

GABRIELA PAPROTNA
ORCID: 0000-0003-2330-1626
The Jesuit University Ignatianum
in Kraków

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EDUCATING FEMALE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE TERRITORY OF POLAND IN THE 19TH CENTURY AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY. AN OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

The unstable social and historical conditions, as well as scientific and technical progress shaped the long history and rich tradition of the profession of a pre-school teacher. During its development, it evolved from a person protecting children, through a caretaker and a tutor, to a pre-school teacher. Organizing the education of people who were responsible for raising children was not easy. The beginnings of this process were ever more complex as – even though on the territory of Poland – they took place under occupation. The analysis of actions undertaken in this area, both during the occupation and after Poland regained its independence, indicates that there were many people and institutions who were significantly involved in the preparation of childcare staff and educational institutions. It was probably the result of the growing understanding of the need to provide small students with caretakers and teachers who would meet high professional standards.

In Poland, the situation of pre-school education was less favorable than in the Western countries, for understandable historical reasons (partitions). In the inter-war period, attempts were made to give it its proper meaning, i.a. through introducing regulations on educating tutors. The processes that were supposed to develop pre-school education were ceased during World War II. This study assumed them as the time cessation of the ongoing deliberations.

THE RUSSIAN PARTITION (THE KINGDOM OF POLAND)

The issue of educating teachers was already addressed in the 18th century by the Commission of National Education, which, depending on the school type,

determined the teaching mode in detail¹. However, one can only talk about the beginnings of educating pre-school teachers from the first half of the 19th century. At that time, this professional group began gradually and slowly to be distinguished, which was caused by many factors.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the industry was developing intensively. The demand for cheap labor was growing and hence, many children were employed and worked hard, and at the same time, many of them lacked care and were abandoned by adults. In order to counteract this situation, the Charity Society in Warsaw adopted a law in 1825, under which various institutions could be formed to provide care to poor children and help them in school education. Thus, various care facilities, including nurseries for small children, were established.

The first nursery was opened in Warsaw in 1839 and was mainly financed from contributions made by wealthy residents from the capital.

It soon turned out that there was a need to open next care facilities. In 1870, there were 32 nurseries in the Kingdom of Poland, however, one of the main problems impeding their operation was a lack of properly prepared teaching staff.

In the first half of the 19th century, the process of organized training nursery employees was still absent. Their preparation was limited to occasional internships in these facilities. Jan Tadeusz Lubomirski, President of the Charity Society in Warsaw, introduced changes to the way candidates for children's caretakers were prepared. Thanks to the efforts he had made, they established practical education of teachers, and the candidates were allowed to inspect the lessons with children in the classroom. J. T. Lubomirski also established the function of an inspector, employed inspectors, and thus, provided constant supervision of nurseries for children².

Due to the growing number of orphanages, more and more attention was given to educating employees, which was reflected in the first instructions and subject publications. In 1849, the Charity Society issued *Instrukcja dla Przewodniczących w Salach Ochrony* (*An instruction for chairmen of nurseries*), which regulated the organization of work and the duties of tutors. In 1857, the Central Welfare Council issued *Projekt instrukcji dla przełożonych i dozorczyń sal ochrony ubogich dzieci* (*A draft instruction for the superiors and caretakers in nurseries for poor children*), which defined the rights and obligations of nursery staff, their remuneration and the work program with children³.

In the second half of the 19th century, activities aimed at integrating the education of employees in nurseries into a certain organizational framework were revived. In 1858, the Agricultural Society was founded with the Nursery Committee,

¹ A. Smolański, *Osoba i zwód nauczyciela w polskiej myśli pedagogicznej do 1939 roku* [*Teachers and their professions in the Polish pedagogical thought until 1939*], Wrocław, Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego, 1983, p. 54–56.

² W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów wychowania przedszkolnego* [*An outline of the history of pre-school education*], part 1, *Teorie pedagogiczne i rozwój praktyki* [*The pedagogical theories and the development of practice*], Warszawa, WSiP, 1978, p. 172–174.

³ Ibid., p. 172.

which developed a draft annual course for city nurseries, led by the Benedictine Sisters. As Bella Sandler stated, there were several conditions that potential candidates had to meet in order to work with children. Candidates had *to be at least 24 years old, single, have strength and health, be familiar with the fundamentals of religion, literate, know the basics of accounts, and do normal female tasks and chores*⁴. The courses, however, did not take place and remained only intentions.

