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The Commission of National Education's teachers and associates: An outline of a collective portrait on the basis of the biographical dictionary

Summary: This article is an attempt at outlining a collective portrait of the individuals involved in education and scientific work in the framework of the Commission of National Education (KEN). The source base that made this study possible is *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1794. Słownik biograficzny* [*Commission of National Education 1773—1794: A biographical dictionary*]. The publication encompasses all the individuals that in a direct way participated in the education reform, i.e. in devising the reform concept and in its implementation. That group of individuals consists of more than 1,900 people, which is a sufficient basis for characterising the selected professional group functioning in 18th-century Poland. Owing to the fact that the biographical dictionary constitutes the main source of the presented collective portrait, this article also presents a detailed concept of that publication. It has exerted a significant influence on the eventual image of the group of the Commission's teachers and associates.

Keywords: Commission of National Education, biographical dictionary, Main Schools' personnel, secondary school teachers

This article is an attempt at outlining a collective portrait of the individuals involved in education and scientific work in the framework of the Commission of National Education (KEN). The source base that made this study possible is *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1794. Słownik biograficzny* [*Commission of National Education 1773—1794: A biographical dictionary*]. That group of individuals consists of more than 1,900 people, which is a sufficient basis for

characterising the selected professional group functioning in 18th-century Poland. Owing to the fact that the biographical dictionary constitutes the main source of the presented collective portrait, this article also presents a detailed concept of that publication. It has exerted a significant influence on the eventual image of the group of the Commission's teachers and associates.

1. The concept of the KEN biographical dictionary

Among the greatest challenges facing the Commission of National Education (KEN), established in 1773, aside from creating the ideological bases for the education system and its organisational, financial, educational and disciplinary principles, were issues related to the concept of creating a central educational authority and its regional branches, as well as the prioritised task of proper training of the teaching staff. Those were the factors that were believed to determine the efficacy of the education reform.

This is why discussions about personnel issues undertaken by the Commission of National Education were an impulse for the work on a biographical dictionary of that educational authority. It was decided that researching the biographies of those individuals could provide opportunities of understanding the KEN's personnel policy and its practical implementation. They also allow answering questions concerning the functioning of the teaching personnel, both on the central and the local levels.

This task was undertaken by the research team named *Komisji Edukacji Narodowej model szkoły i obywatela. Koncepcje, doświadczenia i inspiracje* [*The Commission of National Education's model of the school and the citizen: Concepts, experiences and inspirations*], working under the guidance of Professor Kalina Bartnicka from the Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw.

The dictionary is a collective work by scholars of a number of Polish scientific institutes, such as the Ignatianum Academy in Kraków (Ludwik Grzebień, Andrzej Paweł Bieś, Anna Królikowska, Beata Topij-Stempińska), Polish Academy of Sciences (Kalina Bartnicka), Catholic University of Lublin (Alicja Puszk), University of Gdańsk (Kazimierz Puchowski), Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (Mariusz Ausz), Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce (Adam Massalski, Ewa Kula, Marzenna Pękowska), Pedagogical University of Kraków (Katarzyna Dormus, Jan Ryś, Ryszard Ślęczka), Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Dorota Żołędź-Strzelczyk, Wiesław Jamrozek, Justyna Gulczyńska, Krzysztof Ratajczak, Michał Nowicki), University of Rzeszów (Beata Lorens, Justyna Meissner-Łozińska), Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń (Agnieszka Wałęga), University of Warsaw (Irena Szybiak, Katarzyna

Buczek, Janina Kamińska), University of Wrocław (Stefania Walasek), University of Economics and Innovation in Lublin (Andrzej Meissner), Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University (Jan Wnęk) and Legnica University of Management (Roman Stępień). Besides, Basilian Bogdan Pietnoczko, a historian of the Basilian Order and a member of the Provincial House of the Basilians in Warsaw, and Dominican Marek Miławicki, a historian of the Dominican Order and a member of the Dominican Historical Institute in Kraków, were invited to cooperate.

