestation of the moral and value component, which was part of interpersonal relations and charity. It has partly lost its significance and partly shifted to the professional requirements for the profession of a social worker and other persons who provide assistance or services to others.

Charitable activities very often help to find effective ways to solve problems in the social sphere, which the state cannot, due to certain circumstances, promptly solve, covering both specific individuals and entire levels of society. A study of the local history of charitable and social work provides a real-life context and concrete examples for shaping the professional identity of future social workers. The local aspect of social work is revealed, first of all, through the work of charitable organizations and individuals who created or funded these institutions, or took an active part in their activities. It is noted that charitable activities contribute to the psychological changes in the consciousness of students. In particular, such changes in the minds of students are characterized by changes in the level of their social responsibility, status, role positions and values.

Understanding charity as a historical and spiritual-moral basis of social work can help increase its effectiveness, expedite recovery from difficult life circumstances, and at broader levels – to prevent and preclude the emergence of difficult life circumstances as a mass phenomenon.

Key words: *charity, social work, social institutions, difficult life circumstances, moral, values.*

Наталія МАЛИНОВСЬКА,

orcid.org/0000-0003-0861-603X

*кандидат історичних наук, доцент,
доцент кафедри соціальної роботи, управління і педагогіки
Чорноморського національного університету імені Петра Могили
(Миколаїв, Україна) Natalia.Malynovska@chmnu.edu.ua*

Дмитро САЙ,

orcid.org/0000-0002-0459-7030

*кандидат педагогічних наук,
доцент кафедри соціальної роботи, управління і педагогіки
Чорноморського національного університету імені Петра Могили
(Миколаїв, Україна) dmytro.say@chmnu.edu.ua*

БЛАГОДІЙНІСТЬ ЯК ІСТОРИЧНА ТА ДУХОВНО-МОРАЛЬНА ОСНОВА РОЗВИТКУ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ РОБОТИ

У статті розглянуто питання благодійності як особливого виду соціальної взаємодії, який відрізняється від інших, зумовлених інституційними зв'язками. Благодійність визначається об'єктивним соціальним чинником, а саме існуванням малозабезпечених, нужденних, тобто, об'єктивно існуючою потребою в допомозі однієї зі сторін, і суб'єктивним бажанням іншої сторони таку допомогу надати.

З часом змінюються тільки форми вияву цього феномена в конкретних соціокультурних умовах, проте сутність залишається незмінною. Підтвердженням є той факт, що благодійність трансформувалася від суто суб'єктивного приватного феномену та традиційного підходу в межах християнства до функціонального напрямку державної політики і громадської діяльності в якості функціонування громадських організацій.

Значача трансформація засновувалася і на формах вияву морального та ціннісного складників, які були частиною міжособистісних відносин і благодійності. Вона частково втратила значення, а частково перейшла до вимог до професії соціального працівника та інших осіб, які надають допомогу або соціальні послуги іншим. Благодійна діяльність дуже часто допомагає знайти ефективні способи вирішення проблем у соціальній сфері, які держава не може через певні обставини оперативно вирішити, охоплюючи як конкретні особистості, так і різні прошарки суспільства загалом.

Дослідження місцевої історії благодійної та соціальної роботи надає контекст реального життя та конкретні приклади для формування професійної ідентичності майбутніх соціальних працівників. Місцевий аспект соціальної роботи розкривається насамперед через роботу благодійних організацій та осіб, які створили або фінансували ці установи або брали активну участь у їх діяльності. Зазначається, що благодійна діяльність сприяє психологічним змінам свідомості студентів. Зокрема, такі зміни у свідомості студентів характеризуються зміною рівня їх соціальної відповідальності, статусу, рольових позицій і цінностей.

Розуміння благодійності як історичної та духовно-моральної основи соціальної роботи може сприяти підвищенню її ефективності, скорішому виходу людини зі складних життєвих обставин, а на більш високому рівні – запобіганню та недопущенню виникнення складних життєвих обставин як масового явища.

Ключові слова: історично-соціальний аспект, благодійність, благодійна допомога, складні життєві обставини, соціальна робота.

Problem statement. The existence of categories of people who need and will need external help has been evident for centuries. This situation does not depend on the development of technology or any other factors. Depending on the time period the categories may change but there are always those who are maladapted to certain living conditions, impacted by environmental issues, industrial catastrophes or wars, etc.

