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i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

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# INFORMATION FOR THE READERS

“Social Work in Poland” is an online yearly supplement to the bimonthly “Praca Socjalna” published in Polish. In these supplements, we strive to present international readership the achievements and development of social work in our country which were originally presented in “Praca Socjalna”. The articles for publication in the supplement are chosen from around fifty articles printed in a given year in “Praca Socjalna”. The Editorial Board recommends articles that constitute a significant contribution to the development of social work in Poland and those which may be of interest for readers in other countries.

In addition, we want to share with the international community of social workers issues which we consider to be important for the development of the identity of social work in our country.

Our journal has been published since 1986, previously as a quarterly, and since 2017, as a bimonthly journal. It is the oldest scholarly, peer-reviewed journal in Poland dedicated to social work issues and social welfare both domestically and abroad. We are open to articles written by foreign authors who want to present Polish readers in “Praca Socjalna” the approaches developed in their countries for solving social problems that are troubling many countries in the world today. The articles may be written in English or the author’s native language. Once accepted, we publish the submitted articles in Polish. Our editorial policy is presented at:

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## EDITORIAL

All of the texts in this issue were originally published in “Praca Socjalna” vol. XXXIII/1, 2018 which was entitled “In the Service of Children’s Rights – the Heritage of Irena Sendler” on the occasion of proclaiming 2018 the ‘Year of Irena Sendler’ by the Polish Parliament. The resolution of the Parliament stated:

“Irena Sendler, *nom de guerre* “Jolanta”, was an outstanding Polish social activist. She was born on 15 February 1910 in Warsaw, where she died on 12 May 2008.

Throughout the Second World War, as the head of the children’s section of the “Żegota” Council to Aid Jews, she organized a network of people and institutions with which she assisted children from the ghetto. She contributed to rescuing around 2,500 Jewish children from the Holocaust. Risking her own life and displaying heroism in underground efforts, she led children out of the Warsaw Ghetto, and then found them shelter in Polish families, monasteries and care centres.

In October 1943, Irena Sendler was arrested, interrogated and tortured at the Gestapo headquarters on Al. Szucha, and then imprisoned for 100 days in the Pawiak prison. Even under the threat of the death penalty, she did not betray her collaborators or disclose any information. Irena Sendler’s register of the children she rescued enabled them to learn their own identity, and also find relatives after the end of the Second World War.

In 1965, Irena Sendler was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal, in 2003 – the Order of the White Eagle, and in 2007 – the Order of the Smile. From 1990, she was an honorary citizen of the State of Israel. On the tenth anniversary of Irena Sendler’s death, the

Polish Parliament paid tribute to her, who with the great dedication worked to save others, by declaring 2018 the ‘Year of Irena Sendler’”.

Irena Sendler’s identity as a social worker and professional nurse, began to take shape when, at the age of 22, she started to work at the Mother and Child Care Unit for the Civil Social Assistance Committee in Warsaw, an agency that worked closely with School of Social-Educational Work at the Polish Free University.<sup>1)</sup> This school was launched in 1925 as the first stable form of education for social workers in Poland, which remained in operation

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<sup>1)</sup> The Free Polish University [Wolna Wszechnica Polska] was established shortly after Poland regained independence in 1918 as a institute of higher education and independent

until the beginning of the German occupation of Poland.<sup>2)</sup> Professor Helena Radlińska (1879–1954) was the founder and charismatic leader of the school, who along with Alice Salomon and other founding members established the International Committee of Schools of Social Work in 1929. Radlińska developed the visionary concepts of social work that activated people to independence, still valid today, not only in Poland.<sup>3)</sup> The ethos of social work that Radlińska instilled in her disciples spoke to Irena Sendler. Irena Sendler was raised by her father, a doctor who was always ready to provide poor patients with medical assistance free of charge. Although she was orphaned by her father at the age of seven, she adopted his maxim “If you see a person drowning, you should lend a hand” and lived it throughout her entire life. Her identity as a social worker has been perpetuated around the world thanks to fact that she was awarded the title of “Most Distinguished Social Worker of International Federation of Social Workers” in 2006.