The work on the biographical dictionary began, as is usual in the case of that type publications, with specifying the method of selecting the biographical entries. Based on the text of the Proclamation of the Commission of National Education of the Polish Crown and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania of 24 October 1773, it was agreed that the Commission assumed supervision over schools for the nobility youth, i.e. the two academies in Kraków and Vilnius, and secondary schools situated in the regions which remained within the territory of the Commonwealth after the First Partition. Significant changes were introduced into the existing education system, as most of the Jesuit colleges were closed down or handed over to new owners. For this purpose, the Commission initiated talks with several monastic orders expressing an interest in undertaking educational work: the Basilians, the Benedictines, the Cistercians, the Dominicans, the Bartholomites, the Piarists and the Canons Regulars. A decision was taken to take over academic colonies¹. In order to improve organisational activities, the country was divided into departments with province schools (22) and county schools, the number of which was not a steady one (e.g. 49 in 1778). It was not until the Commission of National Education's Acts for the academic estate and the schools of the Commonwealth [*Ustawy Komisji Edukacji Narodowej dla stanu akademickiego i na szkoły w krajach Rzeczypospolitej przepisane*] were passed in 1783, which created school departments with department schools (9) and sub-department schools (64), that the situation stabilised. Such an organisational structure was to be expanded by the Piarist Department consisting of the schools owned by the Piarist Order in the Crown's territory (10)².

¹ W. Grzelecki, *Szkoły-kolonie Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego 1588—1773. Problematyka kształcenia i wychowania*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1986. In that region, there used to be an academic colony in Miechów in the 16th century, but we do not know whether it survived until the 18th century. The Lesser Poland region, prior to the Partitions of Poland, was home to schools in Kraków, Tarnów, Nowy Sącz, Biecz, Miechów, Wieliczka, Wojnicz, Bochnia, Kielce and Pińczów. Only two schools, i.e. in Kraków and Pińczów, remained within the Lesser Poland Department after the First Partition.

² Still in the 1780s, the Commission carried out certain amendments to the school network, but it is hard to establish its results. It is only confirmed that a sub-department school was founded in 1791 in Stężyca. Aside from secondary schools, two universities were also brought under the

The Commission exercised no authority over schools of other religions, as well as those of a professional profile, e.g. engineering (such as the Engineers' Corps School in Vilnius), military, knights' academies (e.g. Warsaw, Grodno, transferred to Vilnius, Biała, Rydzyna, Slutsk, Nyasvizh, Niemirów)³, medical (e.g. Warsaw, Grodno, Vilnius) or art (such as the Painters' School in Warsaw)⁴. The Commission also exercised no formal supervision over parochial schools, entrusting it to civil and military committees, and provided for formulation of educational principles of their operation in the spirit of enlightening the people⁵. Considering that the latter concept constituted an important element of the Commission's work, it provided support to the seminaries educating teachers of those schools in Vilnius (founded in 1775 thanks to Ignacy Masalski), Kielce and Łowicz (founded in 1787 thanks to Michał Poniatowski). Even though it exercised no formal control over those schools, the Commission conducted visitations there and provided funding⁶. The Commission also made attempts at founding girls' schools, where August Sułkowski played the greatest role.

Commission's governance, which came to be known as the Main Schools. The Commission took over the school in Berestechko (Volhynian Department), run by the Trinitarian Order, who committed themselves to complying with the Acts. There is, however, no information about what happened to that school. In 1788, a school was opened in Ushachy, run by the Dominicans, of which a school inspector wrote that they are seemingly like parochial schools, but indeed, they are very different. The school inspector recommended to the Dominicans that the school remains at the elementary level, but we have no knowledge about whether the Dominicans complied with that request. Another school mentioned was based in Dzisna, run by Franciscans in the Navahrudak Department, but we do not know the organisational level of that school. Moreover, the Basilians in Baruny, Bernardines in Dotnuva, missionaries in Tykocin and Franciscans in Żuromin sought to have their schools ranked as secondary schools. The Commission, however, did not give its consent due to their low teaching levels. There is also no information about the post-Jesuit school in Ilūkste, in which the Commission was interested and did not make visitations there. According to Popłatek, instruction was first provided there by former Jesuits, whereby the Missionaries took over. The subject of secondary schools was explored by I. Szybiak ("Sieć szkół średnich Komisji Edukacji Narodowej", in *Nowożytna myśl naukowa w szkołach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, ed. I. Stasiewicz-Jasiukowa, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973, 259—269).

³ W. Lisowski, *Polskie Korpusy Kadetów 1765—1956. Z dziejów wychowania*, Warsaw, 1983.

⁴ J. Łukaszewicz, *Historia szkół w Koronie i w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim od najdawniejszych czasów aż do roku 1794*, 2, Poznań, 1850, 446. In her work (*Polskie szkolnictwo artystyczne na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku (1764—1831)*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1971), Kalina Bartnicka does not confirm the existence of that school.