The intention that was completed was the opening of the first private Froebel's school in Warsaw in 1870 by Teresa Pruszk-Mleczkowska which educated as well pre-school teachers who could attend and inspect classes, and thus, acquire practical skills. T. Pruszk-Mleczkowska in 1874 began to organize Froebel's courses for teachers, as the work in kindergartens was carried out according to the assumptions of F. Froebel's educational system⁵.

The activist who made great efforts not only in terms of the development of education of kindergarten teachers, but generally, the development of pre-school education, was Maria Weryho-Radziwiłowicz. In her article entitled *Kształcenie ochraniarek (Educating women working in nurseries)* she described the prevailing state of pre-school education, including staff, as well as her beliefs on the discussed problems⁶. On her initiative, in 1903, in Pruszków near Warsaw, the first one-year school for workers of nurseries was opened, which taught and prepared ten female students to work with children. The task was to acquaint students with theory and practice. There was a nursery in the premises, where students could inspect and observe classes, and conduct internships. Candidates for this work also had to participate in cleaning up and maintenance. In 1905, this school was taken over by the Society of Pre-School Education. As a consequence, a number of changes – not only organizational changes followed. They broadened the scope of the curriculum and extended the course to two years, the number of students was increased from ten to thirty, and the school seat was moved from Pruszków to Włochy next to Warsaw. School education was free of charge, and the students covered only the boarding school fees⁷.

Due to the increasing demand for qualified pedagogical staff for kindergartens, preparation courses took place as well at children's schools. The students could only be educated through inspecting and observing the classes, as the tsarist authorities prohibited the use of textbooks. As a result, the curricula in individual institutions were diversified, and so were the educational outcomes.

⁴ B. Sandler, *Wychowanie przedszkolne i kształcenie wychowawczyń w Królestwie Polskim [Pre-school education and educating female teachers in the Kingdom of Poland]*, „Monografie z Dziejów Oświaty” 1968, Vol. 10, p. 50.

⁵ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów...*, part 1, p. 213–214. See also: W. Leżańska, *Kształcenie nauczycieli wychowania przedszkolnego w Polsce [Educating pre-school teachers in Poland]*, Łódź, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 1998, p. 15.

⁶ M. Weryho-Radziwiłowiczowa, *Kształcenie ochraniarek [Educating women working in nurseries]*, in: *Rocznik Pedagogiczny, Seria II-tom I rok 1921 [A pedagogical yearbook, the second series, Vol. 1, 1921]*, Warszawa 1923, p. 388–389.

⁷ Ibid., p. 388–389.

Apart from qualified teachers, many unprepared employees started their work at the same time. This state of affairs continued until 1918, when the Ministry of Enlightenment organized the Department of Seminaries, which managed such schools, and already called them seminars for women working in nurseries⁸.

Vocational education of pre-school teachers was discussed during the First Congress of People's Female Caretakers in Nurseries, which took place in Warsaw on May 7–9, 1906, and was attended by one hundred and twenty teachers from rural kindergartens and about eighty from kindergartens in Warsaw. At that time, the first resolutions regarding the working conditions and education of rural nursery teachers were adopted. The decisions of the Congress initiated new Froebel's courses. One of them – a 14-day course which took place in 1907 – was attended by two hundred people, and its program included: theoretical lectures, visits to educational institutions, learning about tasks performed in nurseries, methodology of elementary education, news from children's literature, the history of Poland, geography, nature, human physiology, and lectures on municipal law and discussions concerning herbalism⁹.

In 1907, Stefania Marciszewska opened the College of Female Caretakers in Nurseries and People's Teachers in Warsaw. Marciszewska advocated combining pre-school education with elementary education so that children would not experience this sudden transition from one institution to another¹⁰.

The issues of professional education of kindergarten tutors was also discussed in the following magazines: "Zorza", "Kronika Wiadomości Krajowych i Zagranicznych", and "Przegląd Pedagogiczny" which became the main advocate of vocational education of kindergarten tutors of small children. Henryk Wernic, Florian Łagowski, Jan Władysław Dawid, Aniela Szyćówna and of course, Maria Weryho promoted the idea of specialist vocational education for teachers¹¹.

Those issues were also present in the views expressed by leading educators and social activists of those times. An example thereof is August Cieszkowski (1814–1894), whose views – even though he operated in the Prussian partition – had an impact on the operation of nurseries in the Kingdom of Poland. In his work entitled *O ochronach wiejskich (On rural nurseries)*, he stated that it was necessary to prepare employees in a proper manner and thus, provide a stable operation of nurseries. He also promoted setting up an institution for this purpose. According to A. Cieszkowski, teachers in nurseries should be chosen from the group of the most talented women for this job.

