

# Searching Roots

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This article deals with the history of social planning in Ostrava. It describes the development of social planning and methods of social work in the region of Ostrava in the 1970ies and 1980ies. Sources of information were materials from the Town Record Office of Ostrava. The original terminology is kept with the intention of better identification of the source material; thus there are names like Gypsies for Romany people, or defective citizens or health faulty citizens for people with any kind of handicap used in the text. It is a work of historical character based on the survey of primary sources unlike other publications describing the same period.

## **Introduction**

Only few publications describing the historic development of both social care and used methods of social work are available for the survey of social planning in the 1970ies and 1980ies. Papers published up to the present are based on information only from secondary sources, which decreases their reliability in comparison with sources of primary character. In Ostrava methods and forms of social work unique within the whole country were introduced, which made social work in Ostrava of high standard. This fact is illustrated by this article.

## **1. Conception of social policy of NVO in the 1970ies and 1980ies**

The conception of social policy of NVO was created in the year 1973 and it dealt with the solution of social problems in Ostrava, including the suggestion of assignments for the arrangement of social care for the following years. With respect to the width of points at issue in the field of activity of the Department of social affairs of NVO and with respect to the shortness of development of some new forms of social care, concrete solutions as well as solutions of alternative character elaborated in five-year and one-year assignment plans of the Department of social affairs of NVO were suggested in the Conception (Conception, 1973).

Social care was an integral part of the community care for human beings in socialist state. The Conception (1973) defines socially needy people as “citizens who got into an unfavourable life situation and at the same time they cannot or are not able to solve it on their own.” (Conception, 1973, p.4).

Here at “social need of individuals or groups of citizens arises in socialist community in connection with the influence of some natural principles in life stages of a man (e.g. in the old age), as a consequence of illness (acquired or innate) and at the same time as a consequence of some social processes (e.g. changes in family or lifestyle).” (Conception, 1973, p.4).

As most important areas of interest were in the Conception (1973) emphasized:

- Care for elderly people
- Care for people with changed working ability
- Care for family, children and youth
- Care for socially unadjusted people
- Care for people of Gypsy origin

The entire existing care concentrated on two main social areas – care for children and families and care for people in retirement age. Later assignments of extension and the deepening of care for elderly and handicapped people were also added (Conception, 1973).

Care for elderly handicapped people began to develop as a special purposeful part of social policy after the year 1948. In 1953 the pursuance of the so-called “working rehabilitation of invalids” was started and a year later retirement houses were passed over to the control of

former State social welfare authorities. Simultaneously from the year 1954 on pensioner's clubs with organized common boarding were being established. From the year 1958 on "institutions for mentally and physically handicapped youth, for ineducable youth and institutions for physically, sensorially and mentally handicapped adults" were concentrated under the control of State social welfare authorities, too (Conception, 1973, p.5). Also the day care started to be organized outside the framework of voluntary organizations and was passed over to the control of National committees from the year 1958 on. Thus, costs for additional care covering day care were increasing. National committees started to search intensively for elderly people, who became recipients of state support in form both of financial support and material gifts (Conception, 1973).

From the year 1969 on preconditions for social care for so-called socially unadjusted citizens were created, namely for people released from execution of punishment and for alcohol addicts. In the year 1968 the control of the governmental committee for issues of Gypsy citizens was similarly passed over to the Department of Employment and Social Affairs, but work in this division in Ostrava started in 1972 (Conception, 1973).

The development of institutional social care in the territory of Ostrava began with the establishment of the Town Board of Social Care Institutions in the year 1965. At that time it included only two retirement houses – in Ostrava-Poruba and in Ostrava-Přívov – with the capacity of 505 places. By the decision of the National committee council of the town of Ostrava the name of Town Board in the year 1975 changed and the Town Institution of Social Services (MÚSS) originated. Its sphere was gradually extending to new established institutions of social care for youth and adults, boarding houses for retired people, retirement houses and other institutions of social care as marital and premarital advisory centre, homes for mothers with children, hostels of temporary stay for the homeless and a special institution for the performance of foster care. On January 1, 1975 the day care became incorporated into MÚSS as well. This improved the control, check and organisation of activities in the division of social services in the town (Working group of MÚSS, 1987).

Work of a social worker was at the beginning of the 1970ies defined as follows: "Like with other forms of social work, a social worker has to work systematically and scientifically, has to be grounded on gathered data and information and elaborate a diagnosis on their basis, i.e. ideally create an exact image of the problems and the situation of both the group and all its members, and only then work out the most suitable form of further procedure, namely from a long-term standpoint." (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 304, mark 561).

## **2. Social care for elderly people**

Care for elderly people traditionally belonged to important issues of social policy of National committees (Conception, 1973).

