



## **Introduction: A brief journey through the 80 year history of the International Association of Schools of Social Work**

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The leaders of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) have played major roles in shaping the organization over its 80 year history. This brief introduction will put their roles in the context of the organization's history. While influenced by its presidents in significant ways, the organization's trajectory has also been affected by the political, economic and social developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Significant changes have occurred in the organization and in social work education, yet, as Feustel (2006) observed, "the history of the IASSW demonstrates lines of continuity that are even more remarkable for the fact that it was caught up in the great historical ruptures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (p. 3).

### **The Founding**

The founding of the IASSW has its roots in the organizing committee established in 1926 to plan the First International Conference of Social Work. Alice Salomon, founder of social work in Germany, was a member of the committee and led the section on training for social work (Feustel 2006). In July 1928, the First International Conference of Social Work was held in Paris. Almost 2500 delegates participated from 42 countries, a remarkable achievement for the times (First International Conference of Social Work 1929). Leaders of the overall Conference were Dr. Alice Masarykova of Prague as President and Dr. Rene Sand of Belgium as Secretary General. A significant segment of the Conference focused on training for social work under the leadership of Alice Salomon. The conference and its success inspired the formation of the 3 major international social work/social welfare professional organizations, now known as the IASSW, the International Conference of Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).

While 1928 is often cited as the year of founding of the IASSW, the formal founding of the organization may also be claimed as the first meeting of the International Committee of Schools of Social Work held in Berlin in June 1929. Delegates to the training section of the 1928 conference had agreed "to write to all the training schools of social work asking them whether they would be prepared to become members of an International Association of Schools" (First International Conference of Social Work 1929, pp. 233-234). Representatives from schools from seven European countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Poland, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia) and a representative of the International Labour Office (ILO) participated at the 1929 meeting in Berlin (Kniephoff-Knebel and Seibel 2008). They agreed on the following statement of purpose:

"The object of the Committee of Schools of Social Work is to bring about an exchange of opinion and experience between schools of social work and to deal with all problems of

international co-operation of these schools, such as the exchange of teachers and students, the organization of a centre of documentation and information, the formation of international social study courses and the participation in the preparation of international congresses for social work.” (International Committee of Schools of Social Work 1929).

Leaders of the founding group included, among others, Dr. Moltzer (Netherlands), Mme Mulle (Belgium) Mme. Wagner-Beck and Mlle de Meyenberg (Switzerland), and Mme. Radlinska (Poland) in addition to Salomon. The leadership group soon expanded to include members from additional countries: Sophonisba Breckinridge and Porter Lee (United States), Elisabeth Macadam and Elinor Black (United Kingdom), and Edouard Fuster (France) (Kendall 1978). This book highlights only the Presidents of the IASSW, but the contributions of other leaders can be found in a growing body of historical biographies available through international journals (see note 1).

### **The Early Years: Progress and the Growing Threat of Depression and Aggression**

At the time of the International Conference, 111 schools of social work had been identified as potential members. Of these 46 from 10 countries agreed to join as founding members (Kendall 1978). Religious affiliation was a source of early conflict for the organization and limited success in enrolling schools. Kendall (1978) summarizes correspondence from Salomon noting that the schools affiliated with the Catholic International Union for Social Service viewed the International Committee as too neutral on religion. On the other side of the issue, leaders from the United States indicated that they opposed any mention of religion in the organization’s constitution. In her report to the International Committee meeting held in Frankfurt in 1932, Elizabeth Macadam speculated that other schools had not affiliated with the committee for financial reasons (Kniephoff-Knebel and Seibel 2008).

Salomon was the central figure in the early years of the International Committee. The new organization sponsored annual summer seminars and held two meetings in the 1930s in conjunction with the International Conferences of Social Welfare. The Second International Conference was held in Frankfurt in 1932 and the Third in London in 1936 (see Note 2). The Fourth Conference planned for 1940 was not held. The Committee worked with the ILO to establish a documentation center for social work education that collected and catalogued materials from over 100 schools of social work (Kendall 1978). This initial effort informed future world surveys and censuses of education for the profession.

Membership grew under Salomon’s leadership; by 1939, membership included 75 schools in 18 countries (as reported by Kendall based on IASSW records). During this same period, however, all the German schools withdrew from membership in protest over Salomon herself.