⁵ T. Wierzbowski, *Szkoły parafialne w Polsce i na Litwie za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1794*, Kraków, 1921.

⁶ There are no data about the personnel in those facilities; only in reference to the Vilnius seminary, we have the names of three teachers working there.

Taking into consideration all of the above facts, nine categories of people associated directly with the KEN's work have been identified for the dictionary. Those were individuals participating in the conception, organisational, executive, control and educational activities.

1. Members of the Commission of National Education
2. Members of the Society for Elementary Books
3. Permanent and temporary school inspectors
4. Authors of textbooks
5. Administrative personnel
6. Main Schools' personnel along with the managing staff (only in reference to the Crown's Main School)
7. Managing staff of county, province, department and sub-department schools
8. Educational staff of county, province, department and sub-department schools (secular teachers, clerical teachers, *metr* teachers, prefects, preachers)
9. KEN's associates (i.e. individuals providing their support for its operation)

As a result of a discussion among the research team, the above list was complemented by personnel of several schools cooperating with the Commission, such as the Piarist Collegium Regium (Royal) in Warsaw, the Knights' School or the post-Jesuit Vilnius *convictus* for noble youth, which the Commission eventually closed down in 1777⁷.

It was decided that the concept of a biographical entry would be devised based on existing patterns, e.g. those applied in the *Polish biographical dictionary*. Each entry was to be composed of three parts. Part one was the lead, presenting concisely, aside from the name and the years of life, the profession and functions performed in the Commission (e.g. member of the KEN, member of the Society for Elementary Books, rector, prorector, professor, school inspector, secular teacher, school preacher, prefect, *metr* teacher etc.) and outside of it (e.g. marshal, member of parliament, bishop, priest, doctor, former Jesuit, Piarist, Dominican etc.)⁸. Due to incomplete source materials, some entries do not provide full personal data. The dictionary's editing team took into considera-

⁷ K. Puchowski, *Jezuickie kolegia szlacheckie Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów. Studium z dziejów edukacji elit*, Gdańsk, 2007, 301. That type of schools associated with secondary schools existed in many towns, but this area requires separate research. Information on this is provided in: *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1785*, ed. M. Mitera-Dobrowolska, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1786—1794*, ed. T. Mizia, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1969; T. Mizia, *Szkoły średnie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony*, Warsaw, 1975.

⁸ A general rule was adopted to place in the lead functions performed in the days of the KEN; however, in individual cases, that rule was not complied with.

tion discrepancies occurring in studies, printed sources and archived materials concerning personal data provided by the KEN personnel. Alternative forms of names and surnames were put into brackets, e.g. Andrzejewski [Andrzejowski] or Patryk [Patrycy].

Part two, the proper biographical note, describes the individual's work prior to 1773 and their involvement in the KEN structures. The form of individual biographical notes was influenced by the available stock of handwritten and printed sources, and how far they have been examined in the existing studies. In the case of each group, a different attitude to that part of the entry was adopted. In the case of KEN activists, originators and organisers, it was their contribution in the reform preparation and implementation that was underscored. With regard to individuals categorised as teaching staff, the focus was put on showing their successive work stages and workplaces, including their functions and opinions about their qualifications, and comments by school inspectors, which in many cases allowed describing the role of the given teacher within the school or community. The post-1795 period, i.e. after the Commission was closed down, was not ignored, to show a certain continuity of activity and raise the reader's awareness that the generation of KEN activists and teachers played an important role during the Partitions of Poland.

Part three of each biographical note includes the biography, containing several elements. First, essential archived and printed sources. The research team's members took multiple inventories of archives, museums and libraries abroad, e.g. in Russia — Moscow (Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents⁹) and Petersburg (Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents), Ukraine — Kyiv (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine) and Lviv (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine, National Science Library, National Museum), Lithuania — Vilnius (Lithuanian State Historical Archives, Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences), Belarus — Minsk (National Historical Archives of Belarus), Austria — Vienna (Handschriftenabteilung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek) and Italy — Rome (Archivio generale delle Scuole pie, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu).

