

'For you always have the poor with you' – From Charity to the Social Politics in Cities Within the 18th–20th Century

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Datum, Ort: 08.10.2013–09.10.2013, Prague

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On October 8th and 9th 2013 the Prague City Archives held its annual conference in Clam-Gallas Palace. This year's topic was the poor and social policy in European towns in the modern period. The participants discussed different forms of poverty and poor relief (including Christian charity, enlightened attempts to discipline the poor, and the foundation of modern social institutions supported by state) in the life of the urban population in the period from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The opening lecture delivered by OLGA FEJTOVÁ and MILAN HLAVAČKA (both Prague) outlined the development of approaches to poverty and the extent to which the mainstream society participated in different forms of relief. Thus, they offered an important theoretical background for the whole conference.

The first session focused on problems of poverty and social care. The key theme of all contributions was the constant presence of poverty in all types of societies in every historic period. JIRÍ PEŠEK (Prague) highlighted that so far the subjective perception of poverty in different cultures and different social classes has not been sufficiently researched. A partial answer to this problem was offered by MILAN VOJÁČEK (Prague) who sketched the conditions of poor people in Prague in the 1880s as described in the diaries of Marie Riegrová-Palacká, the wife of the leader of the Old Czech Party. Subsequent papers reflected on poverty from the point of view of statistics and the law, Czech economic science, sociology and the theory of socialism.

The parallel section discussed the measures of the poor relief in the eighteenth century. TOMÁŠ JELÍNEK (Prague) described

the fruitless attempts of the Prague town council to monitor the prices of food and regulate street beggary. MARTIN ŠTINDL (Žďár nad Sázavou) concentrated on vagabonds, their profile and the legal steps taken to fight vagrancy. JAROSLAV DIBELKA and JOSEF KADEŘÁBEK (both České Budějovice) used the example of poor hospitals in Třeboň and Slaný to note that these institutions were not only the instruments of the poor relief but also of the re-Catholicization policy. INGRID KUŠNIRÁKOVÁ (Bratislava) showed that the situation was similar in Bratislava, where the social and poor care was strictly separated on the confessional basis.

The afternoon session explored the transformation of social policy and its modernization in European cities in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. OLGA FEJTOVÁ (Prague) used the example of Prague to assess the gradual transition from the private activities of Christian charity to the institutional care financed from the council budget. Similar developments took place also in other cities, although it was always influenced by the local specifics. According to ANDREAS WEIGL (Vienna) the representatives of „Red Vienna“ concentrated on the development of social housing and ZDENKA STOKLÁSKOVÁ (Brno) explained that the town council in Brno restricted the immigration of labourers and workers from different regions.

GABRIELA DUDEKOVÁ (Bratislava), WERNER DROBESCH (Klagenfurt) and PETER HEUMOS (Moosburg) discussed the different approaches to social care in the regional towns where industrialization was belated in its introduction. In Bratislava in the late nineteenth century social care was still organized chiefly by the religious (Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish) communities. While the town council in Klagenfurt faced problems connected with increasing industrialization by supporting programmes of social housing, setting up kitchens for the poor and intensification of health care, the council in Bavarian Landshut abandoned organized care and relied on church and private charity. FABIAN BRÄNDLE (Zurich) and FLORIAN GRAFL (Gießen) addressed the problem of poverty from the reverse perspective of the individual and collective strategies of the

recipients of the poor relief. Consequently, different disciplinary elements of poor policy (discrimination, separation and criminalization of poverty by the means of work houses) were discussed.

The opening session of the second day focused on the work of traditional and modern social institutions in Prague. All four speakers documented the constant tension between the aim of the town council to improve the living standards of the poor people and the insufficient material means to do so. VERONIKA JANOVSÁ (Prague) described the work of the almshouse of St Bartholomew; MARTINA HALÍŘOVÁ (Pardubice) analysed the functioning of the lying-in hospital and orphanage in Karlov; MILAN PÁTRA (Brandýs nad Labem-Stará Boleslav) introduced the personality of Josef Vlk, the long-term director of the poor relief department of Prague town hall; and HANA MÁŠOVÁ (Prague) concentrated on the health care in Masaryk's housing estate, which was founded as a part of the social care project of the Prague council.