### **The Pre-war Years**

In many ways, the timing could not have been worse for the founding of international organizations for a profession promoting peace and social justice. Immediately after the founding, the world was plunged into a severe economic depression. Unemployment and economic hardships grew. Soon thereafter, nationalism, isolationism and militarism came together with disastrous consequences for the world and for the International Committee. Salomon came from a Jewish family and was known for her commitments to pacifism, women’s rights, and international connections. All these factors made her increasingly unpopular in her own country and, to German officials, untenable as President of the International Committee. According to correspondence in the IASSW archives, leaders from German social work schools demanded Salomon’s resignation as a condition of their

continued membership. Although Salomon reluctantly agreed in order to save the organization, the International Committee refused to accede to these demands and promptly reinstated Salomon as President. The German delegation excluded her from participation in the 1936 conference in London. And, as a result of the International Committee's refusal to accept Salomon's resignation, the German schools withdrew from the Committee in the first of several instances when larger political forces impacted membership within the IASSW. Salomon was exiled from Germany in 1937. She settled in the United States and while she retained the formal title of head of the International Committee, she was unable to provide strong leadership. Carola Kuhlmann's chapter provides a rich examination of the strength and contributions of this important leader in social work education.

The International Committee carried out a number of activities between 1928 and 1936. These aimed at exchanges between schools, comparative studies to examine similarities and differences in social work education in member countries, and collection of information on social work education (Kniephoff-Knebel and Seibel 2008). Summer seminars focused on topics of relevance to social work and social work training. Some of these activities brought the International Committee into partnership with international inter-governmental bodies, especially the International Labor Organization. A documentation center on social work education was established at the ILO in collaboration with the International Committee.

### **World War II: A Crisis in Leadership and the Destruction of War**

With the world at war, international meetings and even international communications were almost impossible. Elinor Black of the United Kingdom functioned as secretary during the war years and attempted to keep in touch with social work education to the extent possible. She wrote to member schools in 1939 to express her hopes for the future when it would be possible "to renew the link with our present members and to hear from them how they met the challenge" (letter from Elinor Black to the membership, cited in Kendall 1978, p. 177). The Committee was also challenged by the devastation of war experienced by many schools in Europe. In urging members to collect books and materials on social work to send to Poland, board member Moltzer wrote that Helena Radlinska, early member of the Committee, "had the great misfortune to see destroyed besides her private house, the School of Social Work, founded by her at the University of Warsaw as well as the University itself, and to lose by death two-thirds of the teaching staff" (1948, p. 2). Fortunately, Radlinska maintained her relationship with colleagues from the IASSW in the postwar years (Seibel 2007).

### **The Post War Years: Recovery and Opportunity**

In the immediate post war years, the International Committee struggled to reorganize. Members prevailed upon Rene Sand to take over as President in 1946, a role he occupied until his death in 1953. This remarkable leader, discussed in the chapter by Kerstin Eilers, provided the wisdom and inspiration to revitalize the International Committee. In 1948, the General Assembly of Schools of Social Work met in Atlantic City, New Jersey in the U.S. where instead of a full Congress, international sessions had been added to the U.S. National Conference of Social Work. The first real post-war Congress was held in Paris in 1950. Congress presentations highlighted the culmination of recovery efforts in Europe and the promise of the young United Nations organization and its possibilities for social work involvement. Although fragile and still suffering from the wartime disruptions, the International Committee sought affiliation with the United Nations and in 1947, was granted Class B Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as an NGO. Also during this period, another remarkable IASSW leader emerged—Katherine Kendall. She participated in her first IASSW Congress as a speaker in Paris in 1950 where she presented

her just completed First United Nations Survey of Social Work Education. This marked the beginning of Kendall's almost 6 decades of service to the Association, as Lynne Healy elaborates in her chapter. Kendall's UN survey undoubtedly contributed to the spread of social work education. The survey resulted in a UN Resolution that identified social work as a profession requiring professional training and called upon the United Nations to do everything it could to promote social work education, especially in the newly independent nations in Asia and Africa.

Sand also presided over the 1952 conference in Madras, India, marking the first international conference on social work education held outside of North America and Europe. Within a few short years after the war, the International Committee that had been a largely European group extended its reach to new continents.