Social workers in person carried out field investigation and surveyed elderly people who were granted one-time support (AMO, ObNV O.-3, doc. b. No. 372). Thus they got information about the life conditions of these citizens and could decide on granting of repeated support. The information was subsequently used for the elaboration of a register of socially needy people. Local doctors who provided preventive records about elderly, lonely and sick citizens without demand for social services for the time being got involved into the continuous filling of the register, just for the necessity of timely and effective intervention in case of worsening of the situation (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 277, mark 104).

Data gathering, processing of field information and creating of an own register of socially needy people were the first steps necessary for successive planning of social services.

Social care for elderly people was divided into three groups:

1. Institutional care

2. Non-institutional care
3. Additional care

The character of the care for elderly people also required the engagement of all organs and institutions where elderly people before their retirement had been working. Some works prepared complex programmes of care for their former employees – pensioners.

### **2.1 Institutional care for elderly people**

Retirement houses have always been a traditional form of institutional care for elderly people. Till the year 1945 these institutions were established by municipalities, districts or various religious organizations. For these purposes mainly buildings of castles and monasteries were used, however also reconstructed buildings and new-buildings were gradually used. Into retirement houses old, handicapped people were preferentially accepted whose families could not provide them for serious reasons with appropriate care (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 277, mark 104). The main task in the care of elderly and long-term sick people was an increase of institutional capacities (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376).

### **2.2 Non-institutional care for elderly people**

In the division of non-institutional care, where the shortage of geriatric nurses was covered by the day care, was a similar situation (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376).

#### **Day care in households**

Day care is a special non-institutional social service with the aim to facilitate and enable the life of elderly people in their own household and accustomed milieu (Conception, 1973). Day care in households of elderly people was in fact conceived as individual social work. It was a highly appreciated, most convenient form from the standpoint of psychology of the old-age, social and psychic needs of elderly people (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376). High-quality care was primarily dependent on the sufficiency of workers. A working team consisted mainly of professional health visitors but also voluntary home help women from the Czechoslovakian Red Cross, the Czech Women Federation, the Federation of Czechoslovakian Invalids and the Socialist Youth Federation got involved (Conception, 1973).

#### **Focused day care**

Focused health care was an intermediary stage between care in private households and full institutional regime. The main reason for its establishment was the rise in effectiveness of granted social care and the effort to make day care accessible for as many elderly people as possible (Conception, 1973).

The principle was to concentrate elderly people into one building or particular premise. This form of social care should on one hand save time of the health visitors at their rounds along households often situated very distant from one another, and on the other hand to help the old people who resisted placement into retirement house (Conception, 1973).

#### **Pensioner's clubs**

Pensioner's clubs were conceived as a special type of social service emphasizing needs of self-realization, establishment and maintenance of social contacts and an active utilization of leisure time (Conception, 1973).

Social workers for care of elderly and long-term sick people helped them in their work by compiling activity plans, providing actions like meetings, lectures, celebrations of anniversaries, feasts, etc. (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775).

It was a custom that every club had its "patron" – an organization or works. Patronal organization then attended to providing of some actions, offered to selected pensioners holiday coupons, financially supported the functioning of the club or bought gift packages for people celebrating a personal jubilee (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775).

In the year 1978 keep-fit training was successively introduced in pensioner's clubs. First it was experimentally introduced just in one club. Elderly people were very distrustful of this innovation, they did not want to understand that exercise is applicable for people of their age as well. There were altogether 24 pensioner's clubs in the territory of the town at the beginning of the year 1979 (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775).

### **Other institutions**

Main types of institutions:

- Hygienic centres – they served for hygienic cleaning of elderly people. They came on their own or their transport was organized by health visitors. After the accomplishment of personal hygiene the centre offered the possibility of all-day stay, possibly with provided boarding (Conception, 1973).
- Institutions for day stay – these institutions represented a modern form of group care for elderly people at that time. In institutions for day stay, boarding in form of dinner and snack, taking care of personal hygiene including bathing and pedicure were provided for elderly people. Various activities and occupations, physical training and rehabilitation according to individual needs were organized there. Their inseparable part were also culture activities, like listening to music or film projections (Conception, 1973).
- Emergency flats – these were institutions serving as possible temporary solution of own housing situation in cases, when elderly people could not stay in their households frequently for reasons of deratization or painting (Conception, 1973).

### **2.3 Additional care**

To additional care for elderly people generally belonged according to the Directives of MPSV (Department of Employment and Social Affairs) day care, boarding of pensioners, material help, benefits, extra advantages for chronically ill people and cultural services for pensioners (Conception, 1973).

In the year 1967, reduced and free tickets for public transport for pensioners valid in the whole territory of Ostrava were introduced (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376).

### **2.4 Social work with elderly people**

Social work in the 1970ies was in the narrow sense defined by direct, intentional and prepared contact of social worker with a client for the purpose of the determination of social diagnosis and pursuance of social therapy. In a wider sense it also included measures like granting of services and welfare benefits, professional and effective usage of findings and assessments, cooperation with other specialists and naturally administrative and executive procedures created by social and health institutions (Novotná, Schimmerlingová, 1992).

