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The Specifics of Home Practice of Social Work in the Works of Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska

Abstract

Cross-border cooperation has been considered an essential element in the development of professional social work and its education since its beginnings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many social work pioneers promoted the principles of peace, war relief, human rights and international cooperation in dealing with social problems. In Central Europe, there was on the one hand an acceptance of diversity and different national traditions, and on the other hand a series of integration activities aimed at developing transnational common standards. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Alice Masaryková from Czechoslovakia and Helena Radlińska from Poland had been central figures in the professionalization of social work and social pedagogy in Central Europe. While Alice based social work mainly on sociology, Helena based it on social pedagogy.

The aim of this article is to identify and search for the specifics and diversity of historical development and subsequent international dissemination of ideas and practices of professional social work and social pedagogy through the figures of Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska.

Keywords: Alice Masaryková, Helena Radlińska, history, social work, social pedagogy.

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Specyfika lokalnej praktyki pracy społecznej w twórczości Alice Masarykovej i Heleny Radlińskiej

Abstrakt

Współpraca międzynarodowa była uważana za istotny element w rozwoju profesjonalnej pracy społecznej i edukacji od jej początku na przełomie późnego wieku dziewiętnastego i wczesnego dwudziestego. Wielu pionierów pracy społecznej promowało ideały związane z pokojem, pomocą wojenną, prawami człowieka oraz międzynarodową współpracą w mierzeniu się z problemami społecznymi. W Europie Środkowej z jednej strony akceptowano różnorodność i odmienne tradycje narodowe, a z drugiej strony podejmowano szereg integrujących aktywności w celu wytworzenia ponadnarodowych standardów w tej dziedzinie. Od początku dwudziestego wieku zarówno Alice Masaryková z Czechosłowacji, jak i Helena Radlińska z Polski, postrzegane były jako centralne figury w procesie profesjonalizacji pracy społecznej i pedagogii społecznej w Europie Środkowej. Podczas gdy Alice opierała swoją pracę społeczną przede wszystkim na socjologii, Helena opierała ją na pedagogice społecznej. Celem artykułu jest rozpoznanie i odnalezienie specyfiki i różnorodności w historycznym rozwoju, jak i międzynarodowym rozpowszechnieniu, idei i praktyk związanych z profesjonalną pracą społeczną i pedagogiką społeczną w twórczości i aktywności Alice Masarykovej i Heleny Radlińskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Alice Masaryková, Helena Radlińska, historia, praca społeczna, pedagogika społeczna.

Introduction

The history of the profession of social work was significantly influenced by women involved in international social movements. They managed to build an extensive network of international friendship and professional cooperation. A consequence of these initiatives was the support of national efforts to establish professional forms of engagement in the social field (Kniphoff-Knebel 2008).

This development was briefly interrupted by the First World War, but with the resumption of international cooperation after 1918, there was again an internal link to women's movements in the field of social welfare and social policy. At that time, internationalization was a central dimension of professional social work and women pioneers had a significant influence on the development of international social organizations (Hering 2004; Hering, Waaldijk 2003; Kendall 2005). These international contacts also raised awareness of the existence of professional social work courses around the world and in Central European countries, provided inspiration and examples of good practice, and were a means of exchanging professional experience. This article focuses on certain pioneers of social work and social pedagogy from Central European countries and the role they played in the early stages of the internationalization of these professions.

The beginnings of social work are related to the beginnings of organized charity. The first charitable or philanthropic organizations began to appear in Central Europe in the mid-19th century. At that time, charity was part of the activities of the Church and focused on helping the poor, the sick, or the orphaned. At the turn of the 20th century, various charitable and philanthropic associations were set up, especially associations of women, students or religious communities, and the Red Cross expanded internationally (Feustel 2006).

In this context it is appropriate to introduce the readers to the early history of social work in Czechoslovakia and social pedagogy in Poland. Alice Masaryková played a historical role in this process in Czechoslovakia. In social work she drew on the sociological foundations modelled on American social work. After the end of the First World War in the then independent Czechoslovakia, the Women's College of Social Welfare in Prague was founded at her initiative in 1918. Alice was appointed supervisor of the school by the Ministry of Social Welfare (Zpravy 1921). Later, as president of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, she and the first graduates of the school set progressive, international standards and principles of professionalism for social work. The professionalization of social work included regular international social work conferences which Alice helped to prepare and implement. In 1950, Alice left the Czechoslovak Republic due to the communist regime. For the same reason, social work education was subsequently suppressed.