Stanisław Karpowicz (1864–1921) concentrated much on the education of kindergarten teachers. Thanks to his activity, in 1903 a secret Pedagogical Society was established, and in 1905 – also on his initiative – clandestine courses

⁸ M. Weryho-Radziwiłłowiczowa, *Kształcenie ochraniarek*..., p. 388–389.

⁹ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów*..., part 1, p. 219.

¹⁰ B. Sandler, *Wychowanie przedszkolne*..., p. 158.

¹¹ W. Leżańska, *Kształcenie nauczycieli*..., p. 16.

were held for teachers in kindergartens. Lectures, initially organized in a private Froebel's school, after a few months could be held legally and openly, and were continued until 1911. Karpowicz emphasized that teachers should have knowledge about people and society, which resulted from the fact that pedagogy is a social skill¹².

The Pre-school Education Club, which was legalized in 1907, attracted many social and educational activists, i.a. Irena Kosmowska, Stefania Sempołowska, Aniela Szycówna, Helena Orsza-Radlińska, Maria Młodowska and Ryszard Radziwiłłowicz. The group organized and ran courses for kindergarten tutors, taking advantage of nurseries as places for providing exercises¹³.

The Kingdom of Poland was an area where the activities in the field of setting up orphanages and the first kindergartens, as well as establishing the first schools for caretakers were the most lively, and it should be recognized that the institutional education of kindergarten teachers was already initiated during the partitions.

THE PRUSSIAN PARTITION (THE GRAND DUCHY OF POSEN)

In the Grand Duchy of Posen, the situation was different than in the Kingdom of Poland. In 1872, the Prussian authorities issued a ban on running nurseries and kindergartens by orders and associations that organized such type of facilities. Consequently, educational institutions for young children began to be taken over by the Germans. However, it was possible to open Polish kindergartens, but it was required to obtain the consent of the Prussian authorities, who also defined the qualification requirements for people who worked with children, which included i.a.: the requirement to graduate from the German Froebel's Institute in Berlin, complete German high school, and pass an exam in German. One of the female activists who ran a private school for Polish female teachers was Waleria Puffke who opened her school in 1892. The curriculum included only practical classes, and the language of instruction was German, as those were the requirements imposed by the Prussian authorities. This school survived for many years, but its impact range was insignificant. After 1905, attempts were made to make it Polish, which did not happen until 1921¹⁴.

To disseminate the education of kindergarten caretakers, in 1911 Toruń started organizing annual courses under the direction of the United Association of Landowners, thanks to which it was possible to set up many nurseries for children in manor houses, parishes and convents.

¹² W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Historia wychowania przedszkolnego [The history pre-school education]*, Warszawa, WSiP, 1978, p. 219–224.

¹³ Ibid., p. 217–218.

¹⁴ W. Leżańska, *Kształcenie nauczycieli...*, p. 17.

Due to the policy of the Prussian authorities, activities regarding establishing nurseries and educating teachers were conducted in secrecy. Polish education started developing only after 1918. Because of the strict policy of the partitioning powers with regard to the Polish education, the views of August Cieszkowski operating in the Grand Duchy of Posen could not affect the practice of pre-school education and education of kindergarten teachers, which were not organized processes – as in the case of the Kingdom of Poland, because they concentrated on the needs of the Prussian authorities. The Polish educators represented a minority among all pre-school teachers¹⁵.

THE AUSTRIAN PARTITION (GALICIA)

Unlike the Russian and the Prussian partition, the education in Galicia was shaped differently as the social and political conditions differed.

In 1816 they founded the Charity Society in Cracow and later, in 1848, a separate Nursery Department. The established nurseries were run by religious associations and philanthropists. At the same time, one should bear in mind that elementary education in the 19th century in Galicia was seriously neglected. Consequently, the operation of kindergartens and the process of educating teachers were not in the area of interest. However, despite the difficult social, economic and political situation, the activities of educating kindergarten teachers were commenced, and in 1871 they established four (two male and two female) teachers' seminars and thus, initiated the process of setting up next schools of this type. At the teachers' seminars they launched workshops which practically prepared candidates for work with children.

Also in 1871, teachers' seminars were organized in Lviv, Przemyśl and Kraków, with the adjoining Froebel's kindergartens which provided candidates willing to work with children with practical exercises. In order to manage the seminar, the completion of relevant courses in Austria was mandatory. Since 1875, the seminars organized one-year courses for kindergarten teachers¹⁶.