Basic components of social work were:

- Social and psychological diagnosis
- Social therapy (Conception, 1973)

From the evaluation of all forms and types of social care for elderly people in Ostrava arose the idea of deficiency in social work. The reason was a small number of educated social workers. The Conception of NVO supposed only one qualified social worker for 2,300 inhabitants aged over 65 (Conception, 1973).

According to the width of the province of social work, three forms of social work methods, in practice constantly interconnected and correlative but in the activity of social worker appearing as an organic whole, were distinguished in the 1970ies. Schimmerlingová (1972) divides them as follows:

1. Individual social work methods, primarily applicable at searching for socially needy people in field, at dealing with claims in offices of Departments of Social Affairs and in day care in households, too.
2. Collective social work methods were used in pensioner's clubs, in houses of focused day care and in retirement houses. They were based on the theory of "activity" in the old age. It emphasized stimulation and maintenance of a particular degree of activity as the best social prevention of the ageing process (Schimmerlingová 1972, p. 80).
3. Society (community) social work was from the methodical standpoint perceived as work in the province of National committees with the aim to recognize the needs of elderly people, their interests, wishes and to report them to relevant social institution. The task of social worker was to find out, how the group of elderly people would accept planned measures of social policy (Schimmerlingová 1972).

Schimmerlingová (1972) mentions advisory services for elderly people as a special organizational form of social work in the sphere of care for elderly people. "Here, both individual and collective methods of work can be applied because advisory centre may deal with case of individual as well as of a group." (Schimmerlingová 1972, p. 102).

### **3. Social care for people with changed working ability**

The main task of care for people with changed working ability in the 1970ies was to provide the return of people with handicap back to the working process and into the work team (Conception, 1973).

Care for handicapped people had a special place in the complex of social care. In the town of Ostrava, this care had already been handled in a concrete programme since the year 1972, within the Conception of social policy of NVO. Intentions in care of handicapped people concentrated into three basic areas:

1. Care for people with changed working ability – with focus on problems of therapeutic and working rehabilitation, establishing of suitable job opportunities, improvement of linking-up of working rehabilitation to therapeutic rehabilitation, methodical activities in organizations and the sphere of professional advisory services.
2. Institutional care – its attention was aimed mainly at care for children and youth. Institutional capacities increased from 20 places in the year 1973 to 174 places in the year 1981. Many handicapped people were accommodated in retirement houses or in boarding houses for pensioners (note: The sphere of care for handicapped children and youth is developed in the chapter "social care for family, children and youth").
3. Granting of social services to handicapped people in the field – focused on a continual increase in the number of workers in day care and introduction of new practical forms of field services (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 288, mark 526, 14).

Close attention was paid to the selection of suitable workplaces in productive and non-productive organizations in the town and to various forms of required training of citizens with changed working ability for their redeployment to a suitable workplace. Partly, negotiations with large works in Ostrava were held and partly suitable workplaces were provided by establishing sheltered workshops. In addition to the selection of suitable workplaces at works and organizations, care for people with changed working ability and for severely handicapped people was arranged through producer cooperatives, the so-called cooperative society of the handicapped (Conception, 1973).

The National committee of the town of Ostrava prepared at regular intervals a so-called Plan of invalidization resuming the present situation in this division of granting social services to people with changed working ability and at the same time including exact numbers of persons

with changed working ability in the town and their possible employability (Conception, 1973).

#### **4. Social care for family, children and youth**

Changes in political, economic and social conditions that were emerging after the year 1945 also led to significant changes in the division of social care for children and youth. Till the year 1948 this care was performed by former federal organs of District care for youth that were dissolved by the Act No. 48 from the year 1949 and their assignments were assumed by National committees (Conception, 1973).

At the level of National committees a relatively dense network of specialized workplaces of Departments of care for children and youth developed gradually, securing the assignment performance in care for children and family. The power of decision belonged to Boards of care for children at National committees, public participation and help in this area was ensured by trust groups represented by citizens. Boards of care for children in the territory of Ostrava were founded as early as in 1964 at all District national committees and at the National committee of the town of Ostrava, too (Conception, 1973). The activities of these administrative boards primarily consisted in making decisions of reprimands and supervisions, interviews with children and parents and making decisions of granting subsistence allowance (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376). To the most effective measures belonged financial aid – payment of maternity allowance, child allowances, subsistence allowance for the underage and financial aid for families with children and pregnant women. Administrative boards played an important role in the sphere of prevention and education, with focus on improvement of educational conditions of children and youth. All these assignments were fulfilled in cooperation with trust groups and groups of volunteer workers of care for family and children (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1048).