Another example of the professionalization of social work based on social pedagogy is the pioneering work of Helena Radlińska in Poland. As early as 1925 she started teaching social pedagogy courses at the Polish Free University in Warsaw and participated in organizing the first international conferences. This reinforced the role Poland played in the European development of this field of social work. Helena Radlińska also knew well and adopted the concept of social pedagogy of one of the German promoters of this discipline, Paul Natorp. In 1945, Helena founded the first Polish school of social pedagogy at the University of Lodz (Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003: 73).

This article works with the perspective of historical research (Špiláčková 2014), which we consider to be particularly important in social work, given its contextual conditionality. The origin and development of social innovations are intricately related to societal values and trends. The importance of human rights and social justice, discussions about the aegis of social work education, and the stability between public and private services provided are among the themes that persisted as the field professionalized, according to contributions from early global figures within social work. The above-mentioned pioneers have contributed to the international transmission of ideas and methods related to these and other issues as social work emerged from 19th century charitable and voluntary activities (Hegar 2008). The evolution of social work is still relevant in the 21st century, as theory and practice continue to spread internationally through the process of diffusion or cultural sharing, which is discussed in the following section.

In 1969, within the framework of the United Nations European Social Development Program, it was possible to learn about social work education in Poland and Czechoslovakia. This was quite unusual at that time, as both countries were behind the Iron Curtain. These two “communist” countries have had a long tradition of social work, including education and international activities, closely linked to the names of Helena Radlińska and Alice Masaryková, and their contribution to the creation and development of professional training at the national and international levels, especially in the inter-war period in the 20th century.

When we were conceptualizing the topic of the article, we reflected on what its main goal will be and what it will focus on. We realize that in a situation where the aim of the article would be focused on a comparison of the dissemination of ideas and practice of professional social work and the development of theoretical concepts, then the founder of the Czech school of social work, Marie Krakešová (Krakešová 1973a, 1973b; Klimentová 2009; Krakešová, Kodymová, Brnula, 2019), is the adequate choice for comparison with the creator of the Polish school of social pedagogy, Helena Orsza Radlińska (Brenk 2017).

However, we decided not to compare the development of theoretical concepts, but to identify and search for the specifics of historical development, and focus on the beginnings of education in social work. And in this case, we decided to illustrate the issue through an examination of the figures of Helena Orsza Radlińska and Alice Masaryková.

The article will continue by defining the main terms used in social work vs. social pedagogy, and then by looking into their historical development in Czechoslovakia and Poland, taking into account Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska.

Social work and social pedagogy – defining the terms

The text is dedicated to two European figures who established social work in the early days of its professionalization on similar, but not identical, concepts. The concepts of social work and social pedagogy have a special position in the system of scientific disciplines in the Czech Republic. Although social pedagogy as a way of theoretical thinking has a longer tradition, according to Kraus and Hofferková (2016), it was only after 1990 that social pedagogy, like social work, gained a more prominent position. In Poland, according to Marynowicz-Hetka (2020: 102), since the early 1990s, the perspectives of both disciplines have been combined and common elements have been sought, which has led to the acceptance of social work in research interests.

As already mentioned, the roots of social work can be found in the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic in connection with Alice Masaryková. Its development took place in sociological workplaces within the Anglo-American concept, which was distant from social pedagogy. In Poland, on the other hand, the field of social work began to develop from the discipline of social pedagogy, which had a longer tradition. Social pedagogy was seen as a methodological and theoretical foundation, and there-

fore the founder of pedagogy, Radlińska, viewed social work as a branch of social pedagogy (Pilch, Lepalczyk 1995). Social work is understood as a practical activity to help individuals and families who have fallen into a difficult life situation, with the aim of their full participation in society. Recently, it has been developing as a separate discipline regardless of social pedagogy (Bągiel 2001).

