

Helena Radlińska

Self Biography*

I was born on the 2nd of May 1879, to a family of writers and art lovers. My father, Alexander Rajchman, editor of Echoes of Music, Theatre and Art, was the founder of the Warsaw Philharmonic. My mother, Melanie Hirszfeld, outside of editorial work and translations, was strongly involved with the women's liberation movement. I completed six years of secondary education, as was the norm, (H. Czarnocka Science Department), and two years of underground Teacher Courses majoring in the Polish language (with lectures from A.A. Kryński, J. Karłowicz, and Br. Chlebowski). At the 2nd (male) high school in 1897, I passed the state teacher's exam in the Polish language. That same year, my first book was published. In order to get a scientific grounding in the history of Poland, I worked as a volunteer at the Library and the Zamoyski Archive under the direction of T. Korzon. My career in education as a teacher of Polish language and history, began in the year 1902 after my marriage to Dr. Zygmunt Radliński. In 1904/5 I took part in the struggle for Polish schooling and the democratization of education. I secretly taught young people who had left the Russian school system and I participated

* Self-biography of Helena Radlinska has not been previously published anywhere. Its authenticity is confirmed by signature of the H. Radlinska coworker – Dr. Wanda Pawłowska. The present text comes from the private collection of Wiesław Theiss.

in the Teachers' Circle and the establishment of the Polish Association of Teachers. I also provided education for adults and at the same time, worked in a secret organization of medical care for revolutionaries and victims. As a result of this activity, I found myself with my husband in exile in Narym (West Siberia.). After escaping to Cracow, I joined the Jagiellonian University, reading Medieval History. Meanwhile, I worked in the A. Mickiewicz People's University managing the Library and institutions conducting lectures at workers' associations. I started my research on the history and theory of educational work. The result of this was the first Polish textbook in this field: Educational Work, tasks, methods and organization. A collective work under my editorship.

During the First World War, I carried out auxiliary military work and helped with the preparation of future teaching personnel. I edited the magazine "Polish Culture" and was a member of the Central Bureau of Schooling. At a higher level, I conducted lectures at the Free School of Political Science (theory of education) and the Baraniecki Higher Courses for Women (library science and the history of education). During my stay in Cracow, I produced some works on history, the most important of them being:

- History of the Nation. Extracts from sources and summaries of historical studies T. and Warsaw M. Arct, 1098 pages, XVIII and 474, and also
- Social Development in Poland 1911 Cracow, Tow. Wyd. Enc. Lud, 80 pages.

As a candidate for the teaching profession, I submitted an examination paper on the history of geography and subsequently in 1922 I was awarded a high school teaching diploma. After moving to Warsaw, I worked at the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education. (M.W.R.iO.P – Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego) preparing a mass educational campaign. In the following years, I ran the Ministry's under-graduate teacher preparation courses and state teacher training courses (Headed by W. Spasowski) and training of education workers at the Central Bureau of Adult Education. During 1920 I instructed education officers who took part in the struggle against illiteracy helping literacy organizations and hostels. From 1920–1925 I worked in the Central Union of Farmers as the Head of Education (educating instructors, setting up libraries, popularizing general knowledge as the basis for agricultural knowledge, agricultural schools, social centres, exhibitions). At the same time, I edited the "Education Annual", while carrying out independent studies. In 1922, commissioned by the Free Polish University (WWP – Wolna Wszechnica Polska) I embraced

extracurricular education as a so-called 'lecturer'. I worked with a group of social institutions proposing a common foundation for the education of the economics instructors for the local government. This led to the creation in 1925 of the Department of Social-Educational Work within the Free Polish University. As a result of the development of this department, to which I was re-elected as head on a yearly basis, I focused all my activities within the Free Polish University and completed my habilitation there in 1925 on the subject of social work history. Whilst teaching, I conducted personal and group research, organizing exploration and collaboration. In 1927 I attained the position of Professor of History and post-school education theory. For two years I was a WWP Dean of the Faculty of Education.

During group research in this period, the basic concepts of a new discipline in pedagogical science began to take shape in my seminars, namely the theory of work carried out within society, utilizing existing conditions by means of forces that exist in society. In particular, a method of research into community was developed that took into account the contribution of individuals, matters of generational history, a measure of social situation (social age), and methods of applying social norms that, through objective norms, complement and regulate the influence of spontaneous social values. On the basis of the theory of reading, I conducted a series of individual and group research studies. In the field of social work history, as perceived within the broad background of social history, we worked on a number of historical events, particularly related to the work of Stanisław Staszic. The results of this work were a series of printed monographs and contributions. I believe that the most important of these were the papers grouped under the title: *The social causes of success and failure at school*. The works on social pedagogy edited by **Helena Radlinska**, Warsaw Krakow 1937 Wyd. Nauk. Tow. Pedagogicznego, 503 pages.