Courses for candidates eager to work with children were also conducted in the Duchy of Cieszyn. The Educational Society was responsible for that as we and launched an initiative to organize nurseries with the Polish language of instruction in the following places: Michałkowice, Dąbrowa, Bogumin, Polish Ostrava and Cieszyn. The Educational Society provided also courses preparing women to work with children, and cooperated with the Society for Public School in organizing courses, and setting up nurseries and other educational institutions. This organization also played an important role in counteracting the denationalization of Polish children¹⁷.

¹⁵ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów...*, part 1, p. 223–224.

¹⁶ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Historia wychowania...*, p. 147, 185–186.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

It should also be mentioned that two educational congresses took place in Galicia – in the second half of the 19th century. For the first time, the magazine called “Szkola” came up with the initiative to organize a three-day congress for teachers, which took place in 1868, during which the Pedagogical Society was created. Kindergarten teachers, graduates of female seminars participated in the second congress which was held in Lviv and which discussed the problems of educating parents and reforming the methods according to which nurseries were run. It concentrated as well on promoting the Froebel’s method and spreading awareness of the methodology of working with young children.

In the Austrian Partition, like in the Prussian partition, the education of pre-school teachers was not an organized process. Candidates eager to work in nurseries and kindergartens were taught mainly during one-year courses, as the number of seminars was still insignificant. During the education of children’s caretakers, a strong emphasis was placed on counteracting the denationalization of Polish children, but there was no uniform curriculum for educating future teachers¹⁸.

The changes took place after Poland regained its independence, i.e. after 1918.

THE ASSUMPTIONS AND FORMS OF EDUCATING PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS BETWEEN 1918–1945

Upon the regaining of independence by Poland in 1918, the situation of education also changed. From that time, it was the Polish education authorities that set the conditions regarding establishing new care and educational institutions, as well as the mode of educating teachers and tutors.

The first document issued before 1918 was *Tymczasowy regulamin w sprawie ochrony (The temporary regulations on nurseries)*, which was adopted after many discussions on pre-school education which took place during World War I. It concerned the duties of kindergarten teachers, their qualifications, and the organization of work in kindergarten.

The issues of organizing the work in kindergartens and the way of educating tutors were raised in 1919 during the First Nationwide Teachers’ Congress (called as well: the Teachers’ Sejm). The congress established several sections, including the Pre-School Education Section. According to Stanisław Michalski, *the Teachers’ Sejm [...] was the last and most synthetic summary of the historical period of the struggle for a new profile of a unified education system at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century; it was a congress closing the period of direct preparations of organizational, program, didactic, as well as ideological and educational premises of the national educational system for independent Poland*¹⁹.

¹⁸ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów...*, part 1, p. 224–229.

¹⁹ S. Michalski, *Koncepcje systemu edukacji w II Rzeczypospolitej [The concepts of the system of education in the Second Republic of Poland]*, Warszawa, WSiP, 1988, p. 55.

Among many motions and applications which confirmed the need to organize pre-school educational centers, the Congress also underlined the problem of educating teaching staff. It was recognized that the country should proceed as soon as possible to create nursery courses and courses for nannies in nurseries. In addition, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment was supposed to commence publishing papers that would provide guidelines regarding the work in kindergartens.

The arrangements completed during the congress in terms of educating kindergarten teachers were the result of the needs that the new reality of independent Poland had created, which was followed by the increasing number of nurseries and kindergartens, and hence, the need for teaching staff. As a result thereof, as well as previous experience, the Congress noticed the problems of pre-school education and education of teachers, however – as noted by W. Bobrowska-Nowak – *the resolutions were implemented very slowly and not entirely in the interwar period*²⁰.

Despite the difficulties regarding the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Teachers' Sejm (the economic situation of the country, the lack of funds, the shortage of teaching staff), efforts were made to promote and modernize the system of educating kindergarten teachers. The Pre-school Education School that had been opened under the Partitions, was nationalized. They issued the curriculum and a law which were in force for all private nursery seminars, as well as introduced permanent inspection of care facilities – visits by inspectors and examination committee for candidates eager to work with children. In practice, it turned out that not all private schools could meet the committee's requirements. As a result, the majority of these institutions were closed down due to the diversification of the level of education presented by pre-school teachers in particular schools. In 1921, seventeen seminars educating kindergarten teachers operated in Poland. In the former Congress Kingdom – twelve (including three state institutions), in Toruń – one, in Poznań – also one, and in Lesser Poland – three, all state. The seminar included a two-year course. The first year had a general nature, whereas the second one – vocational. Candidates for kindergarten tutors had to fulfill several conditions: be from 16 to 30 years old, have a certificate of completion of at least three grades of secondary school or a certificate of 7-grade primary school, be passionate about working with children, have physical and music skills. The education at the seminars for female caretakers included the following subjects: religion, pedagogy, pre-school methodology, children's literature, the Polish language, knowledge about Poland, natural science, arithmetic with geometry, hygiene, philosophy, singing, physical exercises, gardening, and workshops. At the end of the second year, the students had to take an exam before the examination committee composed of: a representative from the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment, headmaster of the seminar, and the teachers of subjects that were taken during the examination. After completing the education and passing the exam, the graduates received a certificate