Rene Sand died unexpectedly in 1953 and the International Committee had to seek new leaders. A new leadership team of Jan de Jongh of the Netherlands as President, Eileen Youngusband of the United Kingdom as Vice-President, Charles Hendry (Canada) as Treasurer and Katherine Kendall as Secretary took over. The leadership of the International Committee now clearly represented both sides of the Atlantic and the secretariat of the organization moved to the United States for the first time, with office space and support provided through the Council on Social Work Education where Kendall was employed (Hokenstad and Kendall 1995). The new leaders proved that the international association could survive and even prosper without its two outstanding founders, Salomon and Sand. As Kendall described her colleagues during this transition period, both de Jongh and Youngusband were "greatly honoured in their own countries as outstanding educators...both are internationally known and acclaimed for their landmark service with the United Nations and their contributions to the literature of the profession" (1978, p. 182). They devoted their energies to the Association and helped it expand throughout the world. Their noted careers are detailed in chapters by Albert Riga (de Jongh) and Karen Lyons (Youngusband).

### **The 1950's and 1960's: A Time of Expansion**

By 1956, the Committee had changed its name to the current one, the International Association of Schools of Social Work. With the ICSW, the IASSW launched the journal *International Social Work*. This venture began with a grant from the National Cash Register Corporation. In the first issue published in 1958, the sponsoring organizations wrote that the journal was "being undertaken on a frankly experimental basis within the very limited financial resources of the ICSW and the IASSW" (Davidson 1958, p. 1). The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) joined the team of sponsors in mid-1959. *International Social Work* marked its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of publication in 2007, an indication that the 1958 experiment has been successful indeed. Journal sponsorship is particularly important to the IASSW as it fits well with the academic mission of the Association. In the early years, Kendall handled most of the editorial work and IASSW projects were often featured in the volumes of the journal.

During the late 1950s and 1960s, the organization became a more truly international one in terms of membership and leadership. The board of directors elected in 1956 included members from Australia, Guatemala, Japan and India. As schools of social work developed in the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, membership grew. In 1954, there were 217 member schools in 27 countries. Just 12 years later, membership included 350 schools in 46 countries (Kendall 1978, p. 183). The world conferences, too, moved to new locations, including Japan in 1958. In 1962, the Congress was held in Brazil, the first IASSW Congress

in Latin America. Kendall (1989) noted that leaders of the IASSW had hoped to set up an independent Secretariat for the organization. In 1966, this was partially realized using a bequest from Jane Hoey of the United States. The post of Secretary General was created, although there were not sufficient funds to make it a salaried post. The Hoey funds did permit employment of an Administrative Assistant for the IASSW, expanding its personnel resources beyond volunteer contributions for the first time (Kendall 1989). In 1968, Younghusband completed her term of office and turned over leadership to the first IASSW President to come from North America, Herman Stein. Reflecting the focus on further diversifying the IASSW membership and leadership, Vice Presidents elected to work with Stein came from 4 continents: Angelina Almanzor of the Philippines; Seyoum Selassie of Ethiopia; Luz Rodriguez of Panama; and Magnus Kull of Finland (Kendall 1989).

### **1970's: First Permanent Secretariat and Large Scale Project**

During Herman Stein's term as President, IASSW moved into a new realm of activity. In 1971, Katherine Kendall became the first full time and salaried Secretary General of the Association and an office was established in New York. The IASSW secured a large 5-year contract from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to develop and implement an international training project in family planning services. The grant was later supplemented with funds from the Canadian and Swedish development agencies.

The purpose of the family planning project was to introduce emphasis on the human and family dimensions of family planning to broaden the existing focus on quantitative targets and population control. The project's reach and accomplishments were considerable. Training and curriculum development activities took place in at least 20 countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Pilot schools for project activities were in Turkey, Iran, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, Ecuador, Hong Kong, Sudan, Zambia, Ghana, Egypt and Kenya (Kendall 1977). Over its life, the project sponsored more than 100 seminars and workshops in different parts of the world, reached thousands of students through project curricula, developed new field placements in the family planning services, and generated numerous publications (Healy 2008). The project was important for the IASSW as it brought the association into contact with more schools of social work and demonstrated the positive impact of international collaboration on training and curriculum. It is likely that the opportunities for interaction at regional seminars further assisted the development of regional associations of social work educators. And, the project publications and activities further involved the IASSW with the United Nations and other international bodies, including the Pan-American Health Organization. Undoubtedly, the project also made a positive impact on many women and families in developing countries who benefited from expansion of family planning programs with a family-friendly and ethical orientation, demonstrating the power of social work education to improve the lives of populations in need.

