

MUNICIPAL WELFARE DURING WORLD WAR I AS PRACTISED BY THE TOWN OF MAINZ

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For German towns, the beginning of World War I meant a decisive turning-point. During the preceding decades, the municipalities had succeeded in establishing, on a voluntary basis, a welfare system of their own, not controlled and not financially supported by the state, of which they were rather proud. This welfare system included, for example : municipal labour exchange offices, relief for unemployed workers, industrial courts, housing inspection and housing schemes, children's nurseries, efforts to reduce infant mortality, health facilities in elementary schools, such as school medical officers, shower baths and free meals for poor children, public health facilities, such as municipal hospitals, control of tuberculosis, municipal pharmacies, public baths, water supply systems, canalization, street-cleaning, refuse disposal, slaughter houses¹.

Now, during the war, the state intervened and centralized the welfare policy by laws and regulations. For the first time, the state also

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1. For a general description of municipal social policy before 1914 refer to : KRABBE (Wolfgang R.), *Die deutsche Stadt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, 1989 ; REULECKE (Jürgen), *Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland*, Frankfurt/M., 1985 ; details concerning the social policy of the town of Mainz BRÜCHERT-SCHUNK (Hedwig), *Städtische Sozialpolitik vom Wilhelminischen Reich bis zur Weltwirtschaftskrise. Eine sozial- und kommunalhistorische Untersuchung am Beispiel der Stadt Mainz 1890-1930*, Stuttgart, 1994.