However, the humanization of historical and social reality reduces negative manifestations associated with help and suggests effective tools for preventing social challenges and social crises. On the one hand, over the years the theory and practice of social work have been enriched with new knowledge, methods and technologies for solving social problems, but on the other hand, new categories of the needy are emerging (internally displaced persons, combatants and their families, etc).

Therefore, it is necessary to reassess existing resources and capabilities to effectively solve ongoing and emerging challenges. That is why charity as a special type of social interaction, which is fundamentally different from the ones connected and caused by institutional ties, is one of the possible resources that could be further utilized. The essence of charity remains unchanged under various social conditions and time periods. However, the forms of its manifestation change and adapt to the specific socio-cultural conditions.

Literature review. Charity and the issues connected with it are viewed by the scholars through the prism of different approaches: moral, value, historical, legal, financial and so on. The classical thinkers of philosophical and sociological thought such as G. W. F. Hegel, P. Lafarge, K. Marx and J. Mill as well as contemporary scholars A. Gulevska-Chernysh,

D. Nepchatova, D. Murashko, M. Dmitrienko, O. Bezpalko, S. Shenderovsky devoted a lot of attention to general theoretical and methodological essence and principles of charity.

Various aspects of charity and patronage were studied by V. Bozhkova, Y. Butynets, O. Yesina, A. Zinchenko. T. Nikolaeva, M. Ometsinskaya, V. Chepurnov and other scholars analyzed the revival of charity after the Soviet period. O. Litvina carried out a comprehensive study of the legal status of charitable organizations in Ukraine.

At the same time O. Vinnikova and M. Latsyba analyzed the reforming system of taxation of charitable activities in Ukraine. Currently there is an increasing interest of researchers in the processes of forming an effective state policy in the field of charity. Namely, the researchers are interested in the processes and conditions necessary for the state structures to create and sustain favorable legal, economic and organizational conditions for the formation and development of charity. By defining charity as a voluntary selfless activity aimed at helping the needy, we will try to look at it through the prism of social interaction in the context of the relationship with universal values and social work.

The article aims to explore the historical and social aspect of charity in the spiritual and moral domain and highlight possibilities of an effective use of charitable assistance in social work with different categories of clients.

Discussion. The topic of charity and charitable assistance is increasingly becoming the subject of scientific research. In recent decades charitable activities have become an almost integral attribute of public life. However, the specific feature of this activity is that it is based solely on the good will of the subject and always involves a situation

of choice. Therefore, it may always contain some ambiguity.

In ancient societies charity was not seen as a form of humanism, its existence was preconditioned by the traditions formed at that time. Only with the adoption of Christianity did charity become a social virtue. The encyclopedia of F. Brockhaus and A. Efron defines charity as “a manifestation of pity for one’s neighbor and a moral duty of the one who has to hurry to help the poor” (Брокгауз, Ефрон, 1891).

In the Ukrainian charity has been an important component of public life context for many centuries. In the XI century Grand Prince Volodymyr Monomakh of Kiev Rus ordered that every poor who comes to the prince’s court should receive everything that he or she necessitates: clothes, drinks, money. Those who were unable to come for alms, the Grand Prince ordered to deliver them bread, fish, various vegetables, honey and kvass. In addition, the Prince redeemed debtors, freed slaves, helped widows and travelers. In his teaching Volodymyr Monomakh placed mercy above all moral requirements: “Most of all, do not forget the poor, but feed them as much as you can, take care of the orphan, justify the widow” (Володимир Мономах, 1881: 64–74).

However, the origin of charity as a separate concept, its forms, the relationship between such concepts as “charity” and “patronship” (philanthropy) still remains controversial. As early as 1891, the Russian historian V. Klyuchevsky in a pro bono lecture given to the victims of the crop failure in the Volga region, noted the ambiguity of this problem in the following way: “Charity is a word with a rather contradictory and rather simple meaning. Many people interpret it differently, and everyone understands it equally. Ask what it means to do good to your neighbor, and perhaps you will get as many answers as you have companions. But place them right in a situation with an accident, in front of a suffering person asking them the question of what to do – and everyone will be ready to help with what they can. Compassion is so simple and direct that you want to help even when the disadvantaged person does not ask for help, even when the help is harmful or dangerous, when he can abuse it” (Ключевский, 1891).

