

# CHRONICLE

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## **THE REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF THE TEAM OF THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION AT THE COMMITTEE ON PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES OF THE POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, WARSZAWA, 11 OCTOBER 2018**

On October 11, 2018, the Team of the History of Education at the Committee on Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences held a meeting, hosted this time by the Department of the History of Education of the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw.

Prof. Władysława Szulakiewicz, Ph.D., opened the meeting, and subsequently Jacek Kulbaka, a professor at the Maria Grzegorzewska University, delivered a lecture on the history of the university (since 1922 under the name of the National Institute of Special Education), and presented a broader context of the history of special education in Poland. He also presented a slide show with photographs of people who were connected in the past with the Maria Grzegorzewska University (apart from Maria Grzegorzewska those were, i.a. Józef Joteyko and Janusz Korczak) and emphasized their contribution to the achievements of the university and the meaningful importance of the friendship linking them.

Prof. Karol Poznański, Ph.D., the long-time rector, presented a fragment of the history of the Maria Grzegorzewska University from a different angle. He shared his personal memories with the gathered audience related to the period when he had been trying to expand the university. At the beginning of his work in 1984, he was given two modest buildings: a very small and old one on Spiska Street, and a bit larger one on Szcześliwicka Street. At that time, not many students were admitted for the first year of studies – due to the limited amount of space – only about 100 full-time students and the same number of extramural students (which lasted 4 years at that time). It meant that the overall number of students was only approximately 800, but in order to accommodate everyone, rooms in the adjacent schools were rented. When there were more and more people interested in these studies, and the cooperation with the headmasters of elementary and secondary schools located in the neighbourhood started to improve, it was possible to increase the number of admitted students, especially for extramural studies (which took place at that time on Saturdays and Sundays, and

additionally there were two two-week on-campus sessions), and the number of students reached three or four thousand. Hence, it was possible to increase the number of own full-time university teachers and to participate more widely in the funds granted by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In this way, the university, which became more respected and played a more significant role, could apply for the participation entry in the investment plan of the Ministry, and for the use of students dormitories located in Jelonki. With time, the university was granted funds by the Ministry to build the so-called “library” which, in addition to warehouses storing approximately 200,000 books, housed reading rooms, informatoriums and laboratories for specific purposes, as well as some scientific departments and didactic rooms. A significantly large “didactic pavilion” composed of several containers was built in the open yard behind the gym. In order to commence and conduct a major overhaul of the students dormitory located on Spiska Street, the university established its own unit responsible for renovation and construction, and later as a substitute contractor signed the agreement with the Ministry to erect five modern students dormitories in Jelonki, which made it possible to create over 200 places for students in dormitories. Thanks to these successes, it was possible to initiate the process of erecting a 7-floor didactic building on the university premises (but without the ownership title). After long tedious efforts and endeavors, both the consent and appropriate financial resources were obtained. At that time Prof. Kazimierz Pospiszyl, Ph.D., the then rector, applied to the ministerial authorities for transforming the university called at that time “the Higher School of Special Education” into “the University of Special Education”, with the aim to join the movement of ongoing national changes, but it was not easy, as the Higher School of Special Education – contrary to other higher pedagogical schools (e.g. in Cracow, Gdańsk, Bydgoszcz or Kielce) – had only one department and although with regard to the number of teachers, it belonged to the leaders in the field of education, but without a sufficient number of full-time academic teachers, it did not meet the overall requirements (not statutory requirements at that time). However, thanks to the goodwill and favour of the Sejm committee and the very high evaluation of the role and scientific achievements of the Higher School of Special Education, the institution was given the honorable name of the University. At present it enjoys all rights that it is entitled to, and the Board of the Department of Pedagogy is composed of over fifty professors titular and university professors. Prof. Karol Poznański, Ph.D., emphasized that *we created this history*, which brought so much joy and satisfaction – in this case, “we” means a wide group, as, on the one hand, the expansion of the oldest university educating special pedagogues in Poland would not have been possible if not the assistance of many people not employed at the university, whose support and kindness we had managed to obtain, and on the other – he was lucky to cooperate during three tenures with very diligent and responsible administrative directors who became the main builders: Włodzimierz Wolniak (the library), Tadeusz Konrad and Wiesława Nasierowska, his deputy (Jelonki, Spiska and the didactic

block with three assembly halls), as well as school quaestors: Zofia Świdorska and Halina Baczul, and the vice-rectors: Prof. Ludwik Malinowski, Ph.D., (vicerec-  
tor of teaching), Urszula Eckert, Ph.D., and Prof. Jadwiga Kuczyńska-Kwapisz,  
Ph.D., (vicerectors of science and foreign cooperation).

Both professional speeches demonstrated that in the history of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, both in the times of Maria Grzegorzewska and Prof. Karol Poznański, the human factor was of great importance and could many times offset the impact of other factors, such as economic or political difficulties.