Social workers managed to create a register of incomplete and dysfunctional families by the end of the year 1972. In this way a comprehensive overview of families in need of help by the society originated (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376).

For problem solving the so-called “signal activity” was also used. The aim of this cooperation in which trustees, citizen activists and members of community organizations participated was to search for socially needy citizens and families (AMO, ObNV O.-4, doc. b. No. 106). In the division of care for family individual work with individual families that for some reason needed help was primarily performed. Social workers successively visited families from the register and their file records were constantly being updated. An individual approach to separate family members was maintained in all these cases (AMO, ObNV O.-4, doc. b. No. 104).

The majority of tasks in the division of care for family and children consisted in direct educational and advisory activity in families in field, social and legal protection of children, protection of children’s interests, acting as committee for underage at court proceedings. Attention in the division of care for children was aimed mainly at dysfunctional families, lonely pregnant women and families with 5 and more children. Each social worker individually cared for at least five families who he or she was intensively working with (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1048).

Another type of social and educational work was group work. Departments of care for family and children organized courses for lonely mothers and girls from dysfunctional families. Some departments treated the theoretical and practical part of the courses as separate, some departments integrated in the courses educational lectures on marriage and responsibility of parenthood, nourishment, health care and other things (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1048). For example, the District national committee of Ostrava 4–Poruba in cooperation with District community centre organized social and educational courses for women and girls with difficult

social adaptability with an average attendance of ten women annually from November to January. The courses provided information on hygiene, child care, principles of healthy nourishment, housekeeping – economical minimum, family planning etc. (AMO, ObNV O.-4, doc. b. No. 106).

In January 1977 the Department of care for family and children of NVO took over records regarding juvenile delinquency from all District national committees and unified their keeping. A specialized group of social workers for juvenile delinquency – committees for underage dealing with social and postpenitentiary care of persons aged 15-18 was established (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1048).

The District system of work was introduced in all Departments of care for family and children in Ostrava in 1983. Social workers provided in their districts complex care concurrently for the so-called Gypsy population, too (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1048).

Social services in the sphere of care for children, youth and family were divided into advisory services for family and special services and special institutions of social care for family dealing with problems of incomplete families, abandoned children and families with handicapped children (Conception, 1973).

#### **4.1 Advisory services for families**

##### **Marital advisory**

The first component of this system that was in Ostrava represented still in its infancy marital advisory. Marital advisory started to be performed in the town of Ostrava since November 1971 by Permanent marital advisory centre. Its main tasks comprised two groups:

- a) work with clients who asked for help in solving their problems in marriage
- b) lecture activities with focus on marriage and parenthood (Conception, 1973)

There was a centre of advisory activities for dealing with disturbed marital and family relationships. Engaged couples who needed individual specialist consideration and professional help turned to the centre as well. Invitations for individual interviews were requisite in cases of existing serious reasons like: age difference between the partners, partner with child, invalidity of one partner of the engaged couple, second and further marriage. After the visit in the advisory centre, the engaged couple had to bring a certificate of participation in specialist consultation to the registry office. There were some cases (ca. 3-4) that one partner of the engaged couple broke the engagement after the visit in the advisory centre (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 881).

##### **Premarital advisory**

Premarital advisory was practised from its beginning in form of discussions with engaged couples organized by National committees through groups for public matters, and services of the Permanent marital advisory centre were used, too (Conception, 1973). For underage engaged couples the attendance at these discussions was obligatory from the year 1975 on (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775). Permanent marital advisory centres provided methodical aid for instructors of the discussions with engaged couple by arrangement of regular courses (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 881).

In February 1976 an experiment with an external psychologist visiting the office and dealing with troubles of the engaged couple in cases of prior divorce or divorces of one of the partners, single mothers, or at large age difference between the partners, was started within the activity of ObNV Poruba (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 881).

#### **4.2 Special services and special institutions of social care for families**

Into this category belonged services and institutions dealing with:

- a) problems of incomplete families

b) problems of abandoned children

c) problems of families with children with physical or mental handicap (Conception, 1973)

### **Care for social needy incomplete families**

A special form of help in the division of care for incomplete families was a unique institution of a Home for mother and child (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 384). It concentrated on help for single or lonely mothers not able to provide accommodation for them and their child by themselves (Conception, 1973).

The functionality of the Home for mother and child proved useful in helping single mothers to overcome the most difficult period of motherhood, manage new tasks of the mother role and to create conditions for the start into an independent life. It provided not only accommodation, but also secured conditions for the quality of mother's care for the child at their permanent immediate contact (Conception, 1973).