Most researchers derive the motivational forces of charity from a person’s spirituality, one’s need to love. The correlation of charity with love is almost beyond doubt. The essential side of love, as noted by M. Lossky, is that “the object of love is attracted by me to the composition of my essence, becomes ontologically related to my “I” and my life”. If “I” is a person (ecce homo!), then who am I in relation to other people – “friend, comrade and brother», or

an individual who defines oneself by the formula “homo homini lupus est” (a man is a wolf to another man), and can there be an embodiment of the “golden mean” between these two positions. The answers to these ontological questions lead to the moral principles, which in the Christian world are traditionally defined by the well-known commandments “love your neighbor as yourself”, “be a friend and brother for another person”, “help the needy” (Лосський, 2016).

Charity is traditionally associated with a special type of love, such as love for one’s neighbor. In this regard the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, who, unlike the priest and the Levite, helped the traveler at the hands of the robbers is very didactic. The parable says that love of neighbor as a general commandment of Christian morality gives rise to a specific moral obligation for a person to come to the rescue of another person if he or she needs such help.

However, there is a question: who is entrusted with this moral duty to help and in relation to whom can it be justified? The first possible answer is that each person is entrusted with this duty and in relation to every person. Many religious thinkers consider it the only correct answer. If so, then the Christian commandment would have been written differently “love everyone as yourself”. However, it is not true, Christianity emphasizes love for one’s neighbor.

Jesus Christ asked the lawyer: “Which of the three seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?” and this very question indicates that Christian love, like love in general, is selective. The love to which Jesus Christ appealed means the closeness of people, which is expressed by the concept of “neighbor”. Theologians are unanimous that intimacy is established through God and faith in Him. However, the moral value of this parable is much greater: The Good Samaritan was of a different faith than the victim. Thus, moral responsibilities based on the principle of charity are outside the common faith, race, nation, family, tribal or communal ties. They are universal in nature. One’s neighbor is not just a member of my close people, family, nation or faith. My neighbor is everyone with whom I am connected by human solidarity based on compassion (Слобідський, 2004: 251–252).

Christianity has combined love, a feeling that needs maximum unity, with an action, a creation of good, and has placed the duty of helping one’s neighbor on everyone who is able to provide such help. For many centuries, the majestic pathos of Christian morality was maintained by all segments of the population without exception. The situation changed significantly after the eighteenth century, although the foundations of these changes were laid much

earlier – during the religious reforms in continental Europe and England (XVI – XVII centuries). With the development of urbanization and weakened social ties the state undertook much of the responsibility for ensuring the necessary standard of living.

Thus, charity ceased to be just a fact of faith and compassion and became a function of the state. This function has been enshrined in law. In the middle of the twentieth century the legal systems of Western countries developed and adopted a new generation of rights – economic and social. They gained international recognition and were established at first in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 22-27) and later in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The “legal foundation” was provided for the entire social security system. Such changes can be considered crucial for the existence of a society: unreliable moral obligations were replaced by firm legal norms. The right to be protected by the state instilled more optimism than hope for alms. In addition, it was to evoke a sense of dignity in the poor and disadvantaged. In this regard K. Popper states: “No one should live at the expense of the mercy of others, everyone should have the right to protection by the state” (Поппер, 1994).

However, linking the Christian commandment to the real life of modern man has proved quite problematic. Even today, no one denies the high morality and generosity of the Samaritan’s deed, but many say that this is a sacrificial behavior and it cannot be demanded from everyone. Such actions are in the domain of abstract morality. However, relative morality prevails in real life, which is based on the struggle of conflicting motives and interests and is associated with human capabilities, one’s daily worries, goals and plans.

It is more common for people to empathize with each other, but this does not imply their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of another person. It is also quite difficult to deduce something positive for the law from such sacrificial love, and the law itself cannot give anything to such an ideal. Moreover, if a biblical situation were considered in a modern court, the shrewd mind of a lawyer defending a priest or a Levite would find many arguments in their favor. Modern lawyers tend to believe that most crimes are the fault of the victim itself: he or she has shown recklessness, carelessness, overconfidence, and so on.

In the Soviet period the researchers note that charity virtually disappears in its traditional essential sense (selfless help to those who need that comes from public organizations, government institutions, church and society) (Дмирієнко, 1994: 38–39;

Савицький, 2007; Хілецький, 1998). The very existence of the social institution of charity ceases to exist, and the task of caring for the needy was completely transferred to the state, encompassing the sphere of state social protection. Charity was seen as a way of masking the exploitative nature of the bourgeoisie, denying its social need under socialism. It was believed that since there was no poverty in Soviet society, there was no reason for the phenomenon of charity. In this regard, research of the phenomenon of charity in the Soviet science was practically nonexistent.