The thematic scope of the issue emphasizes the constantly important problem of threats to children’s rights in various parts of the world, which had taken on extreme dimensions in relation to Jewish children sentenced to extermination together with their families as part of the policies pursued by the Third German Reich in the occupied territories of Europe during the Second World War. Irena Sendler, together with a group of twenty social workers that risked their lives, undertook the conspiratorial campaign of rescuing children from the Warsaw Ghetto sentenced there to death.

The issue begins with a text written by Mark Michalak, the Ombudsman for Children between 2008 and 2018. The text is entitled with Irena Sendler’s words “... *the most important in the world and in life is Good*”. The author introduces the reader to the essence of Sendler’s heroic activity by interweaving his accounts with impressions of his personal contact with her. There, Irena Sendler is portrayed as a modest person, almost downplay-

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of state control, to which state universities were subject. More information on the Free University can be found in B. Smolińska-Theiss’s article on pp. 22–26.

<sup>2)</sup> The German occupation authorities forbade any activities performed by educational institutions with the exception of primary and vocational schools.

<sup>3)</sup> Our readers can familiarize themselves with Radlińska’s concepts found not only in B. Smolińska-Theiss’s article, but also in I. Lepalczyk and E. Marynowicz-Hetka (2001) Helena Radlińska (1879–1954) – Poland, A Portrait of the Person, Researcher, Teacher and Social Activist, *European Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 191–196 and in M.D. Brainerd (2001) Helena Radlinska. Expanding conceptualizations of social work practice from Poland’s past, *International Social Work*, Vol. 44, Issue 1, pp. 19–30.

ing her contribution to rescuing children from death, but harsh and critical when assessing the world which still remains silent in the face of the suffering of others, and the suffering of children.

Wiesław Theiss's article entitled *The help, care and lifesaving of children in Poland in the war and occupation period (1939–1945). An outline.* analyzes the topic from two pairs of perspectives: the individual and collective perspective, the perspective of danger and death, and the perspective of social assistance and help. In this article, organized efforts aimed at rescuing children from the Warsaw Ghetto carried out by Irena Sendler are described in the broad context of the loss experienced by children in Poland under the German occupation, and efforts made in Polish society to limit that loss.

The article *Irena Sendlerowa – the ethos of social service*, written by Barbara Smolińska Theiss, helps us understand the significance of the above-mentioned relationship between Irena Sendler and the student community of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Polish Free University that met under the charismatic leadership of Helena Radlińska. The author preceded the character of Sendler's personal and professional development with a reflection on human development in light of older and newer psychological, sociological and pedagogical theories. In this respect, she demonstrated how Radlińska's school became an environment in which people with a disposition to social service were educated and shaped by research and field placements. The people associated with school faced the common social problems of the day including illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, poor hygiene, infectious diseases, and difficult housing issues. Irena Sendler worked and gained her experience among these people, the students and graduates of the school. Information about who these people were can be found in the selection of biographies in *People from the Irena Sendlerowa's Generation*, the final section of this issue. The biographies are taken from the *Słownika biograficznego pracowników społecznych [Biographical Dictionary of Social Workers]*, which was published in 1993 by the Society of Polish Free University [Towarzystwo Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej] with the assistance of graduates of Radlińska's school who were still living at the time. It is worth mentioning at this point that after the end of the Second World War, the communist authorities, who restricted public activity, did not permit the recreation of the Free University.

After Smoleńska Theiss's article is found Jerzy Smoleń's article entitled *Psychology of hope in the social activity of Irena Sendlerowa (1910–2008)*.

Here, the author attempts to consider Sendler's social activity from two points of view: Józef Koziellecki's psychological theory of hope, and its assumed sources of hope. In the light of the theory of hope, cognitive, emotional, temporal, and affiliative elements and the subject's agency actively dominate human life. Smoleń attempted to demonstrate what these elements of hope meant for Sendler based on certain statements she made. In a similar way, he speculated on the sources of her hope, which included: childhood experiences, self-confidence, and faith. In his reflections based on this theoretical method, the author used events in Sendler's life and statement she made to make his hypothesis plausible.