At that time, I presented a series of my own articles in the Encyclopedia of Education, consisting of the following books: *The educator's relationship with the social environment*. Sketches of social pedagogy, Warsaw 1935 Nasza Księgarnia, 323 pages; *A book amongst people*, Warsaw 1929 Zw. Księgarnia Polska, 54 pages; as well as papers on the basic methods of popularization, research and planning of social work. Some of these were papers presented at pedagogical, sociological and historical conventions in Poland as well as at social service conferences and international educational congresses. As a representative of the Polish social organizations I was, at that time, a member of the global Councils and Committees. I published a series of papers in foreign languages.

In 1927 I was appointed a full-time chair of history and extracurricular education theory. After the WWP obtained academic rights I entered the process of habilitation, successfully awarded by the State Commission in 1937 I was nominated an ordinary professor of social pedagogy.

During the time of occupation, I was bedridden for years as a result of injuries sustained when rescuing wounded during the September invasion.

Whilst still bedridden – I conducted a series of secret study courses aimed at occupied lands to be returned to Poland. My own work took up much of my time, and was possible thanks to the archives which had been entrusted to me for safe keeping. I wrote three books, of which only small fragments still remain (printed in part after the war). These were: 1/ The fight for the soul of the people (a history of the social and political relations of the Plock farmlands), 2/ In the service of rural culture – overview of tools transforming rural relations and building models of change, 3/ Rules of intellectual work (taking into account the employee's role as a creator and as a resource, the tools for action and measures of assistance, examples of educating social imagination). All my manuscripts and materials were destroyed in fires. I participated in the design and planning of higher education reform and the support of young students. My project included broadening of help and the utilization of youths' drive in the reconstruction and prompt use of resources.

After leaving Warsaw, following weeks of illness in Milanówek, I settled in Skierniewice where I taught in an underground high school and managed the Teacher Training Course (for students with curtailed studies and high school graduates). These courses became public after the liberation of Skierniewice. The graduates were awarded diplomas by the District School Board of Lodz.

In March 1945, at the request of University of Lodz coordinator, Professor Dr. T. Vieweger, I arrived in Lodz. I took part in the organization of the University, especially its first formation, including the Department of Cultural Work, which was to become the nucleus of the Social Faculty.

I was nominated Professor of Social Pedagogy in 1947, having previously worked on short-term contract. On the 21st of August 1950 I was granted leave in order to pursue research work. Simultaneously, the time necessary to take a master's and a doctoral exam in social pedagogy was reduced.

In the five years I spent directing the Department of Social Pedagogy, I organized the library (more than 5000 volumes cataloged), the archival collections (approximately 1000 volumes) and the collection of technical volumes. In result of many former students from Warsaw applying to complete their studies, the research work became possible. The Department took on several extensive fieldwork studies (into the number of children of industrial

workers in Lodz and their needs, the state of children's school enrollment in Bałuty, the impact of schools on their development, the choice of occupation by those who had completed primary education in Lodz, and into the youth of villages and towns in relation to employment and occupation). The Department produced one habilitation thesis (a second pending), 5 PhD theses (10 in progress) and 116 master's theses. Help from the Commission for the Reconstruction of Education contributed in making these achievements possible. In order to gain further help and facilitate practical experience during holiday periods, the Department worked with the Polish Social Services Institute (Polish Society for Social Studies) which was founded at my initiative. The eradication of this Society and Department contributed to the University of Lodz Library.

In 1946 at the request of the Ministry of Education, I organized the Department of Social Studies at the School of Life Sciences in Lodz, and was the Dean for a year. After the war, I issued some books:

- A book amongst people. IV Edition (revised) Warsaw 1946 Światowid Associated Press, 423 pages
- Adult Education. Issues, actions, forms, employees, organization. Warsaw 1947, People's Institute of Education and Culture, 278 pages
- Regional research in educational history. Warsaw 1948, Nasza Księgarnia, 103 pages
- Orphanhood. Scope and redress/relief, Łódź 1946 Social Services Library No. 1, 80 pages
- A. Majewska – Fostering in Lodz P.I.S.S. 1948 Lodz, 219 pages Among my many articles I consider the most important to be:
- Social issues (The intersection of theory and practice) Printed in 1947, part 4 “Work and Social Care”
- The outreach of education, 1947 printed in “Ruch Pedagogiczny” (Pedagogical Movement)
- Research results on the struggle for the soul of the people – Reports of the Lodz Scientific Society plus two papers in the Polska Akademia Umiejętności (Polish Academy of Learning)
- Issues of the history of education in the light of social pedagogy.
- Popularization of knowledge in the views and publications of the Cracow Scientific Society (1848–1852). I prepared the texts for: The social pedagogy exam, and methodology for one's first research project.