After Ukraine became independent the attitude to charity changes and since then it has been one of the focal point of scientific community. Numerous scholars (Y. Buzdugan, M. Bytunec, Y. Guzenko, O. Yesina, R. Serbin, et al.) analyzed the concept of charity, its development, connections and functioning on a regional levels in Ukraine including network of public institutions, church activities, regional charity initiatives, state guardianship orders in the XIX century and early XX century, as well as during the First World War (Буздуган, 2011: 7–10; Бутинець, 2010; Гузенко, 2006; Єсіна, 2009: 114–118; Сербин, 2014: 36–42).

Today Ukrainian public policy is characterized by an attempt to promote building a socially oriented state and secure an effective system of social assistance to the population. Social work encompasses a comprehensive set of measures based on the professional knowledge of social workers, abilities to reduce social risks, effective support of people in need and thus performs a socially stabilizing function. This provides grounds to talk about social work as a factor in promoting social development, preventing social tensions and conflicts. However, social work is not devoid of certain limitations imposed by the state.

Recognition of socio-economic rights was a significant achievement of the twentieth century, at the same time one has to state that the mechanisms of their implementation are often imperfect, and from the moral perspective, might be even humiliating for many groups of people. This applies to many countries, including Ukraine. One of the possible reasons, according to N. Grishchenko, resides in the formalism of state charity (Грищенко, 2016: 46–50).

After accepting the mission of a general benefactor, the state did not inherit two very important components of this activity – moral and psychological. In most cases, charity was accompanied by such feelings and emotions as compassion, mercy, goodwill and love for a person, even with elements of pity. However, the state system of social protection defines and conditions all charitable activities through law,

instructions, guidelines, making moral judgements and emotions inappropriate.

Legal relations in the field of social security have become standard, purely formal and manifest themselves in writing a statement, collecting necessary signatures and providing information, etc. That is why in practice, the implementation of social rights has proved too difficult. This led to the emergence of private and non-governmental charities (Безпалько, 2008; Галустян, 2008; Гулевська-Черниш, 2008; Мацібох, 2009; Мурашко, 2009; Култаєва, 2012; Микитюк, 2012).

In Ukrainian society charity has existed for a long time, gradually overgrowing established centuries-old traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, current Ukrainian statehood perceives the phenomenon of charity as quite new and being in a process of formation. In the Soviet period the implementation of social programs was seen solely as a state function or as a function of “nationalized” non-governmental organizations. Only with independence real non-governmental activities in this area in Ukraine begin to develop more intensively.

The term “charity” signifies not only the collection, accumulation and redistribution of financial, technological, material resources received by the philanthropists, but also one’s own efforts and philanthropists’ personal time spent to solve a range of social problems. However, researchers also emphasize the pragmatic motives of charity. Considering charity in terms of historical and social progress, it should be noted that as a civilizational phenomenon, it has deep socio-cultural and spiritual-moral roots and is aimed at achieving public good (Житник, 2015: 43–49).

At the social level, charity in general is associated with the processes of formation and development of human society, with the assertion in it of the principles of mutual assistance and humanism as a life practice. As a socio-cultural phenomenon, charity resembles a set of widespread cultural and ethical concepts and categories of social knowledge. As a form of social manifestation, charity is an expression of the humanistic orientation of society to create good in relation to a person. From the point of view of structural functionalism, charity as a social phenomenon can be considered as an integral part of society, because it (as a phenomenon) performs the functions necessary to save its structural integrity. O. Yesina notes that with the help of charitable activities, which are the material manifestation of the phenomenon of charity, the main social functions of preservation, renewal and development of society are realized (Єсіна, 2009: 111–118).

The universality of charity as a social phenomenon is determined by its inherent aspects of social life, which exist regardless of the specific historical conditions of a given society, as well as regardless of the forms of organization of the phenomenon itself. O. Yesina states that the universal nature of the phenomenon of charity is determined by the fact that in terms of social space and time there is always room for the material manifestation of this phenomenon in society (Єсіна, 2009: 114–118). Charity is a stable concept. Its essence remains unchanged under various social conditions and time periods. However, the forms of its manifestation change and adapt to the specific socio-cultural conditions.

Charity as a socio-psychological phenomenon possesses the form of a moral and value-based social norm pertaining to interpersonal relations, which determines the prosocial nature of the “helping” behavior of an individual in society according to G. Birhoff, L. Orban-Lembrik and L. Pochebut (Бирхофф, 2011: 398–417; Орбан-Лембрик, 2013; Почебут, 2010). In this context, charity at the personal level acts as an integrative psychological idea, which consolidates in the minds of people the system of values and attitudes about the need to provide selfless help to the needy.