Both articles written by Smolińska Theiss and Smoleń seem to be fit in the inspiring stream of biographical research that is currently used in the social sciences.

The article entitled *International Federation of Social Workers in the Tribute to Irena Sendlerowa* refers to the aforementioned consolidation of her identity as a social worker on the global scale. This text was written thanks to the wealth of knowledge about her and her relationship with the international community of social workers published by Joachim Wieler in 2006. Wieler, who at the time was a professor of social work at the University of Applied Sciences in Erfut, Germany, undertook the mission of personally handing Irena Sendler an invitation to the International Federation of Social Work to accept the honorary title of the "Most Distinguished Social Worker of IFSW" on the occasion of the organization's fifty anniversary. Wieler's account of his personal meeting with Sendler found in his article convinces the reader of how personable she was, and how obvious it was for her to rescue children from the ghetto in a modest way. It is worth emphasising that during that meeting, Sendler confirmed her practical connections with Radlińska's school and Radlińska's pioneering role in initiating social work in Poland. Readers can also find more information about the role of four American female middle school students from a small town in Kansas in internationally proclaiming Irena Sendler's actions of rescuing children from the Warsaw Ghetto, which Marek Michalak mentioned in his article. In this article, the protection of children's rights is presented as a mission of social work as declared in a series of IFSW documents, which justified using Irena Sendler as a model for social workers around the world. This article, written ten years after her death, also shows that her message is referred to as a current moral obligation by younger generations, for whom the Second World War and the post-war era, in which Sendler was active, are history.



Halina Postek's article *The contemporary good practice in the realization of Irena Sendlerowa's heritage in the service of Children's Rights*, which describes volunteer activities connected with protecting children's rights in Poland and other countries, affirms the memory of the fight for children's rights, of which Irena Sendler's work is an extreme example.

The section entitled *Irena Sendlerowa in the Face of post-war Social Care Problems* contains two articles published in *the Welfare Assistant*, [*Opiekun Społeczny*]<sup>4)</sup> in 1946 and 1947. Sendler's work in the Department of Social Care of the City Council of Warsaw, during which she carried out the conspiratorial campaign of rescuing children from the Warsaw Ghetto, was interrupted when she was arrested by the Gestapo in October 1943 (see pp. 37 and 51 of this issue) and imprisoned in Pawiak, from which, according to the Gestapo's procedures, prisoners were led to mass executions. Sendler's co-workers from the Żegota organization (see pp. 12, 30, and 104 of this issue) were able to bribe a guard to release her. From that time, she remained in hiding until the Warsaw Uprising,<sup>5)</sup> during which she worked as a nurse assisting injured soldiers and the civilian residents of Warsaw.

After the war in January 1945, survivors began to return to the rubble of deserted Warsaw determined to find traces of their previous lives, and to rebuild the city. The recreation of public administration also began to take

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<sup>4)</sup> This was a monthly magazine devoted to issues related to social service in Warsaw published by the Division of Health and Social Care, Department of Social Care of the City Council of Warsaw from 1936 to 1948 with an interruption during the German occupation and the difficult period following the war from October 1939 to March 1946.

<sup>5)</sup> The Warsaw Uprising against the German army started on 1 August 1944 on the western side of the Vistula River by the underground Home Army loyal to the Polish Government in Exile. The battle lasted 63 days. The city engaged in battle did not receive significant military or humanitarian assistance from either the Red Army stationed on the eastern side of the Vistula, or from the allies who were fighting against the Germany army on front far from Warsaw. It is estimated that around 16,000 Polish soldiers were killed, 6,000 soldiers were critically injured, and around 200,000 civilian residents were killed. During the battle and the period afterwards, the Germans captured around 550,000 civilians from the city and surrounding areas and sent them into forced labour in the Third Reich and to concentration camps. During the Warsaw Uprising, around 25% of the city's buildings were destroyed. A subsequent 35% were methodically destroyed as a result of the intentional action of German sapper divisions, which were interrupted by the Soviet offensive on the western bank of the Vistula on 17 January 1945, which entered the almost deserted and destroyed city. Together with the destruction that occurred during the invasion of the Third Reich in Poland in September and during the pacification of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943, Warsaw lost around 85% of its buildings.