It is also interesting that this project flourished during a period of considerable social unrest and intense questioning of the relevance of international collaboration and borrowing. Under the leadership of President Stein (whose career is detailed in the chapter by Katherine Kendall) and Secretary General Kendall, the IASSW project demonstrated that genuine international collaboration can generate globally and locally relevant interventions to commonly shared but differentially experienced social problems.

Another highlight of the 1970s was that the IASSW Congress was held in Africa for the first time. The 1974 conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya, and drew a larger than usual number

of delegates from Africa. The conference will return to Africa in 2008 when the 34<sup>th</sup> Congress is held in Durban, South Africa.

In 1976, Stein was followed by Robin Huws Jones of England; his legacy is also preserved in a chapter by Kendall. Under Huws Jones' watch, the Association's first Secretary General and long time volunteer Katherine Kendall retired. Her retirement was celebrated during the IASSW Congress in Israel in 1978; IASSW also celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary during this Congress. Kendall's retirement was marked in part by the publication of a collection of her papers, including a history of the first fifty years of the IASSW. Published by the IASSW, the title of the volume is *Reflections on Social Work Education 1950-1978*. (It should be noted that "retirement" for Kendall meant only that she no longer received a salary for her ongoing contributions to the IASSW).

The decision was made to move the IASSW office to Europe. Huws Jones negotiated the move to Vienna, a move made possible in part by a grant from the Austrian government. Kendall was succeeded by Marguerite Mathieu of Canada as Secretary General; she served from 1978-84. In 1984, Vera Mehta of India was hired as Secretary General and served until the end of 1992.

### **The 1980s: International Politics and the IASSW**

The political environment of the 1980s brought both positive and negative implications for the work of IASSW. Heinrich Schiller of Germany was elected President and served two terms, ending in 1988. The article on Schiller in this volume by Joachim Wieler notes that the German government celebrated the election of the first German president of the body since Alice Salomon. Although the issue of membership in IASSW of South African schools had been ongoing for some time, it was during the 1980s that the issue nearly fractured the association. After much effort, IASSW and its sister organization, the IFSW, had agreed to hold joint congresses and these were held in 1982 in Brighton, England, 1984 in Montreal, Canada, and 1986 in Japan. Conflict over the position of South Africa disrupted this harmony and in 1988 the organizations once again met separately and in different countries. The 1988 IASSW Congress in Vienna, where Schiller handed over leadership of the organization to Ralph Garber of Canada, was the scene of a particularly contentious General Assembly debate and vote and led ultimately to withdrawal of the Nordic schools. It was for President Schiller and IASSW a most difficult time.

On a more positive note, this period was the beginning of the policies of Glasnost and Perestroika from the Soviet Union, policies that made contact and discussions of social work education possible between the IASSW, led by Schiller and then Secretary General Vera Mehta, and Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Various seminars and consultations were held to assist those in Eastern Europe interested in beginning or revitalizing social work educational programs.

An active women's group began and encouraged more attention to issues of gender in social work education. This ultimately resulted in formation of a Women's Interest Group with provision for representation on the Board of Directors. In 1984, IASSW published *The World Guide to Social Work Education*, a reference work documenting the similarities and differences in social work education by describing a program in each of the member countries.

Ralph Garber of Canada assumed the Presidency in 1988, the second North American to hold the position. The next eight years must have tested his great energy, commitment and cheerfulness. As noted briefly above and later in this introduction, contention over IASSW's strategy for contesting apartheid was challenged from within and from outside the membership. It must have been some comfort when UNESCO approved IASSW's application for consultative status in 1992 and accepted its rationale for continuing membership of the South African schools that met its conditions. Membership of a school in Taiwan was also an issue with UNESCO, but the IASSW rationale for academic freedom was accepted as well (UNESCO 1992). Withdrawal of Nordic members, including several from leadership positions, was a difficult time for the association. Fortunately, Garber also presided over reconciliation and reintegration of the departed members after the defeat of the Apartheid system.