²⁰ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Zarys dziejów...*, part 1, p. 312.

which entitled them to execute the duties of a teacher in care centers for pre-school children. The education in the seminar was free of charge, and the poor could take advantage of scholarships²¹.

The requirements that candidates willing to work with children had to meet, were strict. It was supposed to raise the level of teaching staff, and thus, the level of institutions that take care of pre-school children.

The education of kindergarten teachers was included in the Act on the System of Education of 1932 (the so-called the Jędrzejewicz Act), which, i.a. defined the type of professional qualifications of teachers employed in kindergartens. Their education was to be conducted in two ways. The first version included ten years of school education (six classes of elementary school and four years of seminar), and the second version – twelve years (six years of elementary school, four years of gymnasium, and two years of high school). The act distinguished two types of schools with different qualifications: four-year seminars for pre-school education, and two-year high schools. After high school, it was possible to educate kindergarten teachers in higher education institutions, which, however, was not implemented in practice. The Jędrzejewicz Act set out specific qualification requirements for pre-school education, however, the situation in reality was different. In the interwar period in Poland, private kindergartens without a uniform curriculum represented a majority. It was the result of low qualifications of the people employed in those places²². Consequently, in the 1930's an unfavorable phenomenon happened, i.e. a decrease in the number of kindergartens. It should be noted, however, that *the act also raised the importance and status of schools for pre-school teachers, and aligned the requirements concerning the level of teachers employed therein with the education of teachers working in public secondary schools, pedagogical high schools, and teachers*²³.

The region in which pre-school education developed the most in the interwar period was Silesia, with its 274 kindergartens operating in 1933, which increased the demand for qualified pedagogical staff. Since 1928, the Nursery Seminar in Mysłowice started educating kindergarten tutors. It took methodological care of all kindergartens in the Silesian Voivodship. Maria Łabęcka was director of this institution. However, the Seminary in Mysłowice could not meet the educational demands for pedagogical staff in kindergartens, so they organized three-week methodological courses for tutors which took place in Katowice, Szarlej and Mysłowice. They concentrated on the work in kindergartens and the problems of vocational training of kindergarten teachers. The Department of Public Enlightenment also planned to organize 4-week courses culminating in an examination which were meant to take place in Katowice, Pszczyna, Rybnik, Tarnowskie Góry and Bielsko.

²¹ M. Weryho, *Kształcenie ochroniarek*..., p. 389–390.

²² F. Śliwiński, *Organizacja szkolnictwa w Polsce współczesnej [Organization of education in modern Poland]*, Łwów–Warszawa, Książnica–Atlas, 1932, p. 54.

²³ W. Leżańska, *Kształcenie nauczycieli*..., p. 31.

The assumption of the ministry was – since 1936 – to select pre-school teachers with the aim to engage only qualified people in these institutions, who could prove their qualifications with the certificate (a passed exam) provided for by the decree of the President of the Republic of Poland. These activities were aimed at increasing the level of pre-school education, which was very neglected in Silesia under the partitions²⁴.

Theme publications were useful in terms of educating pre-school teachers, i.e. tutorials for female tutors, textbooks on development and upbringing of pre-school children, theoretical dissertations, and reports from the studies already conducted at various academic centers. At the University of Warsaw, Stefan Bailej conducted research on pre-school education, Stefan Błachowski at the University of Poznań, and Stefan Szuman at the Jagiellonian University. In the works by the following authors, the subject of pre-school education and educating teachers was also touched upon: Stefania Marciszewska-Posadzowa, Maria Sariusz-Jaworska, Ida Schatzel, Barbara Żulińska, and finally Maria Weryho-Radziwiłowicz, mainly thanks to whom pre-school education developed. On her initiative, since 1925 the Pre-school Education Society started publishing a monthly journal called “Wychowanie Przedszkolne”. Since 1933, the Kindergarten Teachers’ Section of the Polish Teachers’ Union (Sekcja Wychowawczyń Przedszkoli Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego) started issuing a bi-monthly magazine “Przedszkole” edited by Lucyna Sękowska. Also in 1925 it began to issue a monthly journal “Plan Prac w Przedszkolu” (edited by Zofia Witkowska), published by the Pedagogical Section of Kindergartens and Tutors of the Polish Teachers’ Union (Sekcja Pedagogiczna Związku Polskiego Nauczycielstwa Przedszkoli i Wychowawców)²⁵.