In preparation of the dictionary, an extensive base of domestic sources was used as well, including archives and libraries in Warsaw (Central Archives of Historical Records, Polish Academy of Sciences Archives, Basilian Fathers Archives, Basilian Fathers Library, University of Warsaw Library) and Kraków (Jagiellonian Library, Ignatianum Academy Library, Polish Academy of Learn-

⁹ The materials stored there were presented in detail by: J. Kamińska, E. Kula, "Źródła do dziejów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w zasobach Rosyjskiego Państwowego Archiwum Akt Dawnych w Moskwie", *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty* 53, 2016, 135—147.

ing Library, Polish Academy of Sciences Library, Metropolitan Curia Library, Archives of the Polish Province of the Piarist Order, Archives of the Polish Province of the Dominican Order, Society of Jesus Archives, Jagiellonian University Archives, Princes Czartoryski Library and Archives). Inventories were also made of archive and library collections in other cities. Worthy of note are the State Archives in Lublin, Kraków and Płock, Parochial Office Archives in Shchuchyn, Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Ossolineum Institute in Wrocław.

The printed sources used included all the available, published materials concerning the Commission's work, such as publications overseen by Teodor Wierzbowski¹⁰, Kalina Bartnicka and Irena Szybiak¹¹, Mirosława Mitera-Dobrowolska¹², Tadeusz Mizia¹³ or Kamilla Mrozowska¹⁴. The editors also reached out for collections of correspondence of Jan Śniadecki, Ignacy Potocki¹⁵ and several other publications¹⁶.

The second part of the bibliography consists of informational publications (e.g. *Polski słownik biograficzny*, *Słownik bio-bibliograficzny dawnego Uniwersytetu Wileńskiego*, *Encyklopedia katolicka*, *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*¹⁷, *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy*

¹⁰ *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej i jej szkoły w Koronie 1773—1794*, ed. T. Wierzbowski, 1—9, 23—29, 35—39, Warsaw 1901—1915.

¹¹ *Raporty generalnych wizytatorów szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim (1782—1792)*, ed. K. Bartnicka, I. Szybiak, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1974; *Instrukcja dla wizytatorów generalnych szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1774—1794*, ed. K. Bartnicka, I. Szybiak, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1976.

¹² *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1785*.

¹³ *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1786—1794*.

¹⁴ *Pisma i projekty pedagogiczne doby Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, ed. K. Mrozowska, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; *Raporty Szkoły Głównej Koronnej o generalnych wizytach szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1787—1793*, ed. K. Mrozowska, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1981; *Listy z prowincji. Korespondencja wizytatorów generalnych, rektorów i nauczycieli ze Szkołą Główną Koronną 1779—1794*, ed. K. Mrozowska, Warsaw, 1998.

¹⁵ *Korespondencja Jana Śniadeckiego. Listy z Krakowa, 1780—1787*, ed. L. Kamykowski, Kraków, 1932; *Korespondencja Jana Śniadeckiego. Listy z Krakowa, 1787—1807*, ed. M. Chamcówna, S. Tync, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1954; *Korespondencja Ignacego Potockiego w sprawach edukacyjnych (1774—1809)*, ed. B. Michalik, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1978.

¹⁶ W. Tekieliński, *Opis dzienny szkół wileńskich, Akademii i Uniwersytetu oraz Diarjusz znacniejszych wypadków w Wilnie od roku 1781 po rok 1824 nastątych*, Vilnius, 1876; S. Hołowczyc, *Raport wizyty generalnej południowo-wschodnich wydziałów szkolnych, odprawionej imieniem Komisji Edukacyjnej w r. 1782*, ed. W. Wislocki, Kraków, 1877; *Dzieje domowe albo Opis przez dni osobliwszych dziejów i przypadków zdarzonych w szkołach wydziałowych poznańskich 1781—1793*, ed. D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, Poznań, 2006.

¹⁷ *Słownik polskich teologów katolickich*, ed. H.E. Wyczawski et al., 1—9, Warsaw, 1981—2006.

1564—1995, dictionaries of particular disciplines¹⁸, professions¹⁹ and regions²⁰ etc.).

The last part of the bibliography consists of study works, i.e. monographs, collective works, essays and articles, including regional publications referring to little-known local sources. Publications on the occasion of the 150th and 200th anniversaries of the Commission's establishment are an important part of the bibliography. These works were used by such authors as Mirosława Chamcówna²¹, Jan Hulewicz²², Zygmunt Kukulski²³, Janina Lubieniecka²⁴, Czesław Majorek²⁵, Kamilla Mrozowska²⁶, Hanna Pohoska²⁷, Jan Poplatek²⁸ or Irena Szybiak²⁹.

Individual biographical notes will vary according to the extent of preparation, which was caused by the availability of source materials and by the existing research. The biographical notes of some monastic teachers are quite detailed

¹⁸ *Słownik historyków polskich*, ed. M. Prosińska-Jackl, Warsaw, 1994; *Słownik biograficzny matematyków polskich*, ed. S. Domoradzki, Z. Pawlikowska-Brożek, D. Węglowska, Tarnobrzeg, 2003; *Słownik biograficzny polskiej historii wychowania*, ed. A. Meissner, W. Szulakiewicz, Toruń, 2008.

¹⁹ See: S. Kościński, *Słownik lekarzów polskich*, Warsaw, 1888; P. Szarejko, *Słownik lekarzy polskich XIX wieku*, 1—6, Warsaw, 1991—2001.

²⁰ See: T. Oracki, *Słownik biograficzny Warmii, Mazur i Powiśla. Od połowy XV w. do 1945 roku*, Warsaw, 1963; T. Kowalski, J. Młodyński, J. Szczepański, *Wpisani w historię Pułtusk. Słownik biograficzny*, Pułtusk, 2001; M. Pieniążek-Samek, *Słownik biograficzny. Kielce (XVII—XVIII wiek)*, Kielce, 2003.

²¹ M. Chamcówna, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w dobie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Szkoła Główna Koronna w okresie wizyty i rektoratu Hugona Kolltątaja 1777—1786*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1957; M. Chamcówna, *Uniwersytet Jagielloński w dobie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Szkoła Główna Koronna w latach 1786—1795*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1959.

²² J. Hulewicz, "Opinia publiczna wobec Komisji Edukacji Narodowej", in *Studia z dziejów kultury polskiej*, ed. H. Barycz, J. Hulewicz, Warsaw, 1949, 401—443.

²³ Z. Kukulski, *Pierwsi nauczyciele świeccy w szkole wydziałowej lubelskiej w dobie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Lublin, 1939.

²⁴ J. Lubieniecka, *Towarzystwo do Ksiąg Elementarnych*, Warsaw, 1960.

²⁵ C. Majorek, *Książki szkolne Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Warsaw, 1975.

²⁶ K. Mrozowska, *Walka o nauczycieli świeckich w dobie Komisji Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1956; K. Mrozowska, *Szkoła Rycerska Stanisława Augusta Poniatowskiego (1765—1794)*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1961; K. Mrozowska, *Funkcjonowanie systemu szkolnego Komisji Edukacji Narodowej na terenie Korony w latach 1783—1793*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1985.

²⁷ H. Pohoska, *Wizytatorowie generalni Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Monografia z dziejów administracji szkolnej Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Lublin, 1957.

²⁸ J. Poplatek, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej. Udział byłych jezuitów w pracach Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, ed. J. Paszenda, Kraków, 1974.

²⁹ I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; I. Szybiak, *Nauczyciele szkół średnich Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1980.

owing to the preserved and complete materials from their monastic archives, i.e. Jesuit, Piarist, Basilian and Dominican. By comparison, the biographical notes of monastic teachers from the other religious orders, i.e. Cistercian, Benedictine, Canons Regular and Brethren Communitarian, owing to the lack of preserved sources, are poor.

Biographical information is also complete regarding Commission activists well-known for their political, social and educational activity, i.e. members of the KEN and the Society for Elementary Books, school inspectors, professors of the Main Schools and distinguished secondary school teachers. Quite a lot of attention has been dedicated to them in biographical dictionaries and monographs. But in the case of secular teachers, we do not possess such extensive materials. The Commission recorded only data about their current occupation and presented an opinion on their didactic and educational competencies. The most basic information is contained in the biographies of *metr* teachers of foreign languages, usually foreigners often changing their workplaces and leaving behind no information about themselves. In the case of Commission clerks, information about them can be usually obtained from the Commission session minutes which recorded such data as their surname (without the first name), function and period of employment, besides the workplace.