The following session discussed the participation of the urban society in the poor relief. JIŘÍ POKORNÝ (Prague) assessed attitudes to poverty and improvement of the living standard of the workers held by the representatives of Prague labour unions. JAN MAREŠ (Prague) analysed the increasing importance of the gender perspective in the perception of poverty among the Prague workers in the late nineteenth century. OTAKARA ŘEBOUNOVÁ (Prague) noted the diminishing role of the church in providing the poor relief that transformed from the practical help to dealing with administrative tasks. ARNE THOMSEN (Bochum) outlined the specific position of the Catholic hospitals in the industrial Ruhr district.

The afternoon meeting was opened by KAREL ŘEHÁČEK (Plzeň) who analysed the financial provision for the care of the poor in Plzeň using the case study of the town hospital. The next two speakers discussed the housing arrangements for the poor in big cities. ULRIKE HARMAT (Vienna) concentrated on the housing policy in Vienna and Budapest and pointed out the increasing mobilization of the workers who had to face financial difficulties resulting from the growing

rents. JANA VITKORÍNOVÁ (Prague) talked about the emergency settlements in the outskirts of Prague that were founded as a reaction to the lack of reasonably priced housing possibilities in the interwar period. Both speakers concluded that the deepening want of affordable accommodation added the spatial aspect to the existing social and cultural segregation of the working class.

The final session introduced different forms of social institutions run by Jewish communities. MARTINA NIEDHAMMER (Munich) documented the organization of social care in the Prague Jewish community that drew on both cooperation with Prague town hall and on the financial contributions from members of the Jewish community. KLAUS WEBER (Frankfurt/Oder) examined the poor care in Vienna and Frankfurt am Main and concluded that the conflicting nature of the relationship between the local Jewish and Christian communities resulted in formation of separate social care institutions. As outlined by HANNA KOZIŇSKA-WITT (Leipzig), the situation in Cracow differed: here the local town council supported Jewish social and cultural institutions. However, the arrangement changed in the context of the increasing anti-Semitism and the deepening separation of the Jewish minority.

The concluding lecture was delivered by MILAN HLAVÁČKA (Prague), who stated that the strategies the individual European towns opted for in dealing with social problems differed according to the local specifics. Despite the fact, it is possible to identify some common trends, such as the diminishing role of church and private activities in the poor relief and the gradual segregation of the Jewish communities. Austrian particularities included the fragmentation of the legal provision of the poor relief and the existence of poor institutions that guarded the combined state, council and church interests.

Overall, the conference papers showed that the tension between the endeavour of the town councils to deal actively with the social problems and the lack of financial resources (combined with the increasing number of unemployed and poor people) shaped poor relief policy in most European towns. Thus, the enforcement of particular measures in the sec-

ond half of the nineteenth century (social legislative, professionalization of social and poor care) was to an important extent only a reaction to the worsening conditions caused by progressive industrialization.

The conference proceedings will be published in the volume *Documenta Pragensia* 34.

Conference Overview:

Presentation: Václav Ledvinka

Opening: Václav Ledvinka, Eva Semotanová (Prague)

Olga Fejtová / Milan Hlavačka (Prague): Einführungsreferat

Richard Albrecht (Bad Münstereifel): Über Armut und über Armut hinaus. Pauperismus, Deprivation, Exklusion und Prekarität

Antonie Doležalová (Prague): Armenwesen und Wohltätigkeit. Die zeitgenössische Auslegung des Armenwesens und seine Reflexion im öffentlichen Diskurs an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert

Sektion A

Presentation: Jiří Pešek

Zdeněk R. Nešpor (Prague): Die ersten soziologischen Forschungen der Prager Armut

Jakub Rákosník (Prague): Systemparameter der Armenfürsorge an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert

Milan Vojáček (Prague): Notizen der Armenmutter und die Polizeievidenz

Sektion B

Presentation: Olga Fejtová

Tomáš Jelínek (Prague): Instrumente der Sozialpolitik in den böhmischen Ländern bis zum Jahr 1789

Jaroslav Dibelka / Josef Kadeřábek (České Budějovice): Die Armenfürsorge in Třeboň (Wittingau) und Slaný (Schlan) in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (Diskussionsbeitrag)

Martin Štindl (Žďár nad Sázavou): Das westmährische Profil des Bedürftigen in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (Diskussionsbeitrag)