place. In January, the Department of Health and Social Care of the City Council of Warsaw resumed operation. Irena Sendler, who first participated in establishing the Warsaw Children's Home (Dom Dzieci Warszawy) that cared for both Polish and Jewish war orphans, soon became the deputy director of the Department of Health and Social Care, and was promoted to position of its director in December 1945. Her activity included attempts to organize social services in Warsaw in tune with Helena Radlińska's concepts (see pp. 25–29 in this issue).

Sendler's articles in the *Welfare Assistant* (where she served on the Editorial Board after its re-establishment in 1946) constitute documentation of the most difficult challenges facing social services in Warsaw, and Sendler's personal passion in striving to meet those challenges. Our readers can find a number of people, Helena Radlińska's students, who also took part in this work, in the aforementioned biographies in the section entitled *People from the Irena Sendlerowa's Generation*.

*Jerzy Szmagalski*

MAREK MICHALAK

Ombudsman for Children

## '... THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN WORLD AND IN LIFE IS GOOD'<sup>1)</sup>

**T**he story of Irena Sendler's life should be recalled over and over again. Her thoughts and her message should be analysed. We should implement actions helping the weakest just as she did at every stage of her life. Irena Sendler rescued children from Warsaw ghetto. She did that personally and also by coordinating and organising work of people, who were not indifferent to the fate of the youngest children. It is worth recalling that she as well as the persons who took part in these activities, risked their own lives at every moment of every day. Today we estimate that Sendler rescued personally or indirectly over 2.5 thousand Jewish children. This is a big deal, however, she did even more than that – apart from saving specific children, which deserves everlasting respect and esteem, she also secured their personal data and identities. Similarly to Korczak, she saved their childhood as well as their humanity. In her own words: 'Of all of my most dramatic war experiences, such as tortures at Pawiak, gestapo in Szucha Street, dying youth at uprising's hospital, where I served as a nurse, nothing left me with such sorrow as seeing that procession led by Korczak with children walking calmly to face their deaths...'

Irena Sendler speaks to us in her true nature, modesty, courage, authenticity: 'I regret only one thing – I could have done more. This resentment will accompany me until I die...'

Her story was heard around the world thanks to American students. She received an important 'Thank you' from Szymon Płóciennik from Zielona Góra. It was he who in year 2006 decided to reward the then ninety-five-year-old Irena Sendler. In a proposal addressed to the International Chapter of the Order of Smile he wrote: 'In my opinion, Miss Irena Sendler deserves

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: "Praca Socjalna", 2018, No 1, pp. 23–25.

the Order of Smile like no one else, because she helped children and truly did good deeds, selflessly, risking her own life and not for show. If each of us, with such sacrifice was able to and wanted to save others, weaker and completely unknown to us, the world would be different – better, free from suffering, conflicts, wars; and such sacrifice should be rewarded and praised... (1)' Szymon's wish was fulfilled, Irena Sendler became the 850th Laureate of the Order of Smile. She collected the Order according to the ritual on the 11 April 2007 in Warsaw. She then said that the Order of Smile – such a great award from children, next to a letter from John Paul II, is the most important thing that happened to her in life. We remember the children's action in the Year of Irena Sendler, in which we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Order of Smile.

- (1) A child's petition of 15-year-old Szymon Płóciennik from Zielona Góra asking to reward Irena Sendler with the Order of Smile, 12.12.2006, in the collection of the International Chapter of the Order of Smile, case 850.