### **The Secretariat Dissolved—1990s**

A challenge of a different sort was presented by the fiscal situation of the association in the early 1990s. The government of Austria stopped offering its subsidy and costs of the Vienna office continued to escalate. It became clear that IASSW could no longer support its Secretariat and a full time, professional Secretary General. The office was closed and IASSW reverted to an organization wholly dependent upon volunteers. The loss of a professional Secretary General has continued to hinder the IASSW in vigorously fulfilling its mission. Since the closing of the Vienna office, the office of the IASSW has moved with the Presidency. Garber and his successors, however, devoted countless hours and wise leadership that enabled the organization to not only continue its major functions but to introduce new projects.

The World Census was an effort promoted and led by Garber himself. This was a project to identify every program in the world that offered tertiary social work education. It resulted in a listing of approximately 1600 programs spread across all continents. Findings from the Census have been shared through reports and journal articles. Current efforts are underway to update the census. Garber's leadership is discussed further in the chapter by Richard Splane.

In 1996, with the election of Lena Dominelli of England, the Presidency returned to Europe and to a woman for the first time since Eileen Younghusband completed her terms of office in 1968. Financial stability had returned to the IASSW, although the annual budget is still insufficient to establish a permanent and staffed Secretariat. Funds were approved for employment of an Administrative Assistant to work in the office of the President to assist with administering the organization. This began part way through Dominelli's terms of office and has continued to present.

### **Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In 2000, the Board of Directors adopted a new mission statement. In many ways, the new mission represents a continuation of the long time purposes of the association. As reproduced on the back cover of this volume, the 2000 mission statement restates the enduring purposes of the IASSW to promote social work education, to encourage and support exchange of all types among social work educators, and to represent social work education with other international bodies including important inter-governmental organizations. The statement, and all other statements adopted in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century reinforce IASSW's commitment to human rights.

During Dominelli's presidency, elaborated in the chapter by Marilyn Callahan, IASSW partnered with the IFSW on development and approval of three important policy statements for the profession of social work. In 2000, a new Global Definition of Social Work was jointly adopted. In 2004, both organizations formally approved a new Statement of Ethical Principles and the *Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training*.

Perhaps the most important accomplishment of the IASSW during the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been the development and adoption of the *Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training*. Although standards had been discussed for many years, the *Global Standards* are the first comprehensive guidelines for social work programs, covering all aspects of programs from purposes to curriculum to facilities, organization and management. Working in collaboration with the IFSW and led by Vishanthie Sewpaul of South Africa, the Standards were developed through a long period of consultation with educators and practitioners around the world. They were adopted by both IASSW and IFSW in 2004 and have been translated into a number of languages. Compliance with the standards is voluntary and the standards are more accurately described as guidelines for quality social work education. While concerns have been expressed that the standards may stifle ongoing indigenization of social work education, the standards have been greeted with enthusiasm in many parts of the world and used successfully to advocate with universities for recognition of the unique requirements for educating social work practitioners (IASSW/IFSW 2004).

In 2003, the Board of Directors initiated a program to fund small international projects in social work education. A consortium of at least 3 schools in two or more countries with different cultures or social work educational systems may apply for a small grant for a project that advances social work education. Successful projects must demonstrate and enhance international collaboration. To date, 23 projects have been funded covering a wide range of topics, including field education, disaster management, political conflict resolution, HIV/AIDS, models of assessment for families and children and many more (for more information, see [www.iassw-aiets.org](http://www.iassw-aiets.org))

In 2004, IASSW elected the first president from outside North America or Europe. Abye Tasse of Ethiopia was elected as the 10<sup>th</sup> President of the IASSW. While the congress locations selected for the 21<sup>st</sup> century have underscored the global reach of the IASSW to all continents—located in North America (Montreal) in 2000; Europe (Montpelier) in 2002; Australia (Adelaide) in 2004; South America (Santiago) in 2006; Africa (Durban) in 2008; and Asia (Hong Kong) planned for 2010—is has taken 76 years to elect a President from other than Europe or North America. President Tasse's biography and ongoing leadership are detailed in a chapter by Karen Lyons.