As noted by many researchers (N. Savranskaya, L. Tyuptya, M. Firsov, T. Shanin and others), charity has always been present in various forms in the history of human civilization as a manifestation of prosocial behavior of society’s members. Without charity and consequently charitable activities promoting the benefit of another person and society as a whole, it is impossible to imagine the historical reality of human existence and the progress of human society.

As a social phenomenon, charitable activity helps to find effective ways to solve social problems in the social sphere. At the same time, the phenomenon of charity, which has historically been the basis of social work, in itself characterizes social activity aimed at the positive change both at the level of an individual and at the level of society. The activity itself, in terms of activity theory approach in psychology (K. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, B. Ananiev, A. Leontiev, S. Rubinstein, et. al.), acts as a specific form of human activity, the content of which is an expedient change of the surrounding world, its positive and progressive transformation.

Even though social work is part of a state policy and practices and hence inherits some of its limitations and disadvantages, it is still based on and shares the same founding principles and values with charity and charitable activities. Charitable activity

as a component of social work is characterized by a larger number of forms of personal initiative. Within the social domain of society, charity acts as a certain part of it with the aim of finding a socially just solution for the pressing social problems based on the principles of humanism and voluntary unselfish help to those in need. The range of problems that social work actively tries to find a solution to using the principles of charity include: overcoming the consequences of natural disasters, social crises, combating poverty, helping to solve crises of individual socialization, support and assistance to the needy and many others (Човган, 2015: 232–244).

Charity, as a socio-psychological phenomenon, being in the system of social relations and based on the moral content of helping the needy, is characterized by altruistic social behavior and the corresponding humanistic values of the helper. The phenomenon of charity in the scientific community is determined by the markers of its interdisciplinary approach (depends on the branch of science that studies it – history, social work, pedagogy, sociology, philosophy, psychology, etc.); its relativity (ethical and cultural features of the implementation of charity in a certain historical stage); its multilevel structure (individual act of charity, collective, state), as well as depending on the methodology of the scientific tools of the research (Човган, 2015: 232–244).

The phenomenon of charity can be considered as an element of social and personal components of the structure of individual experience and can be characterized by two functions – social adaptation and personal self-development (M. Gulina, M. Levkivsky). The nature of the manifestation of motivational characteristics of a charitable activity makes it possible to talk about a compensatory function of the charity's subject in relation to the object of a charitable activity (A. Maslow) (Маслоу, 1997). The relative independence of the manifestation of charity's factors at the levels of personality and behavior is manifested in the phenomenon of selectivity. It means that the effectiveness of the social worker performing its professional activities may depend on the social worker's individual perception of charitable activities and its components (V. Bocharova, M. Firsov, etc.).

Analyzing a professional training of future social workers in institutions of higher education, N. Seiko states that charitable activities promote psychological changes of consciousness in students. In particular, such changes in the consciousness of the students are characterized by the changes in the level of their social responsibility, status and role positions, values and regulations. At the same time, charity

acts as a regulator of the individual socialization and is rooted in social justice and responsibility. It is also important to state that one's individual values and qualities, as well as the formation of personal «Self-concept» at the socio-professional level determines behavior of an individual in society. Quality professional training of future social workers requires the development of basic social work values.

Charity as a social (socio-cultural) phenomenon is two-sided. It can be considered as a phenomenon (socio-psychological, ethical and moral characteristics of an individual), and as an activity (socially-oriented process of human interaction in society). This phenomenon has an individual-social, moral-spiritual nature at its core, which psychologically directs an individual or group of people united by common principles and values to the implementation of charitable activities in society, in particular – in the field of social work.

Mainly in social work, as in a systematic and organized professional work, “pure” charity is seen as the main source of this activity, as a direct form of realization of the values of humanism and assistance. In social work charity, as a psychological readiness to selflessly help “others”, is rooted in the principle of continuity of societal humanistic prosocial forms. Such psychological rooting is manifested at the basic level of value-based humanistic orientation in the professional and personal “I-Position” and behavioral forms of social worker, based on the concept of unconditional assistance to the needy (Сай, 2014: 79–84).