Originally, there was no distinction between social work and social pedagogy, and the difference became apparent only in the first half of the twentieth century, when both disciplines found it necessary to establish themselves as separate fields of science. But if we look to the United States, the cradle of modern social work, we find a very different interpretation. The activities of Jane Addams (1860–1935) at Hull House in Chicago clearly did not separate social work from social pedagogy. Nor can they be separated in the thinking of John Dewey, who was behind the theoretical and practical activities of Addams, whose activities and ideas about an ever-changing society in turn inspired Dewey himself to create his most revolutionary philosophical, pedagogical, and social ideas.

It should not be forgotten that it was there that the great wave of “social work” in the first Czechoslovak Republic, imported directly from Hull House by Alice Masaryková and her colleagues, found its motivation. However, this direct line was never duly appreciated. The probable reason is that the first half of the twentieth century, when this inspiration reached Czechoslovakia and when both disciplines began to establish themselves as disciplines, was a time when most Europeans (Masaryková being a notable exception) looked down on American intellectuals from the position of an older and wiser “brother.” It is clear now that social pedagogy and social work overlap and support each other significantly. Kraus and Hoferkova (2016) characterize the current relationship between social pedagogy and social work as a gradual awakening from the dream of separate disciplines.

It is crucial in analyzing Radlińska’s ideas to recognize the correlation between social pedagogy and social work. Radlińska never used the phrase “social work.” She referred to this action as “common work.” This concept highlights the instructive and formative components of community action. It is additionally a state that recognizes the activity’s point (for the community) as well as the methods necessary to carry out the development. Social work (common work) was broadly understood by Radlińska as “a conscious activity to reconstruct collective life based on the acquisition, multiplication and improvement of human forces and their organization so that they work for the good of the people” (Radlińska 1961: 305). In this sense, social work is carried out by an individual, referred to as a “common worker” by Radlińska, who has been educated to do so (Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003). In this sense, social pedagogy outlines an individual’s fundamental concerns in connection to his or her environment while presuming a critical appraisal of reality. As a result, the goal of social work should be to avoid and defend against risks to the individual’s and society’s growth. Only in this way can the social worker fulfill one of the profession’s primary functions: supporting the development of the individuals, the social group, and the community (Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003: 75).

Radlińska's model of social work was developed at a time of deep social underdevelopment and oppression. Much of the simplicity and wisdom of her model can be applied to social work with the contemporary population today and can help expand the current conceptualizations of social work (Brainerd 2001). It can also support the profession in the transition from corrective and social control functions to a process of strengthening that promotes personal and social development.

The Roots of Czech Social Work and the Role of Alice Masaryková

Alice Garrigue Masaryková was the daughter of the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. She grew up in a progressive-minded Czech family. Her parents created the necessary conditions for her full intellectual growth. Her main and lifelong interest lay in the field of health and social issues (Lovčí 2008). After completing her university studies in Vienna, Alice went to Chicago. There she saw the famous "Hull House" and met Jane Addams. She received support from the United States, both personally when she was imprisoned in Vienna during World War I, and in her later efforts to introduce academic education for social workers in Czechoslovakia. She was inspired by feminist thought and the ideals of human rights (Kubíčková 2001).

In 1917, the Czech Provincial Commission for the Care of Youth organized 10-day training courses for social workers working with children and young people. This activity preceded the establishment of the Women's College of Social Welfare at the initiative of Alice Masaryková. The initiative was based on the need to systematize and professionalize the work carried out by public authorities and various charitable societies (Chytil 2006).

In 1919, Alice Masaryková invited the American Y.W.C.A. (Young Women Christian Associations) to Prague to organize a Czech-American course in social welfare. The aim of the course, according to Masaryková, was for the association to "awaken, educate and organize the social work of our women in the American way" (Tůma 1919: 41). The second task of the American women was to draw up a list of social institutions in the city of Prague. After the work was completed and at the request of the Czech women, the Y.W.C.A. established a branch in Prague. The Czechoslovak YWCA became a corresponding member of the world headquarters but was ideologically independent. The work in the individual cities of Czechoslovakia was adapted to the needs and demands of the time (YWCA, 1933).