Between 1918–1939 many attempts were made in Poland to raise the level of education of pre-school teachers, and thus – pre-school education. The statement by M. Weryho-Radziwiłowicz shows how far the relationship between the qualifications of teachers and the problems related to the process of raising and educating small children was understood: *Based of the present state of pre-school education, the first and foremost educating factor in the kindergarten is the manager-tutor, her good spirit, her creative factor which gives value to the entire matter of education. A good tutor is cheerful, loving, understands children, has methodical and pedagogical expertise, knows how to engage a child, speaks her native language well, is knowledgeable about natural sciences, tourism, the history of Poland, has general information on hygiene, gardening, is musical, can draw, model, and is familiar with gardening. She*

²⁴ See the following studies: M. Wróbel, *Wychowanie przedszkolne w Polsce w latach 1918–1939 [Pre-school education in Poland between 1918–1939]*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1967, p. 97–98; W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Historia wychowania...*, p. 263, 283–284, 535–538 – this fragment is a reprint of the article included in the book *Przedszkola śląskie [Kindergartens in Silesia]*, „Sprawy szkolne na Śląsku” 1934, No. 1, p. 2–4 (a supplement to „Chowanna”).

²⁵ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Historia wychowania...*, p. 272–278.

*can apply her knowledge in the kindergarten in an easy and fun way, taking account of the child's developmental conditions, not accelerating the pace of their development. Kindergarten or nursery managers should have appropriate pedagogical qualifications, a completed course of the state or private nursery seminar granting statutory rights*²⁶.

The outbreak of World War II completely changed the educational situation in Poland, including pre-school education. The activities of kindergartens were interrupted mainly due to the threat of air raids. In 1940, the activities run by all Polish associations and institutions were prohibited. Only the Mutual Aid Committee, later renamed the Central Welfare Council, was granted the permission to run its activity.

Only the municipal kindergartens that were under the auspices of the Compulsory Administrator of Poland, religious kindergartens, and – very few – parish kindergartens as private kindergartens could operate in Warsaw. The Central Welfare Council also organized the so-called pre-school points, i.e. clubs for children, which were mainly located in dayrooms.

Between 1939–1945, the activities regarding educating kindergarten teachers were ceased. Although there was clandestine education, however, it was offered to teachers educating children aged 7 or more. The staff from the kindergartens in Warsaw decreased by 16%, and new employees were not educated. All deficiencies began to be replenished after 1945, in free Poland.

EDUCATION OF KINDERGARTEN TUTORS IN POLAND STRAIGHT AFTER 1945

The situation of pre-school education in Poland after the war was very difficult. Its detailed description was cited by Wanda Bobrowska-Nowak²⁷. Difficulties were caused not only by the shortage of teaching staff, but also by the mode of establishing new pre-school institutions. Children from the age of seven years old were obliged to attend school, and the Act of 1932 did not force any institutions to establish kindergartens. Moreover, there was a perceptible lack of rooms suitable for setting up pre-school facilities, the process of educating female teachers did not exist. Until 1950, only reduced courses were organized, which concentrated on quick vocational preparation of candidates to take up positions in kindergartens. These were 8-week courses for candidates, public school graduates (from 18 to 30 years old), and 3-semester courses culminating in an examination for the graduates of 8-week courses and those who had stopped their education during the war. They created as well the so-called district commissions for professionally active but unqualified teachers. It was a new form of education that included

²⁶ M. Weryho-Radziwiłłowiczowa, *Zarys wychowania przedszkolnego [An outline of pre-school education]*, Warszawa, Polski Komitet Opieki nad Dzieckiem, 1930, p. 20.

²⁷ W. Bobrowska-Nowak, *Historia wychowania...*, p. 563–569.

during one year: individual or collective monthly consultations, development of materials and courses allocated for a given period – a few days during winter holidays, and a four-week course during the holidays. After three years of study and after passing the exam, graduates obtained full qualifications²⁸.

Between June 18–22, 1945, the National Education Congress took place in Łódź, where much attention was paid to pre-school education and educating pre-school teaching staff. The participants thereof became familiar with the condition of pre-school education in the country, attention was paid to the shortage of qualified staff and the chaos that prevailed in their educational system. It was postulated to maintain the highest level of education of kindergarten educators, which was possible thanks to 4-year seminars, after which all graduates had to take qualification exams.

