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**FEMALE TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE PRIVATE TEACHER
TRAINING COLLEGE IN MARIÓWKA OPCZYŃSKA
BETWEEN 1921 AND 1936
(OUTLINE OF ISSUES)**

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The article outlines the historic, social and cultural premises of the teacher education development in Poland in 1921 – 1936. It describes the various types of institutions that provided the teacher training education in Poland in this period, and some aspects of their activity. The focus is laid on the Teacher Training College in Mariówka Opoczyńska established at Congregation of Serving Nuns of Holy Mary. The authors analyze the peculiarities of its functioning and the curriculum of female teacher education in particular. They indicate the significance of Teacher Training College for developing the professional skills and personality traits of the candidates for teacher profession.

Key words: Polish system of education, teacher education, preparatory school, teacher training college, Private Female Teacher Training College, teaching staff, college curriculum, female student groups.

One of the problems the Polish system of education had to cope with after the First World War was deficiency of teachers. Education institutions established spontaneously could not function and develop without suitable teaching staff. In such a situation, contemporary school authorities decided to establish various forms of education and supplementary education provided to professionally active teachers [17, s. 25]¹. Institutions established recently included *preparanda* (supplementary, preparatory school; a two-year-course for young people who did not complete 7 grades of primary school but attended teacher training colleges preparing them for the teaching profession), state teacher training courses, teacher training colleges, since 1928 pedagogy and after colleges were closed down in 1932 – pedagogic secondary schools. These schools differed from one another in terms of curriculum, requirements as well as didactic and education methods. All institutions providing education to teachers' enrolled candidates based on selection, which focused, first of all, on their knowledge, skills, ear for music and health

¹ School system faced deficiency of candidates for teaching profession; many unqualified, casually selected individuals appeared: craftsmen, engineers and lawyers. They performed their work using "various methods, sometimes very valuable and innovative, (as Mr Michał Siudak, popular in Poland), but also ineffectual, unprofessional, imperfect and harmful". More information available.

conditions. When the demand for teachers was higher or their inflow decreased, selection became less strict. In the event that there were more candidates enrolment requirements were stricter. During teachers' education, attention was paid, most of all, to students' progress. Quite often the attitude towards children, future responsibilities and teacher's features of character, which might occur in the course of teaching practice, were not taken into consideration [17, s. 38-40].

During the rebirth of the Polish state, it was difficult to find appropriate candidates for teaching profession. Partition of Poland contributed to fact that majority of young people received only basic education, which made it impossible for them to receive secondary school instruction. They were unable to find role model of a good teacher. Facing such difficulties, it was necessary to establish institutions the main intention of which was to compensate for basic education deficiencies, suitable shaping of students' characters and initial preparation for proper education at schools providing teacher education. The Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment in early months of its activity, in order to meet these requirements established preparatory schools in 1917. Initially, these institutions were referred to as preparatory courses or Preliminary Teacher Training Courses [28]. These were 2-year-coeducational scientific institutions the aim of which was to prepare young people (age 12-15) for education provided by teacher training colleges [21, s. 93]. Individuals, who completed at least 4-grade-public school and planned to receive further education in teacher training colleges, attended such institutions. Preparatory schools were supposed to solve the problem of deficiency of candidates for teaching profession. Their aim was also to select the most willing candidates in terms of their professional usefulness. These institutions partially replaced teacher training colleges in this obligation. They were referred to as a kind of bridge between public schools and colleges [18, s. 131]. Preparatory schools were very popular among young people from the countryside because these individuals who had difficult access to further education were the most willing ones to receive teacher training education. This group of people considered an opportunity of teaching profession in terms of social advancement. Preparatory school teachers were carefully selected individuals; therefore they were required to understand issues concerning children, as well as moral and social culture. In practice, these institutions employed home tutors as well as teachers who received academic education [15, s. 90]. Preparatory schools were established from the early 30s until public schools took over the responsibility of preparing candidates for teacher training education [16, s. 47].