In 1935, the Masaryk State School of Health and Social Welfare in Prague, which enjoyed a high prestige at its time, took over the role of social work education. Alice Masaryková focused her personal and professional life on the twin goals of raising the visibility and reputation of Czechoslovakia as a democratic nation and promoting social work education and social work on both the national and international levels (Hegar, 2013). Alice Masaryková maintained international relations through collaboration and exchange of professional experience with the American founders of social work, Jane Addams and Mary MacDowell.

Her contributions to the field of social reform and social services include the development of both sociology (Keith 1991) and social work (Kubíčková 2001), drawing on the work of Addams and other American reformers who mentored her (Deegan 2002, 2010; Romano 2002). Alice Masaryková was one of the first European women to have a university degree and a doctorate in philosophy, to fund a school of social work, and who was involved in many international organizations (Hegar 2008). Her role in establishing social work education in Czechoslovakia and also abroad is crucial to the development of the profession. Shortly after the establishment of Czechoslovakia and the opening of the school of social work in Prague in 1920, she was appointed by her father, T. G. Masaryk, to the position of director of the national branch of the international Red Cross organization (cf. Mitchell 1980), where she worked for more than 20 years.

For several years she was a member of the Board of Governors of the Red Cross League where her role was highly valued. In 1938, Alice Masaryková became an honorary member of the Society of the Czechoslovak Red Cross. She strove to bring the Society to a level where it could stand alongside others from all over the world. Her sociological training and study of social work in America provided a solid foundation for her work in the Red Cross. Thanks to her, the organization received donations from America, England, France and other countries. Her services in elevating the state of nursing and building nursing education in Czechoslovakia are also well known. She also cared for the professional training of doctors and social workers. She never stopped caring for the structure of social health care in Czechoslovakia. At her initiative, the Centre for Voluntary Social Health Care was founded and run according to her principles, bringing together all the main social health organizations. On her advice, the President donated many millions to establish and support several health institutions, such as the Lupus Institute in Prague and the Anti-Cancer Institutes in Prague and Brno. She paid special attention to the eastern part of the country, Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, where orphanages and shelters for school children were established. All of her peace work was done in preparation for war (Haering 1939).

Her numerous international contacts made it possible to receive help from abroad until the maintenance and health conditions in Czechoslovakia stabilized. Everything she proposed and did was based on her deep conviction and feeling. She was always open to and trusting of her co-workers. She looked for the spark of God in the soul of each person, not emphasizing their shadows, but trying to bring them to exercise their bright qualities (Haering 1939).

Masaryková's analysis of the infrastructure of social services in Prague is among the most important international social surveys. Social surveys conducted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Germany (Suin de Boutemard 1990), London (Booth 1902), and numerous American cities (Crawford 1921) examined the nature and causes of poverty and other social problems. Crawford (1921) notes that Masaryková, after her experience in Prague, also began to undertake similar studies in the USA.

Another important activity of Masaryková was the organization of international social work conferences, which were repeated in four-year cycles. The first International Social Service Conference was held in Paris on 1–13 July 1928 as part of the “Fortnight of International Social Welfare.” Masaryk chaired the organizing committee of the conference, which had met in Paris in 1926 and in Prague in 1927, before the actual conference. Speakers at the congress included Marie Krakešová with a paper on *The Development of Individual Social Welfare in the Countryside*, Helena Radlińska with a paper on *The Relationships between Schools for Social Service and Adult Education Schools*, and other leading figures in the world of social work at the time. More than 2,000 people, mostly women, participated in the conference (Kotek 1928). The conference is considered to be pivotal in the history of the internationalizing currents of social work. It dealt with the development of social work, the sociological foundations of social work, individual social welfare, international care of emigrants, social work in schools and hospitals, and also became the impetus for the creation of an international network of schools aimed at educating workers. The emphasis was put on international relations, since Alice Salomon believed that social work could not, by its very nature, be confined to national borders. As president-elect, Alice Masaryková gave the opening and closing remarks at the conference (Kotek 1928). She subsequently chaired the Second International Social Work Conference in Frankfurt am Main, Germany in 1932. Unlike the first conference, which was devoted to individual social work, the focus of the second conference was on the family as the most important component of human society and on methods of social work with the family. Special attention was also paid to the family affected by emigration and the family suffering from the unemployment of its breadwinner (Krakeš 1932). In addition to her international social work roles, Alice Masaryková travelled frequently as a goodwill ambassador, addressing and writing for international audiences, including the 1938 Peace Assembly in London (Mitchell 1980: 149). After 1989, social work and social work education in Czechoslovakia restored broken relationships and the profession then underwent rapid changes, broadening opportunities which were already known by social workers in most post-industrial Western countries.