### **Care for abandoned children**

Help for children whose families were not able to ensure necessary care and life background was from the side of National committees put into effect by various means: partly by the placement of children to care of other people than parents, mostly close relatives, or by application of these types of alternative family care:

a) adoption

b) individual foster care

c) groups of children in alternative family (Conception, 1973)

Important forms of alternative family care were Homes of family type based on marital principle when a group of children was placed into an alternative family (Conception, 1973). Homes of family type were experimentally tested for the first time in the country in Ostrava with a great success. The advantage of these homes was that it was the best substitution of upbringing in the family. On average ten children lived in these homes and they did not need to "travel" from one institution to another but were growing up in a stable home up to the full age (Conception, 1973).

The Northern Moravian region was spearhead of this form of care for children already prior the force of legislation. Foster care was experimentally provided in homes of family education and just the experience with them was used in creation of some legal provisions of the above mentioned act (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 776).

### **Care for children with mental or physical handicap**

Handicapped people in the social sphere in earlier times were cared for in various ways, the care was mainly a matter of charity and support. Help for people with permanent handicap was a private concern of those who provided it, not the concern of state care.

Governmental resolution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic from the year 1963 on imposed to secure placement of all mentally and physically handicapped children and youth aged 3-25 according to the requirement of their state of health into institutions by the year 1970 (collective of the works council of the Socialist Youth Federation, 1979).

Care for handicapped children and youth was secured by the Departments of Health, Education and Social Affairs. From the Summary report of state and quality inspection of the care for defective youth from the end of the year 1972 followed that so-called defective children and youth should be granted specialist care and advisory service to compensate defects of the handicapped child, social situation of the family and the relationship of the family to the handicapped individual as well (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 197).

Regional advisory centres organizing Advisory days for individual handicaps took charge of this role. Advisory days were a special form within the advisory work for parents of severely handicapped children with the purpose of complex consideration of child's state of health,



prognosis and suggestion of the most suitable method of integrated care (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1020).

### **Day care for families**

Day care for families was a completely new form of special social care for families with underage children. According to the resolution of the Department of Employment and Social Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic it was experimentally introduced in Prague and Ostrava. It started to operate in Ostrava as early as in January 1973 and it was performed by voluntary health visitors. They provided care for children and household in cases when parents or the extended family were not able to carry out these duties. The service was paid for by its recipients and the charge amount was fixed by The Department of Social Affairs of NVO. Primary task of this new system was its experimental testing and thoroughly elaboration (Conception, 1973).

### **4.3 Social work in the sphere of social care for families**

The main component of social care for family in the town of Ostrava was social work performed by group of skilled social workers (Conception, 1973).

Work of social worker in social care for families consisted of these constituents:

1. searching for socially needy families and their following registration
2. finding information necessary for making analysis of the family and the social conditions of the particular family
3. gathering information about the family and their members from a social, health and economical perspective
4. elaboration of required social care measures, social prognosis and cooperation with the family and relevant authorities at the implementation of the determined proceedings
5. cooperation with the relevant health institutions, schools, courts, community organizations
6. involvement in internal assignments of individual social institutions of special care for families
7. involvement in education in the sphere of education dealing with issues of marriage and parenthood (Conception 1973)

In the year 1972 at every District national committee operated one social worker for families. A working group of four social workers for families was directed by the Department of Social Affairs of NVO through one social worker – methodologist (Conception, 1973).

### **5. Social care for socially unadjusted citizens**

The Department of Social Affairs of NVO created preconditions for care for so-called socially unadjusted people by organizational and institutional means. In the year 1970 the arrangement of network of social committees was started, in the year 1973 six social committees worked in the territory of the town (Conception, 1973).

The contact for establishing a partnership with the client was executed by invitation of the client to committee's office, visit of the committee in the corrective institution, visit of the family prior to client's release or the clients came upon their own incentives. Existing experience showed that one of the best and most effective forms of establishing a contact of the committee and the client was personal visit of the client in the corrective institution and then maintenance of correspondence (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 277, mark 104).

In an interview the social committee determined most serious problems to be faced by the people after their release. Most common were problems with job search, accommodation, debt liquidation and with solution of the situation in the family where they should return (AMO,

ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 277, mark 104).

At the beginning of the 1970ies the National Committee of the town of Ostrava set primary provisions in the interest of dealing with care for socially unadjusted people in the town of Ostrava:

1. establishment of Centres of postpenitentiary care
2. establishment of Hostels for temporary placement of socially unadjusted people
3. increase of the number of social committees and improvement of their work

After its opening the Postpenitentiary centre became the only specialized workplace of its kind in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. On the basis of the experiences from Ostrava similar centres were founded in other Czech towns like – Brno, Most and Plzeň (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775).

The centre, as a special institution within the Department of Social Affairs of NVO ensured better coordination with institutions, community organizations and works, facilitated contacts and consultations with clients and thus enabled an intensive execution of individual care. However, the main asset of the focused workplace was the creation of a specialist team consisting of psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, lawyers and social committees. This team was able to solve even more complicated problems professionally (Conception, 1973).