Teacher training college, established pursuant to legally valid "Decree on teacher education at public schools" of 7th February 1919, was an institution responsible for teacher education which lasted 5 years. There were state colleges - separate for boys and girls and private ones - coeducational. College education included 5 courses. The first three courses were of comprehensive nature and they

focused on mathematics, natural and artistic and technical subjects. The last two years were of vocational nature within the range of which pedagogy, psychology, education history, child science and fundamental methods of teaching were provided. Apart from that, students attended teaching practice at public schools, which substituted exercise schools. Teacher training colleges accepted graduates of public schools between the age of 14 and 20 who passed entrance exam. Teacher training education ended with the final exam, including written exam (Polish language and pedagogy) and oral exams (Polish language exam was of special importance; a student who failed this part of final exam, was not allowed to take oral exams). Teacher training colleges functioned until 1936, closing down these institutions and gradual decreasing of their activity was subject to Jędrzejewicz Act [16, s. 44-45; 28, s. 198-212; 20, s. 142-143].

Apart from preparatory school and teacher training colleges, there were National Teacher Training Courses (intended for individuals who completed VI or VII grade of gymnasium, passed gymnasium exam or received equivalent education) [17, s. 81-82]². In 1928, 2-year-pedagogy for secondary school graduates started and since 1932, pedagogic secondary schools were established, instead of teacher training colleges [17, s. 81].

Among teacher training colleges established in 1921 there was the Teacher Training College in Mariówka Opoczyńska. It was established at Congregation of Serving Nuns of Holy Mary [27, s. 242–254; 7, s. 384–392]³ initiated by the priest Julian Młynarczyk - chaplain and confessor of serving nuns, later on head of Teacher Training College. Teacher training college authorities carefully selected teaching staff. Despite the fact that teachers changed quite often, it was possible to create the team which was willing to achieve the best teaching effects and implement ideological values of the college [26, s. 548]. School, apart from lay teachers, employed also nuns who did not receive any remuneration for their work (within school year 1928/29, 6 nuns worked at schools and 18 of them worked at boarding house, there was also a director – priest J. Młynarczyk. Saved money was intended for reduction of student tuition fees.

² In Poland, there were only 8 cities where state courses were conducted and 3 cities where private courses were conducted.

³ In Mariówka, nuns conducted intensive educational activities. Apart from congregation, in 1903-1907 the following activities were also carried out: Craft School, between 1907 and 1945 Private Female Farm and Craft School, since 1938 till 1939 there was also Tailoring and Linen School which at the beginning war suspended its activity and restarted it in 1943, and in 1946 it was transformed into Female Tailoring and Linen Gymnasium (conducted till 1952), between 1948 and 1950 there was 4-grade Catering Gymnasium, between 1914 and 1922 there was Security College, since 1933 there was Private Female Comprehensive Gymnasium, and since 1937 Private Female Secondary School. More information regarding schools conducted by nuns can be found in M. Wójcik, *Prywatne Gimnazjum i Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. bł. Królowej Jadwigi w Marice Opoczyńskiej (1933-1954, 1992-)*, Sandomierz 1995.

Education at Teacher Training College for the first two years of its activity was free of charge. Students did not have to pay for accommodation at the boarding house. The only school-related costs was registration fee for school office maintenance in the amount of 200 D-marks and annual fare to pay for fuel and electricity in the amount of 600 D-marks. Students usually paid back for food in kind. Such a situation was possible thanks to subsidy of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. For the following two years, the state paid for one full-time employment [23, s. 4–5]. Free education and boarding house accommodation was very difficult to cover by Congregation, therefore later on, monthly fares were introduced (e.g. in school year 1930/31) 45 PLN for education and 70 PLN for the boarding house accommodation [26, s. 549].

College curriculum complied with “Decree on education of teachers at public schools in Poland of 7th July 1919”, which specified obligatory subjects: religious instruction, Polish language with literature, Polish language, education about Poland with civil instruction, maths with drawing, geography with geology and cosmology, chemistry with mineralogy, biology, physics, general and social hygiene, drawing, gardening, apiculture, singing, music, crafts, physical exercises with games involving physical movement, pedagogy, psychology and logic, calligraphy [5]. Comprehensive subjects were taught during the first three courses, while pedagogy-related and vocational subjects were added during the last two years of education. The fourth course included practical classes in the form of class inspection at exercise school. During the fifth course, the amount of classes increased and weekly pedagogic excursion was planned [26, s. 540]. Female students were introduced to the latest pedagogic achievements, visiting famous schools in Warszawa. Students were provided with classes in fully equipped rooms, among others geography, chemistry, physics and biology and three recreational rooms: gymnastics, theatre and music. They could use numerous teaching aids: pictures, maps, illustrations (display boards) [26, s. 540]. College students had to take and pass the final graduation exam in the presence of committee consisting of 7 members [1].

In order to avoid occurrence of offence and searching for culprits, preventive education system was provided. It involved introduction of supervision, taking care of atmosphere full of mutual trust, friendly relations between authorities and teaching staff and mutual willingness to help one another. College atmosphere inspired to work intensively and creatively and to shape required attitudes among the students. All teachers lived within one location, thanks to which they created cohesive team, which was interested in entirety of school issues. Teaching staff shared all joys and sadness with their students, worked and played together, also after classes [26, s. 541].

The fact that all students of Teacher Training College found accommodation at the boarding house contributed to creating various groups and organizations

which gathered young people and influenced their patriotic and piety way of thinking. They socialized and taught responsibility and proper behaviour, encouraged practicing physical exercises. Since 1921, when this institution started its activity, student government known as Self-education Group „Jedność” (“Unity”) was established. All female students belonged to this group. The main activity of student government was the concern for proper education of young students, majority of whom had knowledge deficiencies regarding table manners, behaviour, personal hygiene and appearance. The aim of student government was “cooperation in shaping features of character and developing individual skills” [11, s. 11]. In order to manage the task, female students engaged themselves in tidiness maintenance, laying the table, serving meals, washing-up, etc. [9, s. 13].

Within the College area, the following groups were conducted: Women Military Training, Scouts, Anti-aircraft and Anti-gas Defence League, Polish Red Cross, Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Social and Sports Group. Acting on behalf of these organizations, female students took care of children from rural areas, assisted them in their learning process, sewed clothes, collected money for noble aims, gave lectures in neighbouring towns, taught local inhabitants patriotic songs and parlour games. Apart from that they "prepared themselves for the position of auxiliary instructor of military service", they acted voluntarily, and they acquired the responsibility for the Country, necessary at that time [12, s. 15; 24, s.17; 8, s. 15; 26, s. 552-553]. Many female students belonged to the Natural Science Club, which in 1926 was included in "School Young Tourist Group Association" [6, s. 16-17]. The aim of this Group was extending natural science knowledge, care and protection of flora and fauna, getting familiarized with habits and folklore of local inhabitants [14, s. 7]. The Group arranged many regional trips and longer scientific and sightseeing excursions [6, s. 16–17].

College pride and mark was school magazine "Brzask" ("Dawn"). Its beginnings were related to Literary Group initiated by the teacher of Polish language Janina Łabędzka in school year 1921/22. Initially, group meetings focused on developing literary talents and skills and getting familiarized with native literature. Students composed occasional poems, prepared school celebrations, edited and wrote manually the school monthly magazine "Niespodzianka" ("Surprise"). When the priest Julian Młynarczyk took care after the group in school year 1923/24, title of the magazine was changed for "Brzask"

("Dawn") and it was published every two months [4, s. 9; 3, s. 18–19].

Female students who have artistic skills could develop their abilities at school theatre. Each year, several plays were staged for their friends and inhabitants from nearby towns [22, s. 4–7].

Every year, College arranged St. Nicholas Day, St. Andrew's Eve Party, "tea and evening parties" with reference to names-day of the school head or boarding house tutors. Young people willingly celebrated important public holidays and

anniversaries. During carnival, balls were arranged, in which students from other schools could take part [10, s. 2–4; 25, s. 10–12; 19, s. 8-10; 13, s. 7–8].

Thanks to extensive activities, not only didactic ones, students had their time arranged. Many unwilling and negative types of behaviour were eliminated. Students were instructed on group cooperation, co-responsibility for common good, they developed their creativity, formed the attitude of being receptive to the needs of other human being. Students were very close to one another and friendships initiated during education period, lasted for many years. Candidates were allowed to enrol for the Teacher Training College after completing 7-grade-public-school or passing entrance exam. Nearby public school in Smogorzew had only 6 grades, therefore preliminary supplementary course for candidates was arranged. Thanks to such a course, girls from the area could receive education at the College. There were so many individuals willing to receive education that nuns had to send candidates back home, due to the fact that a boarding house could not offer accommodation for all of them [26, s. 549]. Majority of female students receiving education at Teacher Training College came from Kielce or Lublin Provinces. However, among them there were also young ladies from other provinces [2]. Number of female students in Manowce College annually reached almost 180. Majority of girls came from lower social classes (they were daughters of workers and peasants). Among female students, there were orphans of war heroes and daughters of borderland owners who lost their accommodation [26, s. 549-550]⁴. Girls from the poorest families were entitled to fare concession [26, s. 550].

Almost all students lived in a boarding house next to the college, some of them arrived. Daily schedule of female students was planned according to boarding house regulations. Boarding house tutors and student government were responsible for observing its rules. Complying with regulations allowed to uniform educational guidelines and monitor students' activities [26, s. 541].

Private Female Teacher Training College provided education to more than 300 teachers within 15 years of its activity. Majority of them came from the countryside and after completing their education they return to their villages carrying the torch of enlightenment to many benighted areas. Principles applied at school not only enabled to provide the students with necessary knowledge but they also helped in shaping individual characters to be open to human needs, sensitive to other people's pain and misfortune, responsible for own actions. They were quiet heroines fighting for improvement of education level of Polish children.

⁴ According to records of Teacher Training College between 1921 and 1936, female students 393 were enrolled to school. 207 of them came from peasant and working class background (there were 89 daughters of workers and 118 daughters of peasants). Moreover, 43 students were daughters of land owners and leaseholders. 96 students were of intellectual origins (families of engineers, office workers, teachers). The remaining 47 students came from families of other professions (workers, merchants, senior citizens) among whom there were also orphans.

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**ЖІНОЧА ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ОСВІТА У ПРИВАТНОМУ ПЕДАГОГІЧНОМУ
КОЛЕДЖІ В МАРІУВЦІ ОПОЧИНСЬКІЙ У 1921–1936 РОКАХ
(ОГЛЯД ПРОБЛЕМ)**

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Розглянуто історичні, соціокультурні передумови розвитку педагогічної освіти в Польщі у 1921–1936 роках. Виокремлено типи освітніх інституцій, що забезпечували підготовку вчителів у Польщі у цей період; розкрито мету, особливості їхньої діяльності. Звернено увагу на Педагогічний Коледж у Маріувці Опочинській, який став приватним після двох років існування та був заснований на основі Конгрегації черниць Пресвятої Богородиці. Висвітлено організаційні особливості діяльності коледжу, зміст педагогічної освіти на підставі аналізу навчального плану. Описано характерні ознаки освітнього середовища та вплив психологічно-комфортної атмосфери на процес навчання й виховання студентів коледжу. Проаналізовано діяльність жіночих організацій при цій інституції, турботу їхніх представниць про дітей з сільської місцевості. Показано значущість приватного жіночого педагогічного коледжу для формування професійних знань, особистісних рис, необхідних для педагогічної діяльності майбутніх учителів.

Ключеві слова: система освіти Польщі, педагогічна освіта, педагогічний коледж, підготовча школа, приватний жіночий педагогічний коледж, викладацький склад, навчальний план, жіночі студентські організації.