### **The IASSW Today: Membership and Structure**

Membership in the IASSW is held by social work schools or educational programs and by individual social work educators. Tertiary level social work programs are eligible for full membership; individual educators may join, but in General Assembly votes and elections, their votes count as 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a school vote. Currently there are members in more than 70 countries spread across all the inhabited continents. The largest groups of members are from Japan and the United States, reflecting the large numbers of social work programs in those countries. Schools of social work are also organized into regional associations, although these differ considerably in level of formality and activity. The Presidents of each regional association serve on the Executive Committee and Board of the IASSW as Vice-Presidents. The large Board of Directors includes, in addition to the officers, 4 at-large representatives,



regional representatives, and national representatives from countries with more than 5 member schools. Chairs of task forces and committee also participate as non-voting members of the Board. Committee and Task Forces include the Nominating Committee, the Kendall Award Committee, the Women's Interest Group, Publications, Human Rights, the Projects Committee, the International Exchange Task Force, the World Census Committee, the Language Committee, Newsletter, and the Team of Representatives to the United Nations.

Through a strategic planning initiative started by President Tasse in 2005 and chaired by Association Secretary Lynne Healy, the Board has identified critical areas for further development. Promotion of growth and development in selected regions of the world is one such area. Recent efforts have assisted reorganization of the African Regional Association, provided a modest subsidy to assist the Caribbean subregion in launching a journal (*The Caribbean Journal of Social Work*), and supporting the efforts to expand social work education in Southeast Europe. Membership outreach and recruitment to further strengthen the IASSW accompanies these efforts. Another ongoing effort is to continue to enhance IASSW representation with the United Nations and its affiliated bodies. The IASSW team in New York, led by Janice Wood Wetzel, has been functioning well and ensures social work education's presence and leadership in NGO committees. Representatives have also been active in Vienna and additional representatives are being appointed for the IASSW in UN locations in Europe, Africa and elsewhere.

### **Impact of Larger Forces and Conflicts on Membership: An Ongoing Theme**

Since its founding, the IASSW has been affected by larger political forces and conflicts. A number of these have threatened, or sometimes enhanced, membership in the association. As described earlier, all the German schools withdrew from the International Committee during the 1930s in a sad but perhaps unavoidable complicity with demands of the Nazi regime. The withdrawal was sparked by Alice Salomon's Jewish heritage, but it can also be argued that membership in an Association that promoted social justice, equality, pacifism and internationalism would have been incompatible with Nazi ideology and unsustainable in the face of war.

After the end of the war, schools of social work began to close in countries controlled by the Soviet Union, as social work (and other social sciences) was deemed unnecessary in a socialist state. Existing schools of social work in countries such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary were abolished. As International Committee Secretary Moltzer reported in 1950, "From the Tsechoslovakian Schools, who were members before the last war, we hear no more. Of the East of Europe only the School of Mrs. Radlinska at Lodz in Poland has remained loyal to us" (p. 3). His report continued on to say that the schools in China had not been affected by the Communist takeover. This proved short-lived, and social work education was also branded a bourgeois profession and soon eliminated in China. Some level of social work education did survive in Czechoslovakia and in Poland (Seibel 2002). A more noted exception in Eastern Europe was Yugoslavia, where social work education continued to expand and maintained some continuing contact with the IASSW.

More than compensating, perhaps, for the loss of schools to Communist expansion was the emergence of social work education programs in newly independent countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Social work and social welfare were identified as important arenas for assistance to new nations struggling with poverty and its associated problems (Healy 2008). The United Nations included social work in its assistance programs, creating opportunities for international consultation on social work education and providing scholarships to aspiring

social work leaders from developing countries. Thus, the number of potential members of the IASSW expanded considerably, in large part due to the success of independence movements and the recognition of the importance of social welfare by the United Nations. During the Presidency of Younghusband, outreach to new programs in developing countries flourished, as discussed earlier. While the ensuing controversies over indigenization might have posed some threat to international cooperation, this does not seem to have affected membership in the IASSW significantly.

In the 1980s, membership in IASSW was again challenged by larger political issues. Boycott and isolation were advocated as strategies to oppose apartheid in South Africa and to hasten its end. The IASSW struggled with whether to expel its South African member schools. When the Association instead decided to impose a series of conditions and reporting requirements on the South African schools, the Nordic schools withdrew from IASSW membership. (Note that some educators in the Nordic region describe this as a period when the Nordic schools ceased communication with the IASSW, but in fact by not paying dues to the Association, the schools were no longer part of the membership). Although hard feelings lingered for some time, rapprochement was successful after the end of apartheid in South Africa and the schools in the Nordic region are again active members of the IASSW.