I utilized my holidays to develop a number of materials including a 5-volume set – Research in the field of social pedagogy.

Annex

Selection of works about Helena Radlińska:

- Cyrański B., (2012), *Aksjologiczne podstawy pedagogiki społecznej Heleny Radlińskiej. Przykład zastosowania interpretacji hermeneutycznej* [Axiological foundations of Helena Radlińska's social pedagogy. An example of the application of hermeneutic interpretation] Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź.
- Lepalczyk I., (2001), *Helena Radlińska. Życie i twórczość* [Helena Radlińska. Life and Works], Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń.
- Lepalczyk I., Marynowicz-Hetka E., (2001), *Helena Radlińska (1879–1954) – Poland. A Portrait of the Person, Researcher, Teacher and Social Activist*, „European Journal of Social Work”, No. 2.
- Lepalczyk I., Skibińska W., (1974), *Helena Radlińska. Kalendarium życia i pracy* [Helena Radlińska. Life and work timeline], „Roczniki Biblioteczne”, z. 1–2.
- Lepalczyk I., Wasilewska B. (red.), (1994/1995), *Helena Radlińska. Człowiek i wychowawca* [Helena Radlińska. A person and an educator], Towarzystwo Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej, Warszawa.
- Mazurkiewicz A.E., (1983), *Sprawność działania socjalnego w pedagogice społecznej Heleny Radlińskiej* [The efficiency of social action in the social pedagogy of Helena Radlińska], Ossolineum, Wrocław.
- Radlińska. Nauka i zaangażowanie*. Wystawa online www.radlinska.pl
- Szot B., (2002), *Dwa światy Radlińskiej. Współpraca prof. Heleny Radlińskiej ze Zgromadzeniem Sióstr Urszulanek SJK w Warszawie w latach 1939–1945* [Two worlds of Radlińska. The cooperation of prof. Helena Radlińska with the Congregation of Ursulines of the SJK in Warsaw, 1939–1945], AWP, Milanówek.
- Theiss W., (1997), *Radlińska*, wyd. 2 [Radlińska 2nd Edition], Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa.
- Theiss W., (2015), *Wychowanie i niepodległość. Idea polskiej szkoły w publicystyce społeczno-oświatowej Heleny Radlińskiej (1907–1918)* [Education and the Independence. Helena Radlińska's idea of a Polish school in socio-educational journalism (1907–1918)], „Polska Myśl Pedagogiczna”, nr 1.
- Theiss W., (2017), *Udział Heleny Radlińskiej w europejskim ruchu społeczno-pedagogicznym (1918–1939)* [Helena Radlińska's participation in European socio-pedagogical movement (1918–1939)], „Society Register” nr 1(1).
- Theiss W. (oprac.), (2006), *Korespondencja Heleny Radlińskiej z Ryszardem Wroczyńskim (w latach 1946–1954)* [Correspondence of Helena Radlińska with Ryszard Wroczyński (in 1946–1954)], „Pedagogika Społeczna”, nr 4.
- Theiss W. (red.), (1997), *Listy o pedagogice społecznej. Helena Radlińska, Aleksander Kamiński, Adam O. Uziembło* [Letters on social pedagogy. Helena Radlińska, Aleksander Kamiński, Adam O. Uziembło] Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa.

- Witkowski L., (2014), *Niewidzialne środowisko. Pedagogika kompletna Heleny Radlińskiej jako krytyczna ekologia umysłu, idei i wychowania* [Invisible environment. Holistic pedagogy of Helen Radlinska as a critical ecology of mind, concept and upbringing], Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków.
- Wroczyński R., (1961), [wstęp] *Helena Radlińska – działalność i system pedagogiczny* [Introduction: Helena Radlińska - activity and pedagogical system], [w:] Radlińska H., *Pedagogika społeczna, Pisma pedagogiczne*, t. 1, Ossolineum, Wrocław.
- Wroczyński R., (1980), *Pedagogika społeczna Heleny Radlińskiej na tle polskiej myśli wychowawczej Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* [Social pedagogy of Helena Radlinska and the Polish educational thought of the Second Polish Republic] „Człowiek w Pracy i w Osiedlu”, nr 2–3.
- Żukiewicz A., (2009), *Wprowadzenie do pracy społecznej. Odniesienia do społeczno-pedagogicznej refleksji Heleny Radlińskiej* [Introduction to social work. References to the socio-pedagogical reflection of Helena Radlińska] Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków.