

Mrozowska, Kamilla

All-Polish Conference in Cracow on History of Education - Research and Teaching

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KAMILLA MROZOWSKA

ALL-POLISH CONFERENCE IN CRACOW ON HISTORY
OF EDUCATION — RESEARCH AND TEACHING

On 23—24 September, 1987 in Cracow an all-Polish conference was held on research methods and didactic practice in history of education. The conference was organized by the Section of History of Education and Upbringing of the Jagiellonian University in conjunction with the Chair of History of Education and Upbringing of "Komisja Edukacji Narodowej Pedagogical" University in Cracow.

On the first day of the conference the papers and discussions centred on the problem of historical-educational research; on the second day, issues pertaining to teaching of this discipline in higher schools were discussed. The opening paper was read by Prof. Kamilla Mrozowska who presented those scholars and their scholarly interests who, introducing history of education and culture into university curricula, also conducted intensive and wide-ranging research of sources. Thus, they initiated the formation of distinct research trends in the development of the discipline in question. The first professor of history of culture at the Jagiellonian University (in the years 1923—1933), Stanislaw Kot, combining harmoniously research in links between Polish and western culture, simultaneously paved the way for investigations in the history of schooling and pedagogical thinking in Poland during the Renaissance and Reformation. He was also the author of the first university manual of history of upbringing. Stanislaw Lempicki, professor of history of upbringing at the University of Lvov (1925—1939), concentrated his scholarly interests on history of Polish education, drawing attention to the value of regional studies and the role that secondary school teachers can play in them. Helena Radlińska, the mother of Polish social pedagogy, was simultaneously a precursor of historical investigations in the field of extra school education and educational-cultural activity among adults. As director of Social-Educational Work Studium in Wolna Wszechnica Polska in Warsaw (1926—1939) she outlined for her students and collaborators an original plan of wide-scope research, interpreting historical research with socio-educational problems. These three scholars indicated the speakers—are in the lead of creators of history of education as a wide-scope discipline linked in a multiplicity of ways with other humanistic disciplines.

Methodological issues were discussed in the following paper by Doc. Julian Dybiec (Jagiellonian University) and Prof. Czesław Majorek (Pedagogical University of Cracow): "Contemporary conceptions of history of education as a science". On the basis of examples from historical-pedagogical publications from America, Great Britain, France and Germany, and discussions on international conferences, they characterized new trends and new methods of research. They pointed out the changes in research questionnaires as well as the broadening and deepening of analytical tools. More and more frequently historical-educational investigations employ theoretical proposals from sociology, geography, statics and economy.

More specific problems were discussed in the papers and communique by Prof. Stanislaw Litak (Catholic University of Lublin): "From a historian of education"; Prof. Eugenia Podgórska (Łódź University): "Methodological problems of biographical works in the field of history of education"; Prof. Lech Mokrzecki and Dr. Józef Zerko (Gdańsk University): "Regionalism in research and teaching of

history". Prof. Litak discussed in his paper the problems of use of ecclesiastic sources for a complete description of school system in Poland. He pointed out a great variety and abundance of these sources, the necessity to catalogue them and make more thorough their interpretation. He emphasized the fact that sacral art should be more extensively employed as a source of knowledge about the educational influence of the Church. Prof. Podgórska presented the results of research in the Łódź milieu. In her paper she demonstrated the role of bibliography writing for historical-educational works. She pointed out the various ways in which this issue can be approached in different epochs and milieus and with different research problems in mind. This in turn has bearing on research methods, which means that this sort of investigations should be widely diversified as to the uses, selection of sources, and the ways of their interpretation. The authors of the communique on regionalism emphasized the ambiguity of this notion. They described the research in the Gdańsk milieu on history of education in this region and methods with which they attempt to attract the students to history of education in Pomerania.

This part of the conference was in a way summarized in the communique by Doc. Andrzej Meissner (Pedagogical University of Rzeszów): "Polish manuals for history of upbringing". He described the progress of research among at a synthetic account of history of education, from the earliest attempts in the first half of the 19th century, until the second half of our century. A. Meissner treated the issues involved comparatively, paying particular attention to the development of theory of manuals of history of education, among others in German literature of the beginning of the 20th century. Parallel works Polish on the same issue turn out to be quite rare. An exception in this respect is Stanisław Kot's modern manual, based on a wide range of source works, which can be treated as exemplary both in its construction and presentation of material.