Almost at the same time as the crisis over membership of South African and Nordic schools was at its most difficult point, new global political developments created opportunities for expansion of social work education and IASSW membership. The opening of countries in the former Communist bloc to the social sciences and the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union and its control over Eastern Europe led to rapid emergence or reemergence of social work education throughout this part of the world. Schools of social work reemerged in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, while it began to take root for the first time in Russia, Armenia, and other former Soviet republics. With Communist governments still in firm control, China and Vietnam reopened to social work education. As will be mentioned later, expansion in China has been rapid and that country has the potential to become one of the largest membership groups within the IASSW in a very short period of time.

Political turmoil within countries has periodically created more local crises that have suspended operations of schools of social work. Examples are Iran during the late 1970s after the Islamic revolution, and Ethiopia after the Mengistu regime took over. The closing of the social work program in Addis Ababa in 1975 not only deprived the IASSW of a member school, but also of a center of leadership for social work education within Africa. Through an innovative international partnership, a School of Social Work in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, reopened in 2004 and is again a member. Indeed, the School's Dean is the most recent President of the Association. Perhaps the pattern of temporary closings followed by rebirth of social work education indicates the essential nature of the profession in the modern world.

It is too early to tell what global or regional political events and trends will shape IASSW membership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some concerns have been expressed over the impact of mergers of social work programs and schools into larger units, over the potential for unfriendly regulation of social work education under regional or global trade agreements, and of the impact of growing labor mobility in social work. On a more positive note, it is likely that the very rapid expansion of social work education in China will affect the IASSW. Hopefully, the Chinese schools will see the value of belonging to the international

organization; if so, Chinese schools could soon become a significantly large group within the membership.

The growth of membership of Chinese schools will intensify the already daunting challenge that language poses for the IASSW. For many years, the association recognized three official languages: English, French and Spanish. Letters sent among the founders and early documents were as likely to be in French as English, and often were also in other languages. Early volumes of *International Social Work* accepted and published articles in any of the three official languages until the early 1980s when it became English only, with translated abstracts (Healy and Thomas, 2007). In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became clear that Japanese schools and U.S. schools were the two largest membership groups in the association. Japanese was therefore added as a 4<sup>th</sup> official language. The association has continued to struggle to meet its commitment to be a 4-language organization. At the same time, pressures have grown to recognize additional languages. Language remains an important and difficult challenge to open and equal exchange and communication in social work education.

### **Enduring Purpose and Mission**

Facing the challenges posed by the larger socio-political context and keeping the focus on mission are the achievements of the remarkable set of leaders profiled in this volume. Of course they were aided by many others in the profession who served as officers, board members and loyal members, but the vision and commitment of those who served as Presidents of the International Committee and the International Association of Schools of Social Work have led the way in advancing the cause of social work education and social justice globally.

The founders believed in the power of international communication and collaboration to improve social work education and strengthen its collective voice on the world scene. Sixty years later, Lavan (1989) wrote on the same conviction: “An international organisation devoted to social work education provides the possibility of overcoming peripherality by building a sound identity of social work as an instrument of constructive social change and social work education as a mechanism for the transmission of knowledge and values. Knowledge, compassion and solidarity are needed in every culture. Our international focus demonstrates that social problems are indeed world-wide and do not cease at geographical border” (p. 50). Passion for social work education and for international collaboration has sustained the Presidents of the International Association of Schools of Social Work. The Association is grateful to Friedrich W. Seibel for his vision and commitment in commissioning and editing these portraits of extraordinary social work leaders.

Note 1: Articles on the following IASSW founders have been published in the *European Journal of Social Work*: Helena Radlinska (volume IV:2); Alice Masarykova (volume IV:3); Marguerite Wagner-Beck (volume V:2); and M.A.J. Moltzer (volume VI:1).

Note 2: The IASSW today considers the International Conferences of Social Work held prior to the organization of its separate or officially jointly sponsored Congresses to be early meetings of the association. The formality of participation of the International Committee of Schools of Social Work in the early conferences varied. In 1932, for example, the report of the meetings of the Committee are included in the Conference Proceedings, but the meetings were not part of the Conference itself. See Kniephoff-Knebel and Seibel 2008, for more thorough analysis.

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