The KEN dictionary consists of the following parts: preface, list of abbreviations, list of terms requiring an explanation, biographical notes in alphabetical order, index of names and list of entry authors. It is worthy of noting that the index of names is in an itemised and geographical order. Part one of the index contains the names of members of the Commission and the Society for Elementary Books. The dictionary also contains KEN associates who supported the KEN in its work with their activity and opinions. Obviously, the list of the Commission's personnel is incomplete, and it should be considered as a starting point for further research. The second part contains lists of associates of the Main Schools and the teaching personnel at secondary schools according to school departments and individual schools. In such a structure, the index will allow the reader to access the biographical notes fairly easily, but it also provides information on the structure of the education system and the school network along with the teaching personnel of the schools that were in operation in the Crown and in Lithuania.

2. An attempt at outlining the collective portrait of the KEN teachers and associates

Despite difficulties in obtaining relevant publications and sources, the editing team succeeded in compiling an extensive collection of 1,905 biographical notes depicting representatives of science, education and school administration.

It is, therefore, the first dictionary of this type, embracing the Main Schools' personnel, secondary school teachers, and the administrative staff in the entire territory of the Commonwealth within the borders defined after the First Partition. This way, they managed to examine in their entirety those professional groups that participated in devising the school reform, implementing it and both controlling and evaluating the education system. At the same time, the dictionary demonstrates the process of shaping the Polish intellectual elites which were to co-create a modern society, emerging on the basis of the ideas of 18th-century modernism. The second half of the 18th century saw the start of the process in which the intelligentsia began forming in such an important aspect of social life as education and science. But it must be said that said activity was based on clearly defined legal bases, organisational frames and sources of funding. Taking into account that all those processes took place in extremely difficult political conditions, it is proof of the great determination of part of the enlightened Polish public that believed in the need to reform the state. Education was understood as one of the ingredients, perhaps the most important one, of that reform.

Based on the biographical notes, it is possible to paint a collective portrait of the Commission's activists. Three professional groups can be clearly defined, i.e. the administrative staff (some 200 persons), the Main Schools' personnel (some 200 persons) and other secondary school teachers employed in academic and monastic schools.

The Commission's administrative staff constituted the legal organisational and logistical background that allowed efficient functioning of the Commission and its offices. The principal group consisted of the members of the Commission and the Society for Elementary Books. They were representatives of Polish political, scientific and Church elites involved in the creation of the school reform concept. A separate group consisted of lower administrative staff, such as chancery scribes, minute-takers, copyists, archivists, treasurers, writers, bookkeepers, representatives etc. They were part of the Commission's three key offices, i.e. the Chancery, the Archive and the Fund in Warsaw and Vilnius. Soon, they were joined by lawyers who were needed to transact business connected with the management of post-Jesuit properties, dispute resolution etc., particularly after 1776, when property and financial issues were brought under the Commission's supervision. As has already been mentioned, the available personal data of the junior administrative staff do not allow conducting full examination of their professional profiles. But it must be stressed that this dictionary is the first attempt at compiling data of the administrative staff and basic biographical data have been assembled³⁰.

³⁰ K. Gózdź-Roszkowski, "Tworzenie aparatu administracyjnego przez Komisję Edukacji Narodowej w świetle jej protokołów z lat 1773—1776", *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 25, 2016, 323—333.

There is relatively exhaustive information available about the scholarly personnel at both of the Commonwealth's Main Schools, in the Crown and in Lithuania. Unlike the Lithuanian Main School, the Crown's Main School was a secular establishment, as clerical professors were employed only at the Department of Theology. What was unique for the Crown's Main School was its rejuvenated team of professors educated abroad. A lot of them had gained pedagogical experience at secondary schools which constituted the training ground for a university career. The professors were very active in their scientific work and embarked on new research projects conducted on the basis of the existing research methods, which gave it the leading role in the system of tertiary education. The Lithuanian Main School also had a distinguished scholarly personnel, including many foreign professors. What characterised the personnel of particular departments was the relatively high number of professors who were former Jesuits, as about 50 out of the 106 professors employed in the days of the KEN had belonged to the former Jesuit Order. Aside from them, the school employed six Piarists, two Basilians and one Missionary. After the reform was implemented, the professorial personnel were rather steady and scientifically ambitious. Burdened by didactic duties and organisational work, they did not pursue any broader research activity.

But it was the secondary school personnel that was the most numerous, comprising in the entire period some 1,400 teachers. Their composition was very diverse in terms of social and territorial origins, education and the professional status. The teaching staff consisted not only of nobles but also of townsmen, at which nobles were looking with distrust or even scorn. Teachers came from all over the Commonwealth, both the Crown and Lithuania, also from the regions that found themselves outside of Poland after the First Partition. KEN schools also employed foreign language teachers who in principle were foreigners. Their official name was *metr*, and they did not always possess suitable methodological qualifications, which had adverse effects on teaching results. Poorly remunerated, they often changed their workplaces or completely gave up the teaching profession.