The roots of Polish social pedagogy and the role of Helena Radlińska

If we were to talk about the most important figure in the field of social pedagogy in Poland, first of all we would certainly mention Helena Radlińska, who was described by Baková (2015) as a person with multidimensional passions. Helena Radlińska was born in Warsaw into an intellectual family which belonged to the city’s elite. Her father – Alexander Rajchman was the co-founder and first director of the Philharmonic Orchestra, her mother – Melanie Hirszfeld was a journalist and writer. In 1925, Helena Radlińska took a higher doctorate in the history of social work and in 1937 she was nominated for professorship in social pedagogy (Brainerd 2001; Baková 2015).

Radlińska wrote and edited 79 books and more than 500 articles (Mencwel 2009). Radlińska was respected by her students and affectionately called “grandma” (Baková 2015). When analyzing Radlińska’s research work, the range of issues studied, her innovations and her connections to practice and European thought are impressive. Here, we will only point to the main areas of her work: research, education, and organizing. Radlińska’s life and her conception of social pedagogy (the so-called ‘common pedagogy’) were recognized over time as ‘experiential pedagogy’ (Hessen 1936).

She began teaching and community activity at a young age (1897–1905), first as a private tutor, then as a Polish and history instructor in schools and underground study groups. She worked as a nurse in a variety of settings and organizations. Her activity in the community and in school was directly linked to the political and national independence movements of the period. She was a member or co-founder of various organizations in her early professional life (the Cracow period). Radlińska’s life and activities were intertwined with significant events in Polish and European history. They had a strong impact on her efforts, starting with the fight for an independent Polish state, achieving political independence, as well as ambitions connected with the ability to create and transform society “to represent the ideal” (Bulletin 2001: 192; Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003).

As in the case of Alice Masaryková, an important area of Radlińska’s work was her involvement in the international academic movement. She actively participated in a number of academic conferences, e.g. the third International Congress of Moral Education in Geneva in 1922, the third International Congress of New Education in Montreux in 1924, the first International Conference of Social Workers in Paris in 1928, and the third Congress of the World Federation of Educators in Geneva in 1929. At the same time, Radlińska was one of the five founding members of the International Committee of Schools of Social Work (nowadays the International Association of Schools of Social Work) which was established in Berlin in 1929 (Bakova 2015). Her participation in these international social and educational movements was very significant as reflected in many initiatives and activities carried out in Poland and Europe.

The initiatives and experience providing social work with its first forms of educational institutionalization and professionalization in Poland are therefore inextricably linked to the person of Helena Radlińska.

Another of her most important academic achievements is undoubtedly the development and organization of the first Polish social work program at an institute of higher education - the Program of Social and Pedagogical Studies (Studium Pracy Społeczno-Oświatowej) of the Polish Free University in 1925 (Bulletin 2001: 191; Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003). This marked the beginning of treating social workers as professionals in Poland. The theoretical focus of the school was based on social pedagogy, a discipline that deals with education and the relationship between human development and the social environment (Theiss 1996: 1). Social pedagogy is still a well-established field of science in European universities and corresponds to

social work, which is considered an applied science (Lorenz 1994: 87). This school, directed by Radlińska until 1944, significantly influenced the understanding of the role of social work in society and the overall development of social education in Poland (Brainerd 2001).