Ingrid Kušniráková (Bratislava): Die Organisation der Sozialfürsorge in Bratislava (Preßburg) in der Frühen Neuzeit (Diskussionsbeitrag)

Presentation: Werner Drobesch

Olga Fejtová (Prague): Von der Barmherzigkeit und der Wohltätigkeit zum System der staatlichen und kommunalen Armenfürsorge in Prag im langen 19. Jahrhundert

Andreas Weigl (Vienna): Von der Armenfürsorge zur Daseinsvorsorge. Zur Genesis kommunaler Sozialpolitik in Wien vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart

Fabian Brändle (Zurich): Poor Relief in some Swiss Communes: The Institutions and the Experience of the Poor in their Egodocuments

Zdeňka Stoklásková (Brno): Die Evidenz der Arbeitenden in der Stadt als das Instrumentarium der Armenfürsorge

Presentation: Milan Hlavačka

Florian Grafl (Gießen): Nur ein Tropfen auf den heißen Stein? Armenfürsorge in Barcelona während der Zwischenkriegszeit

Gabriela Dudeková (Bratislava): Die Modernisierung der kommunalen Sozialfürsorge in Preßburg/Bratislava im 19. und an der Schwelle zum 20. Jahrhundert

Werner Drobesch (Klagenfurt): Die „soziale Frage“ im Gefolge der „Großen Depression“ (1873) in einer semiindustriellen Gesellschaft: das Beispiel der Provinzhauptstadt Klagenfurt

Peter Heumos (Moosburg): Armut, Armenfürsorge und Disziplinierung der Armen in Landshut in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts

Presentation: Václav Ledvinka

Milan Pátra (Brandýs nad Labem-Stará Boleslav): Josef Vlk, der Angestellte des Armenamtes der Hauptstadt Prag

Martina Halířová (Pardubice): Prager Findelhaus und seine Rolle in der Armenfürsorge

Veronika Janovská (Prague): Armenhaus zu St. Bartholomäus – Prager Sozialanstalt

(1864–1929) (Diskussionsbeitrag)

Hana Mášová (Prague): Kein Armenwesen, aber Sozialfürsorge – Masaryks Fürsorgeheim in Prag-Krč

Presentation: Jiří Pešek

Jiří Pokorný (Prague): Schwierige Lebenssituationen und Bestrebungen zu ihrer Bewältigung in den tschechischen Gewerkschaftszeitschriften an der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert

Jan Mareš (Prague): „Eine Frau kann viel mehr als ein Mann im Armenwesen leisten.“ Armut und Gender in der Konzeption der tschechischen Sozialisten

Otakara Řebounová (Prague): Die Geistlichkeit in der Armenpolitik der böhmischen Städte in den Jahren 1864–1918

Arne Thomsen (Bochum): Katholisches Krankenhauswesen in den Städten des Ruhrreviers bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg

Presentation: Peter Heumos

Karel Řeháček (Plzeň): Gesundheits- versus Sozialfürsorge in Plzeň (Pilsen) in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts

Ulrike Harmat (Vienna): Wohnungsnot, Wohnungselend und Obdachlosigkeit: Der Wohnreformdiskurs in der Habsburgermonarchie am Beispiel Wiens und Budapests zwischen 1848 und 1914

Jana Viktorínová (Prague): Inseln der Armut in der Prager Peripherie. Notizen zum Studium Prager Notsiedlungen

Presentation: Kateřina Čapková

Martina Niedhammer (Munich): „Wenn ein Armer in deiner Mitte ist, so verhärte nicht dein Herz und verschließe nicht deine Hand“ – das Armenwesen der Prager jüdischen Gemeinde in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts

Klaus Weber (Frankfurt/Oder): Jüdische Wohlfahrtspflege im „zweiten konfessionellen Zeitalter“: Beispiele Frankfurt und Wien, c. 1800–1930

Hanna Kozińska-Witt (Leipzig): Kommunale Subventionen für jüdische Stadteinwohner:

Krakau 1918–1939

Summary: Milan Hlavačka (Prague)

Tagungsbericht *‘For you always have the poor with you’ – From Charity to the Social Politics in Cities Within the 18th–20th Century*. 08.10.2013–09.10.2013, Prague, in: H-Soz-Kult 16.01.2014.