KEN teachers, especially at secondary schools, possessed very diverse professional qualifications. The most competent teachers included academic teachers who had graduated from the Seminary for Candidates for the Academic Estate at the Crown's Main School and the Lithuanian Main School, where education usually lasted four years. Those studies usually concluded with the title of Doctor, but on provision of completion of the entire programme, passing all of the exams and showing impeccable conduct. The academics, consisting of both secular and clerical teachers, constituted as little as 10% of the entire population of secondary school teachers. The remaining part comprised monastic

teachers, i.e. former Jesuits, Piarists and Basilians, and to a negligible extent, representatives of other religious orders, i.e. Dominican, Cistercian, Benedictine and Bartholomite, as well as ordinary priests. Former Jesuits and Piarists had the best methodological qualifications; the Basilians did to a lesser extent. The above groups of monastic teachers had obtained the necessary education at their own schools and monastic teacher training seminaries. Representatives of those orders usually possessed no methodological qualifications, so the schools they ran mostly offered a low educational level. The high turnover of teachers constituted a very detrimental factor in the days of the KEN for both clerical and secular teachers. Subject to the authority of their orders, monastic teachers were transferred from one place to another. Academics, on their part, often changed their workplaces for personal or professional reasons, but not so often as clerical teachers did. KEN teachers' living and working conditions were burdened by multiple problems. Former Jesuits experienced harshest conditions, especially in the first decade, when their professional and material status was not fully regulated or resolved on an ongoing basis. The life was also hard for secular teachers, as suitable conditions for work and everyday existence (lodging and food) were not provided everywhere. Moreover, they encountered an unfriendly or even hostile attitude of the public, especially the noble population and often monastic teachers, which forced the KEN to intervene with the authorities of the relevant school or even the relevant order.

The issue of curriculum implementation and teachers' competencies to implement it was a separate problem. Under the provisions of the Acts, two groups of teachers were created, i.e. class teachers to provide instruction in Classes 1 and 2 and subject teachers. Classes 1 and 2 provided instruction in Polish and Latin grammar, arithmetic, elementary geography, natural history and morals. Moreover, teachers were obligated to assign students exercises in composition writing, loud reading, translation of Polish and Latin texts, grammatical deconstruction, spelling, calligraphy and arithmetic. Teachers were also encouraged to urge students to write short compositions on their everyday lives, observations and own reflections. A class teacher had to possess broader qualifications and professional experience that would allow him to implement such a syllabus. The other four subject teachers providing instruction in Classes 4—6 included teachers of speech, mathematics, physics, morals and law. The first one continued the teaching of Polish and Latin. The next one was a mathematician providing instruction in algebra, geometry and logic. A physics teacher taught physics, natural history, horticulture and agriculture, as well history of art and skills. The Acts drew special attention, like in the case of mathematics, to the need to carry out observations, organising practical exercises in the field and making simple experiments. The last group of subjects was taught by the teacher of

morals and law. It encompassed international and Polish history, geography, natural law and domestic moral norms.

Attention ought to be also paid to the ideological postures of the individuals associated with the Commission. It is common knowledge that a lot of participants of the reform undertaken by the KEN had shaped their beliefs in the spirit of the French Enlightenment. That process involved not only the originators of the KEN but also those who implemented the reform, so the academic teachers and part of the monastic staff. The academics had the best awareness about the teachers' responsibility, as they were not indifferent to the developments in public and political life. They expressed their support for the changes that were under way in the education system, in which they directly participated and which they directly implemented. They also expressed their support for state reforms and the Constitution of 3 May 1791 above all. Faced with the threat to the national existence, they engaged in the Kościuszko Uprising, participated in multiple military operations and defended Warsaw. They carried on their teaching obligations also after the Third Partition, feeling their responsibility for patriotic education of young people.

The above description of the personnel associated with the Commission of National Education is brief out of necessity. All the same, these biographical notes present a picture of an activity in the school life on the hand and in political and public life on the other. They also present evidence that this activity required any individual to make choices between personal courage and giving in to the existing stereotypes of public life, between compliance with laws and ignoring them or deliberate boycotting and between betrayal and sacrificing one's career or life in defence of one's values.

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