Children and youth had their special place in her heart. She told them: 'You are the future of the world! Do something to make it a better place. Without wars and innocent deaths. Spread goodness. Be sensitive to the fate of those who are weaker than you', as if she was losing hope in the adult world: '... did whole nations and individual people draw appropriate conclusions in order to make the world a better place? Nothing of this sort took place, conversely – the world is still caught up in fire of tribal, racial, and national wars ...' Irena Sendler wrote in her message, in her appeal. She was extremely convincing, true in her humanity and care of another person. Behind her there were actions, specific deeds, a result from the exam from being human in the most difficult time, the exam from courage, decency, although she herself said many times: 'Do not make a hero out of me. All I did was what everyone should have done...' When, after these words, I asked her if everyone indeed did the same, she would drop her gaze and her cheeks would blush. She was modest, very wise and aware, up to date with the current social situation until the very end of her days. She would have strong opinions: 'And what does the world do about that? Mighty countries? The world was silent. And silence sometimes means acceptance of what is happening...' This assessment still applies today, it refers to our times very much, when people start wars, when children die, when we do not open our hearts for them, close borders, allow others to suffer and die.

Politicians with pleasure repeat catchphrases about helping in war zones, where children die because of bombings, not allowing a real openness and not inviting people to their homes. They are not capable of global saving action, they do not save children and they do not save humanity.

It is incredible how much Irena Sendler’s words are needed in a real, practical sense today, words which I consciously and without provocation choose as a slogan for Irena Sendler’s Year: ‘If you see a person drowning, you should lend a hand...’

Irena – great, irreplaceable, modest, the most normal, would say when trying to spread her message to us: ‘As long as I live, as long as I have the power, I will always say that the most important thing in the world is good.’ It is worth remembering here, that she meant the common good, health, life, childhood, humanity. She fought for this good when she was alive. And she demands it today.

*Transl. Ewa Butowska*

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WIESŁAW THEISS

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## HELP, CARE AND RESCUE OF CHILDREN IN POLAND IN THE WAR AND OCCUPATION PERIOD (1939–1945). AN OUTLINE<sup>1)</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to outline the issue of helping, rescuing, and caring for children in Poland in the war and occupation period (1939–1945). The aim of the text is to cover the following areas: individual trauma, population losses, situation of danger, social solidarity, and actions of helping children. The article describes the main areas of war dangers and crimes committed against children, and also the range and forms of helping them (institutional and individual). Apart from the informative and ordering aims, the text signals a need for pedagogical-historical research on history of childhood, seen from a perspective of the Second World War and occupation in the years 1939–1945.

**Keywords:** Second World War, war crimes against children, war childhood, help, care and lifesaving during war ('lifeline')

### CHILDREN – VICTIMS OF WAR: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The range of the topic undertaken here, which is the issue of help, rescue, and care for children in Poland during Second World War, is oriented and also restricted by two pairs of research perspectives proposed in the article: the individual and collective perspective, the perspective of danger and death, and the perspective of social assistance and help.

The first perspective focuses on human beings, and has a subjective, individual character. It reveals the experiences of individuals, children and their families, whose lives were torn apart by war. The second perspective refers to a collective dimension, and handles broader social and national groups, and is

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: "Praca Socjalna", 2018, No 1, pp. 27–42, DOI:10.5604/01.30001.0012.4703.

characterised by an objective assessment of war reality. It can inform us about population losses, which Poland and its citizens experienced as a result of wartime activities and occupation period of 1939–1945. Both perspectives intersect and also join together, creating a complicated historical-social wholeness, a burden with infinity of wartime unspoken tragedies, violence, suffering, crime and death. It is a picture which simultaneously shows the situation of a ‘child in war’ as well as ‘war in a child’. If the first of these two pictures has distinct time boundaries and finishes with the end of war, the other one can extend throughout a longer period of time, outside the boundaries of specific dates and historic periods, in order to relatively become a permanent part of the lives of individuals and generations.