The fact that during the congress the participants discussed not only the issue of education, but also professional training of teaching staff of kindergartens is of significant importance.

The National Education Congress assessed kindergartens run by orders as suited to the needs at that particular time, paying attention to the fact that nuns who had pedagogical qualifications were often overwhelmed by religious discipline. Meanwhile – according to Janina Pawłowska, the minister's inspector of the Department of Pre-School Education – *it was necessary to base the professional preparation on the most comprehensive and thorough general education and social experience presented by tutors*²⁹.

The issues regarding improving professional qualifications of kindergarten teachers were reflected in the final conclusions of the congress held in Łódź, which was expressed in the following way: *For the first time the National Education Congress in Łódź addressed the issue of the dissemination of kindergartens. While entering the path of satisfying this demand, it is required to base pre-school education on the legal framework without establishing duties of the public factor in terms of setting up, maintaining, and running kindergartens. For a good cause it shall be suggested that pre-school teachers – similarly to public school teachers – become state employees. This business connection of female caretakers and the state will ensure durability, provide uniform relations, will be a propaganda factor encouraging female youth to choose this profession, and will raise their social status. By making pre-schools universal, we impose the necessity of undergoing intensive education preparing female youth to the profession of kindergarten teachers to a greater extent than it is done at present – 4-year pedagogical high school and further studies at the university. During the transition period, substitute staff of kindergarten teachers should not be allowed to work in*

²⁸ Z. Woźnicka, *Wychowanie przedszkolne w Polsce Ludowej [Pre-school education in People's Poland]*, Warszawa, Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1972, p. 41–42.

²⁹ *Ogólnopolski Zjazd Oświatowy w Łodzi 18–22 czerwca 1945 [The National Education Congress in Łódź June 18–22, 1945]*, ed. S. Świdwiński, Warszawa. PZWS, 1945, p. 226.

*pre-schools unless they complete at least an eight-week pre-school educational introductory course*³⁰.

The conclusions of the Congress cited above prove that they attempted to raise the status of pre-school education, appreciating its importance in the overall education of a human being. As a result, the candidates willing to take up the post of a pre-school tutor faced higher and higher qualification requirements.

As a consequence of the arrangements adopted in Łódź, it was decided to resume – still in 1945 – the education of kindergarten teachers in permanent institutions. Therefore, three-year seminars were opened. Candidates between 14 and 18 years old had to provide a public school certificate. The curriculum in seminars was established in line with three criteria: ideological and educational, cognitive, and public, and included such subjects as: pedagogical psychology and pre-school education methodology. As part of the methodology, the curriculum included the following issues: observation of children and activities in the kindergarten, learning about the children's environment, discussing the purpose of the subject, child's character features, games, methodology of classes, administration, and methods of working with children. It is significant that one of the assumptions of the curriculum for three-year seminars was to provide students with the basics of effective work and self-education. This fact is worth noting in terms of the professional development of kindergarten teachers. This assumption imposed almost an obligation on teachers to develop further.

Three-year seminars were the first post-war attempt to reactivate the education of pre-school teachers in permanent institutions. However, in the 1948–1949 school year, the seminars were liquidated, and in their place three-year high schools were created for kindergarten tutors, which had the character of vocational schools. The following subjects were taught: drawing, manual work, methodology of artistic and technical classes, children's literature with the methodology of the child's speech development, singing lessons with the choir, rhythmic, methodology of physical education, methodology of getting children acquainted with nature.

Although in the case of pre-school teachers, high schools prepared well for the profession, but they did not solve the problem of educating teachers. The education in high schools was not culminated in the final matriculation examination, and thus, did not entitle to start higher education.

Over the period 1955–1959, three-year high schools were gradually transformed into five-year pedagogical high schools. The education in high schools was culminated in the final matriculation examination which entitled to take up higher education. In five-year high schools, the idea of educating kindergarten teachers was to correlate pedagogical subjects with workshops and practical exercises, which guaranteed proper vocational preparation³¹.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Z. Woźnicka, *Wychowanie przedszkolne*..., p. 94–97.