In the discussion that followed the issue of modernness of research methods and Polish contributions in this respect (Doc. Renata Dutkova, Jagellonian University) were touched, also the value of church sources and the problem of access to them were underlined (Doc. Irena Szybiak, Warsaw University). The attention was drawn to the growth of interest in regional history. At the same time, said Doc. Adam Massalski (Pedagogical University of Kielce), the standard of publications is very uneven, which is a corollary of a lack of prior methodological training and ignorance of essentials with many authors. On the same day jubilee celebrations were held to honour pedagogical and scholarly activity of Prof. Kamilla Mrozowska, whose scholarly, didactic and organizational achievements were characterized by Doc. Meissner. On behalf of her colleagues and students, Doc. J. Dybiec handed her in a volume of *Prace Historyczne (Historical Works)* dedicated to her.

The second day of the conference began with the presentation by Prof. Stanisław Michalski (Poznań University): "The role of history of education in the system of pedagogical sciences". He talked about the changing position of history of education in pedagogical education. He also indicated the role of this discipline in formation of views on goals and aims of didactic-educational works, and, on the other hand, on the influence of pedagogical needs on contents and construction of questionnaires used by historians of education.

Doc. Irena Szybiak discussed, on the basis of the inquiry conducted in spring 1987, "The current situation in the teaching of history of education". She indicated the different position that this subject occupies in curricula of different schools, depending on pedagogical specialization and availability of qualified staff, or the interest in history of education in different milieus. Forms of teaching were also discussed and the scope of materials presented to the students. This diversification

has both positive and negative effects, especially when the total number of hours devoted to history of education is limited and there are no manuals and additional readings.

MA theses and MA seminars were discussed in the following three papers. The themes of MA theses and methods of seminar work were discussed in the communique by Doc. Wiktor Frąckowiak (Gdańsk University): contents and forms of MA seminars in history of education were discussed by Doc. Tadeusz Jałmużny; Dr. Wiesława Leżańska and Ms. Ewa Witkowska: their paper entitled "The role and significance of MA theses on history of education for pedagogical training". Dr. Jan Krukowski (Pedagogical University of Cracow) presented "Issues in history of education as discussed in MA these completed in Pedagogical University of Cracow, 1974—1986". The last communique differed from the previous presentations. It included the analysis of structure of MA theses written at the Pedagogical University with respect to their themes, as well as the scope of the materials used. We also find here a characterization of staff availability, and of other factors determining the diversification of the standard of MA theses. The last communique, by Dr. Danuta Koźmian (Szczecin University): "Views of Szczecin University students on curricula of history of education in the light of poll inquiries", reported the views of about 100 first year students of pedagogy on contents, methods of presentation, construction of curricula, manuals, readings and value of acquired knowledge. The polled students studied pedagogy and the beginning of teaching. The reader rightly observed that the number of the polled was not representative enough to justify far-reaching conclusions. The answer given by the students constituted an interesting supplement to earlier considerations of teaching of history of education.

In this part of the conference the guest from West Berlin, Prof. Klaus-Dichter Mende (Hochschule der Künste, Institut für Allgemeine Pädagogik) informed about the research on history of education in German Federal Republic. The participants of the discussion were the following. Doc. Franciszek Berezniński who talked about the general situation in Polish pedagogy. Prof. St. Litak and Prof. St. Michalski touched the issue of MA theses arguing against writing monographs on school-educational centres. A different position was taken by Prof. Mirosława Chamcówna (Wrocław University) who drew attention to the fact that MA seminars are overcrowded, students' aptitudes are different (external students) which necessitates taking up of different topics. Of the same opinion was Prof. Zygmunt Ruta (Pedagogical University of Cracow) who stated that the majority of MA theses are of good quality and as such can be of use in compilation of monographs on secondary schools.

The conference was summed up by Prof. K. Mrozowska. She underlined as positive the participation of representatives from almost all universities, and indicated the problems deserving particular attention. She emphasized the importance of comparative studies for research in history of education, the necessity of constant extension of source basis, the diversification and modernization of research methods and permanent reporting of results. She also indicated the need to extend the catalogue of bibliographical works, e.g., the description of the role and significance for history of education of the activity of such scholars as Stanisław Kot, Stanisław Lempicki and others. Finally, she underlined the postulate of more frequent meetings of historians of education for the purpose of deepening of their co-operation and the exchange of experiences.

Translated by Michał Post