At any stage of societal development the concept of helping other people always acts at the fundamental level of the laws of life as a method of maintaining human sociality. In a humanistic context, the content of aid determines positivity of attitude to other people and the potential of helping “others” (help acts as a general humanistic value of human society, aimed at goodwill for others, according to S. Banks). The principle of assistance psychologically determines certain forms of practical altruistic behavior of the individual as “I-Position”.

Such practical altruism underlies the phenomenon of charity as the creation of good in the form of selfless help to others in society (N. Savranska, N. Seiko) (Савранська, 2008: 114–119; Сейко, 2012: 187–195). In this case, the phenomenon of charity, based on the content of altruistic assistance to “others”, is considered by science as a socio-cultural and socio-psychological phenomenon, which is the humanistic basis of social work and reflects social orientation of a social worker.

A number of scholars (S. Banks, M. Doel, S. Shardlow, M. Gulina, D. Lucas, S.-E. Jungholm)

stress, that values and ethical principles of social work form a certain kind of professional and ethical system. The system defines the norms and limits of practical interaction of the client and the expert (i.e. the social worker). The basis of this ethical system includes a set of individual and professional founding principles and social ideals (norms) of charity concerning the person in need – charitable values.

These values and ethical principles are the psychological justification of specific actions of a social worker, the requirements for one's individual professional qualities and characteristics, as well as denotement of one's responsibility to clients, colleagues and profession. In this context A. Konokov states that charity as a socio-psychological phenomenon psychologically encourages an individual or group of people united by common interests to implement charitable activities in society, including the field of social work.

In the educational domain, the students (future social workers) may benefit from perceiving well-known historical events through the prism of social work and charity. Local history of charity and social work activities provide real life context and concrete examples. The local aspect of social work is revealed, first of all, through the work of charitable organizations and persons, who created or financed these institutions, or took an active part in their activities (Малиновська, 2015: 70–72).

The second half of the XIX – early XX century has much in common with the processes taking place at the present stage of the social development. The charitable activities in Mykolaiv included creation and development of various organizations that helped different categories of people: “Charitable Society” (1845), “Society for the Aid of the Poor Seeking Education” (1874-1884), “Society for Providing Night Shelters” (1875-1900), “Society of Clerks – Christians” (1894-1914), “Society of Labor Assistance” (1900), “Society of Aid to Poor Jews of Mykolaiv” (1901), “Society of Aid to the Unemployed Workers of Mykolaiv and Their Families” (1906) and others.

There is a number of authentic historical documents that describe the situation with charity in Mykolaiv region: “Report of the Nikolaev Charitable Society as for 1900” (1901), “Report of the Society of the Aid to Children of Needy Workers of Nikolaev as for 1908/9 Academic Year” (1909), “Report of the Board

of the Nikolaev Society of the Labor Assistance as for 1903” (1904), “Digest of the Activities of the Nikolaev Society of Night Shelters During 25 Years of its Existence (1886-1911)” (1912), etc.

There is also a number of academic scholars who researched this topic as well: Y. Guzenko “Activities of the Society of Mutual Assistance of Clerks-Christians of the City of Nikolaev in 1894-1914”, “Nikolaev Society of Mutual Aid to Those who are Engaged in Handicraft Work (1904-1913)”, “Charitable Societies of Nikolaev Region in the End of XIX – Beginning of XX Centuries”; M. Kazmirchuk “Social Activity of the Nikolaev City Pawnshop in the End of the XIX – the Beginning of the XX Century”; I. Krykalova “History of Activities of the Nikolaev Society “Friends of Children” (the 85th anniversary from the date of its creation)”, etc.

Recent events in Ukraine have created new challenges for society and exacerbated the crisis in all spheres of life of our state. However, at the same time they caused unprecedented changes in attitudes to charity, became the basis for national identity, formed Ukrainians' sense of national dignity and provided invaluable practical experience for activities and charitable assistance. All of this has profound impact on the understanding and effectiveness of social work in Ukraine.

Conclusions. Charity is a powerful societal resource based on moral and professional values, especially in the domain of social work. Charitable activities strive to secure social justice in the society and solve pressing social problems despite being either a private initiative or a state policy. The use of various forms and tools of charitable activities as well as the introduction of a comprehensive system of planning, monitoring and evaluation will promote the development of effective charity initiatives.

The dynamic development of Ukrainian society gives grounds to assert that charity is becoming an important aspect of country's life and relations between the state and civil society thus requiring further substantial research. Venture charity is a new trend which needs special consideration as well. Its purpose is not to solve current social problems, but to develop the beneficiary, strengthen its infrastructure, create social mechanisms that can develop themselves.

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