The Board for Corrective and Educational Activity of the National Committee council of the town of Ostrava in cooperation with the Postpenitentiary centre and Town Union Council established in Ostravian works Assemblies for Corrective and Educational Activity that under the methodical direction of social committees participated in care for socially unadjusted citizens, mainly for persons released from the execution of a punishment who had been employed at the works before. They performed systematic educational work, starting with an interview at the job engagement with the purpose to find out existing problems of the person. Then the person was assigned to a particular working group and was allotted so-called “patron” who during the period of one year took part in educational process and reintegration of the citizen in life (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 775).

There was a plan to build up a hostel for temporary stay of homeless people in connection to the Postpenitentiary centre by the end of the year 1975 (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 277, mark 104).

This assignment was successfully realized at the beginning of the year 1975 when the Hostel for homeless people on Palackého Street in Ostrava-Přívoz with the capacity of 15 beds (but after troublesome experiences only for men) was opened (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 376).

From the very beginning of the existence of the hostel, young people released from the execution of a punishment were accommodated here intentionally in the long term. In the years 1976-1977 a Centre for manual training of young socially unadjusted people (Resocialization centre) for the age group 18-25 with the capacity of 4 places was experimentally established. The main problem was to motivate the young people and to explain them the advantage of the idea to live again in an institution with required keeping of a certain regime in comparison with living in freedom somewhere in a hostel. The age limit was eventually shifted to the age of 30 because it proved that the interest for the services of the centre would be unsatisfactory (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 775).

The objective here was to consolidate the client’s working ability or improve his/her qualification by training, practising or undertaking apprenticeship in cooperation with works. Social and educational activity with accommodated clients was performed according to individual plans (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 1020).

At the beginning of the 1980ies the possibility to establish short term attachments for university students and students of the School for Social and Legal Matters in the Postpenitentiary centre for elaboration of their theses and final papers and also for social committees within their entrance practice was planned (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 75).

## **5.1 Social work with socially unadjusted people**

The aim of the social work with so-called socially unadjusted people and their families was the prevention of further delinquency/criminality and the stimulation of the client's abilities to adapt appropriately to the norms of community life. The care for socially unadjusted people began with the registration of all people released from the execution of punishment and in selected cases individual social work was started with an average length of six months, in cases of need even longer. The first contact with the client was established by means of invitations to committee's workplace or visit in the family or the clients came by themselves. Sometimes the contact was established already by a personal visit in the corrective institution. To the most serious problems of these people belonged (the same as today) job and accommodation search, debt liquidation and dealing with the situation in the family (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. 277, mark 104).

Those who did not appear in the Centre were visited by voluntary co-workers (e.g. pedagogues, public judges and members of social boards of National committees), which was one of the forms used only in Ostrava. In the year 1977 25 co-workers were collaborating with the Centre (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 775).

From the year 1976 on an educational plan by external specialists (psychologists, psychiatrists and pedagogue) for determination of social diagnosis at intensive educational activity was used – again an innovation solely in Ostrava (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 775).

Postpenitentiary centre made a systematic effort to increase the intensity of the care and its professional standard. New methods used nowhere but here, were gradually introduced into practice. One of them was care for people with suspended sentence and application of psychological advisory methods. The Centre also served as a training workplace for social committees from the whole country (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 1020).

The postpenitentiary centre was searching for new forms of work with clients to which belonged group work in small group with active assistance of already resocialized clients. It was based on the principle used in treatment of alcoholics, when the cured alcoholics effectively influence alcoholics being cured. This kind of "educational influence" with the assistance of resocialized clients had not been tested anywhere for the time being (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 775).

Finally, we can say that a clue to the establishment of a complex system of care for socially unadjusted people, where social committees as professionals along with external specialists could deal with most complicated cases, was found in Ostrava. The achievements of systematic activity in works were highly appreciated (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 775).

## **6. Social care for population of Gypsy origin**

In the year 1966 some so-called Gypsy settlements in Slovakia were cleared and their inhabitants gradually spread along the Czech countries. Thus, a lot of Gypsy families concentrated in the territory of Ostrava and it was necessary to integrate and place them in the town. A significant guideline for planning of further activity was governmental resolution No. 279/1970 and No. 231/1972 with focus on long term planning in the division of care for the Gypsy population (Conception, 1973).

In the course of the year 1972 social workers dealing with problems of Gypsy families with the intention to improve their situation started to operate at District national committees.

Social workers in person visited the families at least once a month (Conception, 1973).

All the families were divided into three categories according to the degree of integration.

Then, systematic work of influence to the families from the III. category followed, i.e. totally socially unadjusted families demanding the maximum help in adaptation to the lifestyle in Ostrava (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. 277, mark 104).