In March 1945, at the request of the coordinator of the University of Lodz, Professor Dr. T. Vieweger, she came to Lodz. She participated in the organization of the university, especially in its establishment, including the creation of the Department of Cultural Work, which was to become the core of the Social Faculty. Between 1945 and 1950, she organized the first Polish Faculty of Social Pedagogy (Radlińska 2018). After the closure of the faculty, Radlińska's academic career ended in 1950 when she was sent on compulsory paid leave.

What she did was engage in experiential activity, reflecting the reality in which one acted and with care taken to consider its meanings and future implications. From this perspective, Radlińska's approach reflects the contemporary concept of "reflective social work," which is focused on being aware of and responding to the social and environmental factors that impact individuals and communities. The reciprocal examination of 'ideal' and reality is a distinguishing element of this approach. This is what constitutes social practice and is a crucial component of the reflective process. Radlińska's postulates for social education may be defined as an example of an effective connecting of reality with envisioned possibilities, and activity with what is intended and desired. The core ideas of social pedagogy emerge from reflection on reality and actions. It may be represented as a series of presumptions and supporting evidence. Therefore, Helena Radlińska's social pedagogy and its core shall also be defined as a unique philosophy of action, offering context and meaning to this action (Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003: 74–75).

She was very active in her community, and had a particular interest in the development of rural areas. Radlińska organized community education programs for adults in small towns and rural areas throughout Poland. In the concept of social work formulated by Radlińska, social action is aimed at building a community. Its structure is multidimensional. In other words, the meaning of this "community" work (rather than social work) is to carry out systematic activities that enable action not only "for the community," but also "by the community" (Lepalczyk, Marynowicz-Hetka 2003: 71–72).

Even today, Radlińska's work can be a valuable contribution to the literature about status strengthening, and can provide a model for practice that can be particularly effective in promoting the social development of oppressed populations throughout the world.

Common visions/intersections of Masaryková and Radlińska

Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska share several characteristics. The most prominent is their substantial role in the process of establishing social work and social pedagogy as distinct national professions with scientific roots, making them both significant figures in the history of these fields. They were peers in age, shared a common social background and influential family origins, both achieved higher education and subsequently founded the first educational courses in their countries. Both women were central figures in many social activities, organizations and institutions. Each focused her energies on specific aspects of social work: Masaryková on the transfer of international experience, international aid and social work education, Radlińska on the concept of social pedagogy, social work education and community activism.

Both Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska played a significant role in the field of internationalization initiatives in social work education and the exchange of international experience.

The internationalization of social work education pursued many directions from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s. It included, for example, the initiation of exchanges/sharing and cooperation between educational institutions, the initiation of international comparative studies on training systems in participating countries, the collection and centralization of information on the conditions and developments related to different training systems, or the initiation of international research.

Salomon (1937) mentions the importance of diversity – being and remaining different. Social work is profoundly shaped by national conditions, and social work education is also dynamic and should be inspired by the basic principles of the society it aims to help. Diversity is seen as crucial in this regard, for if the systems designed in different countries were reduced to one, it would hinder the development and progress of social work education (Salomon 1937: 112–113).

One of the initial objectives of international cooperation in the field of social work education was therefore to compare education systems in different countries with regard to differences and common features. Prior to the Paris Conference (1928), and in connection with the work of the ICSSW since 1929, several questionnaires were sent out and international comparative studies were carried out. The results identified a wide range of education and training models in the different participating countries (Kniephoff-Knebel, Seibel 2008). The work of both pioneering women is also illustrative: while Alice Masaryková aimed her activities at the field of social work, Helena Radlińska fully devoted herself to special education, the link between the two fields being the theoretical framework of social work.

Radlińska's comprehensive understanding of social work and her influence on the development of social pedagogy were evident in her involvement in international movements aimed at promoting the development of social work education. The concept of social work education at the time prepared students to work for and with the community, and to use the community's strengths. It reflected similar approaches in

the world and in Europe which she learned of during her participation in the international movement of social work education.