In the second half of the 1940's and 1950's, activities were taken not only to educate teaching staff for kindergartens, but also to initiate the process of professional development of teachers. In order to prepare teaching staff to take up managerial positions in 1945, eight-week courses for pre-school education instructors were launched, which could be attended by qualified kindergarten teachers with at least 5 years of pedagogical experience. Zofia Woźnicka described these courses in a detailed way³². The professional development of kindergarten teachers acquired some planning and regularity characteristics³³. It took place in various forms. One of them was a three-stage system of improving and developing teaching staff, which included the Central Center of Developing Teaching Staff, provincial and county centers. In the Central Center in 1953 a section of pre-school education was established, headed by Danuta Dziatelowaska, and later by Stanisława Lipina. They initiated to form pre-school education sections in district centers. On the other hand, pre-school education instructors were working in county centers and coordinated the work of pre-school methodological teams.

Another form of professional development of kindergarten teachers was the pedagogical readings initiated in 1950 by the State Center for Educational Program Works and Pedagogical Research, which contained a description and an analysis of work of leading teachers, tutors and educational activists. It was a form of a two-stage competition. As a result, awarded works were published. As Woźnicka writes: *this action, which were aimed at stimulating creative reflections of teachers, eliciting and disseminating their valuable experiences, significantly contributed to bring the theory and practice closer. It was an important instrument for development and self-education, although the value of the studies differed (quite often they were characterized by a tendency to beautify reality, and skip difficulties and failures). The effect thereof were collections entitled: "Pre-school issues"*³⁴. *Radio talks that have been broadcast by the Polish Radio since 1948 were considered a form of professional development of kindergarten teachers. However, since 1950, as part of these broadcasts, they provided tutorials for educators that subsequently were printed*³⁵.

The post-war period was hallmarked by some effort aimed at rebuilding the professional group of kindergarten teachers. Not earlier than in the second half of the 1950's, education of kindergarten teachers at a semi-high level was initiated and a new concept of this process was developed, which was based on the idea of combining two specialties: pre-school education and elementary education.

The second half of the 1950's was the time which initiated education of kindergarten educators at a semi-high level. At the turn of 1957/1958 in Poznań,

³² Ibid., p. 43–44.

³³ Ibid., p. 67–69.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 68–69.

³⁵ *W naszym przedszkolu. Pogadanki radiowe dla wychowawczyń przedszkoli [In our kindergarten. Radio talks for kindergarten caretakers]*, ed. M. Radziwiłł, Warszawa, PZWS, 1956.

a stationary teachers' seminar providing pre-school education and elementary education was established. The idea of teaching there was based on the idea of combining these two specializations so that graduates thereof would be prepared to work with both pre-school and early-school children. This concept confirmed that the continuity between pre-school education and elementary education was more often and increasingly recognized, which had been already mentioned in 1907 by S. Marciszewska³⁶.

Apart from stationary teachers' studies, at the end of the 1950's, three-year weekend studies were organized for students who did not take the matriculation examination, which however, did not offer any further higher education.

Education of pre-school teachers is a process rooted in history. The experiences of the 19th century and first half of the 20th century in this area became a legacy which one could reap benefits from in the future.

From the time when this profession was defined to the 1950's, there were changes regarding teachers' rights and duties, their social status and tasks they were assigned to at work. The psychological, pedagogical and medical knowledge – about development of children and their upbringing – improved as well. As a consequence, different concepts of educating kindergarten teachers were sought so that they could meet high professional standards. Gradually, this process was more organized and planned.

It has to be recognized that prominent people who cared about the issues of raising the youngest – pedagogues, psychologists, writers, and social activists significantly contributed to the development of pre-school education and the education of teachers. Thanks to their multiple and versatile activity, the pedagogical progress was visible.

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³⁶ B. Sandler, *Wychowanie przedszkolne...*, p. 161.

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Educating female preschool teachers on the territory of Poland in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. An outline of the problem

Summary

The profession of a preschool teacher has a long history and evolved from a person protecting children, through a caretaker and a tutor, to a pre-school teacher. The beginnings of educating kindergarten teachers date back to the first half of the 19th century. At first it took place in the period when Poland was under occupation. In spite of the difficulties, many attempts were made to open educational institutions for female tutors, magazines dealing with the subject of pre-school education were published as well as congresses for teachers and on educational issues were organized.

After Poland regained its independence, one could observe efforts to guarantee education of preschool teachers as an organized and planned process. This was achieved thanks to the following actions: issuing relevant legal acts, opening teachers' seminars, developing pedagogical journalism, and conducting research in various academic centers.

The years of WWII hindered the development of preschool education, and consequently – the education of preschool teachers. It was not until 1945 that efforts were made to restore preschool education and reactivate preschool teachers' education.

Through all that time, people who significantly contributed to raising the level of preschool education were visible and made their mark – philanthropists, pedagogues, psychologists, writers and social activists.

Keywords: kindergarten, teacher, education, pre-school education.