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## **G. Rosen. Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953 [photocopie]**

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Personnes citées[Rosen, Georges](#)

Références bibliographiques

- [\[anonyme ou collectif\] Journal of the history of medicine](#)
- [Rosen, Economic and Social Policy in Public Health, in Journal of the History of Medicine, 1953](#)

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### **Références éditoriales**

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social distress were more widespread than ever. Nevertheless, the situation remained basically unchanged until 1834, when the drastic and revolutionary Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, ushering in a new period of thought and practice in relation to public health and social welfare. The existing Poor Law System affected the economic and administrative fabric of the state. It regulated the migration of labor and limited its mobility. While there was a widespread awareness that the existing Poor Law had to be replaced, there was little agreement on what to put in its stead. The problem of the poor remained a heavy burden for local administrators, and a subject for polemics among social reformers. But out of this ferment of thought came a new and radical approach to the treatment of the poor which was to give a uniform direction to British social and health policy throughout most of the nineteenth century.

The revolutionary changes in governmental structure and policy brought about by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 were rooted in specific practical and theoretical considerations. The foremost social problem facing England during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was the organization and financing of poor relief. Assistance to the destitute was administered by 15,000 separate parishes, varying widely in size, population, and financial resources. Furthermore, to all intents and purposes, each parish was autonomous. Within this patchwork system of local authorities, annual expenditures for relief of the poor mounted steadily. From £2,000,000 in 1784 the cost climbed steadily to £8,000,000 in 1818, and still amounted to £7,000,000 in 1832 even though the price of bread had decreased by one-third since 1818. Furthermore, the leaders of the new industrialism, which was gaining momentum at the end of the eighteenth century, felt themselves hampered by the irrational restrictions of a system handed down from a pre-industrial period. Mobility of the laboring population was an essential requirement for the burgeoning industrial civilization. The labor force had to be available in adequate quantity in the places where it was most needed, and consequently the industrialists demanded a labor market open to the free play of supply and demand. This condition already existed to a considerable extent in the north of England. In the agricultural south, however, while the enclosure movement was driving the peasantry off the land, various obstacles still prevented the achievement of the desired goal. The rationalization of agriculture uprooted the

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