Radlińska and her school became known internationally. Radlińska was a member of the committee that organized the first international conference of social workers in Paris in 1928 (Radlińska 1927). As stated by Brainerd (2001), through these international associations, Radlińska developed relationships with many of the leading figures in social work in Europe (e.g. Alice Salomon, the founder of social work in Germany, who already had a close relationship with Alice Masaryková at that time; or, for example, Mary Hurlburt, a social worker from the USA) (Theiss 1996: 58; Stelmaszuk 1994: 236). Although she had not been to the USA, unlike Masaryková, she was very well informed about social work approaches in that country and was interested in the reform work of Jane Addams, with whom Alice Masaryková had also worked (Constable, Frysztacki 1994: 28).

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to search and identify both the specific nature as well as the diversity of historical development of ideas and practices connected with professional social work and social pedagogy in the Czech Republic and Poland. The subject of our interest were two outstanding personalities active in the first period of the professionalization of Central European social work, namely Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska. Both Masaryková and Radlińska were active in their respective countries and in some of the most important international, cultural and social organizations of their time. The visions of social work they proposed and their reflections on it (and social pedagogy) are still relevant today.

The data was secured through historical research that emphasizes the study of primary sources. We will use the optics of historical research and the importance of history for social work for the final summary. The acquired historical knowledge fulfills important theoretical, educational and pragmatic functions in social work (Kováčiková 2002).

The theoretical function refers to the formation of the historical awareness of social work. The knowledge gained can serve as a starting point for further scientific work. The result of the historical work is analogously a piece of the puzzle, with which we can try to create an image of the researched discipline. By analyzing the available sources, we presented the pioneering steps undertaken by Masaryková and Radlińska. We identified their common points of intersection and at the same time the partial differences in their experiences. Radlińska was proficient in publishing activities and wrote a large number of professional texts. In them, she actively developed the concept of social pedagogy, both in theoretical statements and in empirical studies. In contrast, Masaryková appears primarily as an initiator and organizer of realized activities and events associated with her name, especially in cooperation with foreign educators and organizations. Alice had no ambition to create or develop her own theoretical concept that would be applicable to social work.

Another essential function of history in social work is the educational function. This allows to follow the developmental trends of social care, to understand the genesis, and to evaluate events in specific time stages. It is evident that both figures concentrated from the early beginnings on three important elements in the development of social work and social pedagogy. They focused on the implementation of education in both disciplines as quickly as possible, both in the primary form of educational courses for social workers, and subsequently in the form of independent studies at higher education institutions. They also focused on the international presentation of their national fields at prestigious foreign conferences, on examples of good practice in the form of their professional contributions, and on involvement in the international network of schools of social work. Finally, they emphasized the implementation of the necessary empirical studies, which would scientifically capture the realized national practice in their respective countries. These activities always went hand in hand, one building on the other. It is impossible to think about them in isolation.

The third function is the pragmatic function. It emphasizes that social work enriched by knowledge of its historical roots strengthens its scientific position, and social workers who are aware of their history tend to identify more with their profession. Social work and social pedagogy are distinct professions and scientific disciplines. Students are required to know the historical roots of their disciplines, and the professional life and work of Masaryková and Radlińska are certainly a part of it. Each in their own unique way helped to shape and make visible the process of assisting professions with scientific foundations. Their legacy continues to the present day.

The work co-developed by Alice Masaryková continues, especially in the activities of the Czech and Slovak Red Cross. In 1991, the Czech Red Cross even established a home nursing service for families, symbolically named ALICE, and organized several "Alice Masaryková Memorials." Radovan Lovčí (2008: 437) believes that there will be enough outstanding figures in the Czech Red Cross and elsewhere who will follow the footsteps of Alice Masaryková, whose rich and altruistic life legacy remains an enduring appeal for current and future generations.

The common themes in the lives of Alice Masaryková and Helena Radlińska go beyond their family backgrounds, education, progressive religious traditions, career choices and political struggles. Through advocacy, organizational leadership and international travel, and direct cultural professional exchanges with other countries, these women contributed to the international dissemination of social work and special education knowledge at a time when the profession was based on earlier models of charity, volunteerism, and reform.

Masaryková's and Radlińska's views and work in education and research remain relevant to modern social work. Their emphasis on maintaining an interdisciplinary perspective on social work and social pedagogy is considered pivotal. In conclusion, we can state that the goal of the text and the described functions of history in social work have been fulfilled.

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