The so-called Gypsy population was divided into three categories:

I. category “assimilated”

II. category “capable of adaptation”

III. category “difficult adaptable”

based in fact on the degree of its adaptation to the majority, and it was a typical action of the state policy in the 1960ies. Partially, these categories reflected the entire social and community standard of particular Romany communities, the degree of their ability to take over the lifestyle of the majority on the outside. In literature, they were referred to as a specific indicator of social structure of Romany population (Pavelčíková, 1999).

Close attention was paid to the young generation with the presumption of visible results of social work in this particular group. Parents were explained the usefulness of children’s placement into kindergartens: the children would get used to regular attendance required later in basic school as well (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 1019).

A specialized class for pre-school Gypsy children was operated in the kindergarten on Nezvalovo Square in Ostrava 4. In other kindergartens Gypsy children were given preference to other children at enrolment but mothers were not much interested in placement of their children into kindergartens, though (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 1019).

Group work was applied in social and educational activity for Gypsy population from the year 1974, among others by organizing two week-long boarding courses for Gypsy girls at the end of their compulsory school attendance. These were health and educational courses with the aim to prepare the girls to enter the practical family and community life, with emphasis on their job application. 35 Gypsy girls participated in the course in the year 1975 (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 376). Social and health courses for gypsy girls had social, health and cultural mission and contributed to creation of preconditions for successful integration of Gypsy girls before the entrance into active life. Of the highest significance was the fact that they enabled educational influence of the participants outside the family (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. No. 305 mark 561).

Summer recreational and educational camps for Gypsy children aged 7-14 with recreational and educational activities and possibility of learning by supplementation of the subject matter in the morning were organized from the year 1974 on (AMO, NVO, doc. b. 376). Their mission was to establish and consolidate social, health, hygienic, cultural and community habits and to fill the gaps caused by inappropriate upbringing in the families by means of educational work and learning (AMO, ObNV O.-1, doc. b. 305, mark 561).

### **6.1 Social work in the sphere of care for Gypsy population**

The division of social work methods into three groups was based on the Suggestion of social work methods for people of Gypsy origin by Věra Mezníková (1973) approved as methodical guideline on the meeting of regional board of the Assembly of North Moravian Regional National Committee for issues regarding people of Gypsy origin.

1. Individual work was divided by Mezníková (1973) into three groups:

a) diagnostic part (establishing and creating of therapeutic relationship, investigation of the causes of the trouble)

b) social and therapeutic part (analysis of social situation elaborated on record sheet in the form of sociopsychical anamnesis, determination of social diagnosis, social prognosis, i.e. hypothesis of possible development of the situation), further divided into two forms – restitution form (clients visits social institution out of their will) and repressive form (the initiative is on the part of the social institution).

c) social therapy (short term solution or long term plans). Mezníková (1973) stresses exact keeping of social records as important source of information about the social background of the case.

2. Social group work was divided by Mezníková (1973) into three stages, too: anamnestic, diagnostic and therapeutic stage. As the objective of social group work she perceived the achievement of clarification of own problems in the particular group with minimum intervention by the social worker, and the ability to start dealing with them as a group independently. This method of work was applied in addition to the interest activity including health and educational, cultural and enlightenment courses for Gypsy population. The optimum number should be 10-15 members in a group and the work had a long term character. After the termination of the courses, it was recommended to continue in the work of the established group.

3. Social work with community units served for development of life of Gypsy population as a whole. It was applied in places with concentrated Gypsy citizens and it should break the distance from the rest of the population. It included organizing of social and health, cultural and enlightenment courses or discussions for Gypsy citizens, too. (Mezníková, 1973)  
To the work with group also belonged the work with families. It began in the year 1972 and from its beginning it was performed in 96 families. It involved regular visits direct in families, with the influence on individual groups according to the situation so that the required improvement in selected families would be achieved (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1216).  
In the year 1985 with families was already perceived as individual care. Part of the families in the individual care were families from the III. category with slight prospect of integration, though, they needed help in dealing with some temporary problems with housing, ensuring of nourishment for children etc. Repressive measures by means of ceased payment of family benefits were taken in such cases (AMO, NVO, doc. b. No. 1019).

### **Conclusion**

This article presented a summary overview of social care in Ostrava in the monitored period, including an identification of used forms of social work. In each sphere of social care for particular target group, activities without any parallel within the whole country were traced. For example, in the 1970ies Homes of family type based on the marital principle were founded. A group of children was placed into alternative families, where they stayed until their majority; thus the children did not need to travel from one institution to another. Successful results of Homes of family type appeared soon and contributed to rapid development of this kind of institutions in care for abandoned children.

Another significant institution in care for families and children, the only one of its kind in the country, was a Home for mother and child founded as early as in 1966 as purposeful institution of NHKG (New Steelworks of Klement Gottwald). The Home provided accommodation, educational care and advisory services for lonely mothers with small children who had found themselves in difficult life situation. Social work in care for children and youth used two forms of social work: individual work and group work. It is certainly worth to mention organizing of social and educational courses for women and girls with difficult social adaptability.