The subsequent part of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion about the further research on the history of special education in Poland and its directions. Jacek Kulbaka, Ph.D., a professor of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, stated there was still a long way to go in this area: a new monograph about the history of the University of Special Education would come in handy or some paper might be dedicated to the profiles of people involved in special education in the past. Joanna Sosnowska, Ph.D., who dealt with the problems of childcare (exercised by German authorities and charity organizations) in Łódź during World War I mentioned about the abundant archive materials in Łódź. The materials on special education (buildings, people, ideas) have been preserved as well, some of them, such as *Dziennik Zarządu Miasta Łodzi* (the Management Journal of the City of Łódź) are also available online, and due to the pioneering nature of the activities run by the management board to which Stefan Kopciński belonged, it is worth dedicating particular attention to the archives of Łódź. Prof. Karol Poznański, Ph.D., added that the archive in Łódź is one of the most valuable as far as the history of Polish education in the interwar period is concerned. However, a number of valuable materials have also been preserved in the archive in Lublin, and fewer materials – in Kielce and Radom. They include such sources as class registers and protocols from school staff meetings which make it possible to learn about the specificity of local communities. The sources and studies of Central Archives of Modern Records (Pl. Archiwum Akt Nowych AAN), Central Statistical Office of Poland (Pl. Główny Urząd Statystyczny GUS) and Supreme Audit Office (Pl. Najwyższa Izba Kontroli NIK) are also interesting. Prof. Karol Poznański, Ph.D., drew attention to the fact that in the history of special education in Poland, the period of People's Poland is not much examined – e.g. the interpretation of the operation of the Polish Parliament (Sejm) and its commissions is missing. Jacek Kulbaka, Ph.D., stated that the Sejm library gives access the transcripts of Sejm sessions, while the Sejm committees rarely dealt with the problems of the disabled, but the transcripts of the sub-committees' meetings already contain such materials. He also noticed that our post-war pedagogues in the 1970's had good background and knowledge about the pedagogy in Western Europe, and the Polish press constituted an important source in the process of acquiring this knowledge. Witold Chmielewski, Ph.D., a professor of the Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education Ignatianum added that the Silesian archives also contain interesting materials about people with disabilities.



Fot. A. Zagrodzka

The participants of the meeting of the Team of the History of Education at the Committee on *Pedagogical Sciences* of the *Polish Academy* of Sciences. Sitting from the left: Prof. W. Szulakiewicz, Prof. K. Poznański, A. Królikowska, Ph.D., Prof. H. Markiewicz. Standing from the left: M. Stawiak-Ososińska, Ph.D., J. Falkowska, Ph.D., Rev. Dr. M. Wierzbicki, E. Dolata, Ph.D., A. Haratyk, Ph.D., Rev. Prof. K. Miśiaszek, K. Dormus, a professor of the Pedagogical University of Kraków, E. Barnaś-Baran, Ph.D., D. Grabowska-Pieńkosz, Ph.D., W. Chmielewski, a professor of the Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education Ignatianum, J. Kamińska, a professor of the University of Warsaw, A. Fijałkowski, a professor of the University of Warsaw, B Topij-Stempińska, Ph.D., Rev. Dr. A. Bieś, J. Sosnowska, Ph.D., J. Kulbaka, a professor of the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, I. Czarnecka, Ph.D., R. Skrzyniarz, a professor of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, A. Żakiewicz, a professor of the University of Opole.

The last part of the meeting concerned the ideas and plans for organizing conferences and scientific publications in 2019. Beata Topij-Stempińska, Ph.D., encouraged the gathered to publish articles on the history of preschool education in the quarterly issued magazine entitled “Edukacja Elementarna w Teorii i Praktyce”. Ryszard Skrzyniarz, Ph.D., a professor of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin invited the audience to participate in the interdisciplinary conference on historical biographical writings (under a working title: *Pedagogical biography and its application in education*), scheduled for 11-12.04.2019 at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. Katarzyna Dormus, Ph.D., a professor of the Pedagogical University of Kraków scheduled for the turn of March and April 2019 a conference on changes in Polish school, related to the hundredth anniversary of the Teachers’ Sejm. Janina Kamińska, Ph.D., reminded about the Pedagogical Congress which is supposed to take place in September. She expressed the hope that it would be desirable if educational historians took part in it and thus, marked their presence. Adam Fijałkowski, Ph.D., professor of the University of Warsaw, encouraged the gathered to send articles and texts on the

history of education to “Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny” which publishes a lot of research texts, but historical articles included therein are scarce. Subsequently, the participants were involved in a brief discussion about footnotes (footnotes in brackets and standard ones). At the end, authorized by Prof. Dorota Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Ph.D., Prof. Władysława Szulakiewicz, Ph.D., invited the participants to the congress of historians of education in Poznań in October 2019.

ALICJA ZAGRODZKA  
ORCID: 0000-0002-6684-0948  
Warsaw