The sphere of care for so-called socially unadjusted people made itself visible by opening the Postpenitentiary centre providing better coordination of work of social committees with institutions, community organizations and works, simplified complicated office work, facilitated contacts and consultations with clients, and thus ensured intensive performance of individual care. In cooperation with the Board for Corrective and Educational Activity of the National Committee of Ostrava and the Town Union Council Assemblies for Corrective and Educational Activity helping in joining people released from the execution of a punishment to the working process were founded in Ostravian Works. In connection to the Postpenitentiary centre a Hostel for homeless people with a resocialization centre – the Centre for manual training of young socially unadjusted people was opened. Social work was performed

according to an individual plan created in cooperation with external specialists. The Centre was searching for new forms of social work with clients, to which also belonged social group work in small groups with active assistance of already resocialized clients. We managed to trace the beginnings of social work with people with suspended sentence in the 1970ies, at present known as probation.

Success of the same significance was achieved in the care for Romany population dealing with all age categories, but mainly with children and youth. Work with the youngest children began in specialized kindergarten class, then continued with two week-long boarding courses for Gypsy girls and boys at the end of their compulsory school attendance and organizing of summer recreational and educational camps.

Care for elderly and handicapped people focused on an increase of institutional capacities, extension of day care, establishment of houses with day care, and new Pensioner's clubs with common boarding were opened. Very popular institutions for day stay and hygienic centres were operated in the town as well.

In most of these activities members of the Czech Women Federation, the Czechoslovakian Red Cross and the Czechoslovakian Federation of Invalids actively participated.

The outcome of the thesis this article is based on is a complete description of social care in Ostrava during the given period of time, along with identification of used methods of social work. In each sphere of social care for the given target group I succeeded to trace activities unique within the country. By the nature and extent of ascertained information, it praises the social care in Ostrava as the countrywide head.

A whole new systems of care were formed there, e.g. care for socially unadapted people or care for Romany people, new methods of social work were applied there, social institutions unique within the country at that time were established there, namely Homes of Family Education, Houses for Mother and Child or Postpenitentiary Centres with Dormitories for Homeless People. It is possible to find traces of the beginnings of nowadays modern forms of social work; in case of care for so-called socially unadapted people it meant beginning of probation, cooperation with external experts on formation of educational plan, use of experience by resocialized clients.

Bearing in mind all the fact mentioned above, I cannot agree with the statement by Večeřa (2001) that "government social policy before November 1989 indirectly contributed to general passivity and to change of social values and norms .... especially to the tendency of losing trust in personal effort and endeavour." (2001, p.27) In this text is no reference to the kind and type of source material, nevertheless this statement applied to Ostrava is not true. A similar statement by Večeřa (2001) that "populist and ideologically oriented problems of social policy and social securities before November 1989 as advantages of realistic socialism in comparison with dying capitalism discredited the sphere of social policy in the eyes of the public." (2001, p.9) is for me at direct contradiction with ascertained facts presented in the thesis.

Also Šiklová (2001) expresses the same view: "After that long years of underestimating of social work, the number of social workers was minimum, they were missing even for so-called special social services..." (2001, p. 150) Again, this statement is unconvincing and makes me doubt about the reliability of the text. Social services in Ostrava developed intensively and social workers used all the methods of social work existing at that time.

I limited data collecting by the year 1989 for two reasons. Firstly, material for elaborating the history of social planning after 1989 in archives was insufficient, and at the same time, a clear result of my interviews with witnesses is that this year was a turning point meaning senseless interruption of the uncompleted work. JUDr. Kotová was right when saying verbatim "we did not keep the good work going". The social sphere developed after the Velvet Revolution in a slower pace than in the passed twenty years.

All the facts that I found out seem very interesting and unique that their publication abroad could raise the reputation of Czech social work (and especially social work in Ostrava) and would enrich the historical material of study for experts and students of social sphere.

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1977-1981

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### **Abbreviations**

AMO Town Record Office of Ostrava  
ČSČK Czechoslovakian Red Cross



ČSSR Czechoslovakian Socialist Republic  
ČSŽ Czech Women Federation  
doc. b. document board  
MPSV Department of Employment and Social Affairs  
MÚSS Town Institution of Social Services  
NHKG New Steelworks of Klement Gottwald  
NV National Committee  
NVO National Committee of the town of Ostrava  
ObNV District National Committee  
ObNV O.-1 District National Committee Ostrava 1  
ObNV O.-2 District National Committee Ostrava 2  
ObNV O.-3 District National Committee Ostrava 3  
ObNV O.-4 District National Committee Ostrava 4  
OPBH District Enterprise of Housing Economy  
sign. signature  
Sm KNV North Moravian Regional National Committee  
ZV SSM works council of Socialist Youth Federation

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