On the foundation of understanding history as ‘a collective reality with an individual character’, a history which encompasses both events (‘event’s complex’) as well as reporting these events (‘historical science’) (Traverso, 2014, p. 10) emerges the next pair of the above-mentioned perspectives: danger and death as well as assistance and help.

In the centre of the perspective of danger and death, there is an extreme situation. In a well-known concept of Bruno Bettelheim, it refers to a lasting danger, and helplessness when it comes to existing dangers, their inevitability and unknown time limit (Bettelheim, 1986, pp. 23–30; see also: Leociak, 2009). This extreme situation has also other dimensions – if we were to look at it considering the historical background and a broader social context, we would definitely see a common and complete threat to life, which was brought by war and occupation. The Germans, in the occupied Western and Southern parts of Poland, created a General Government and introduced martial law. The consequence of breaking the law was death or death camp (Davies, 1981, p. 552). This was decided by Nazi ideology, which was in place in all occupied countries and which promoted ideas such as superman (Übermensch), living space (Lebensraum), racial laws and the Final Solution to the Jewish Question starting in 1942 (Endlösung der Judenfrage) (see Grunberger, 1987; History..., 2008, pp. 145–176).

In the prevailing situation of constant war, a particular danger was faced by children. The war, in an obvious way, not only deprived children of their right to childhood, safe development and an access to education and culture, but it also turned children into the most tragic victims. A child in the extreme situation of war and military conflict is defenceless, condemned to death, deprived of their motherland, and subject to slavery. This has always been the case – and still is – all around the world.

In the Second World War period, next to the extreme situation seen from Bettelheim's perspective or in the beforementioned broader view, there was also another type of circumstances, whose central point was a protection of human life: 'an area of social solidarity' and such its manifestations as rescuing and helping children. The fourth perspective described here of an overview and interpretation of the war experience of children was a kind of ethical-pragmatic space. In this space, the rule of 'doing good' was in place, which is a universal, timeless, humanitarian idea of helping always and everywhere whenever another person is experiencing something bad, or when their safety and life are in danger. Such activity was deeply rooted in patriotism and a duty to fight against the occupant. It protected human beings from complete danger, overwhelming circumstances, from prevailing violence. It meant that 'the law of death' did not exhaust the extreme situation of wartime. There was also 'the law of life'; and next to the 'world of death', there was also 'the world of life'. This 'world of life', which gave a chance of surviving was a piece of freedom and would bring hope for a better tomorrow. Between these two broader points of the dangerous situation of war, a 'line of life' could be drawn. The metaphor reflects a set of pragmatism-moral actions, implemented in majority by people focused on the idea of serving the wellbeing of others, the idea of rescuing, helping and caring about Polish children in the war and occupation period of 1939–1945 (see. Theiss, 1999, 2012, 2015, 2016).

The last perspective mentioned here follows a lead started by great scientific icons such as Antoni Kępiński, Anna Pawełczyńska, and Zygmunt Bauman, and by those who survived the wartime destruction and showed the world the wartime suffering (Władysław Bartoszewski, Zofia Posmysz, Halina Birenbaum, Primo Levi), as well as by those who by dying in Nazi's death camps achieved a moral triumph in a fight against evil (e.g. Janusz Korczak, Maksymilian Kolbe).

## THE WORLD OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

'At 5pm, the uprising started [1 VIII 1944, 'Warsaw Uprising' – WT]. I do not remember being afraid. And on the 22 August, just like every day, I left the basement and walked a dog, because no matter if there is an uprising or not, the dog must be walked (...). At one moment, the dog jumped on me, I fell on the ground and the dog took a bullet or two intended to reach me (...). The dog saved my life. I was only wounded. So, a child came to War-



saw [on the 1 August, from Józefów – WT] and a mature, strong human being, who was able to tell good from evil came out of it grey and wounded, but still 11 years old, as only 63 days went by.’ This is how the war period is remembered by popular actress Zofia Czerwińska (2016).

In turn, Józef Lebenbaum, a photographer, emigrant in 1968, organiser of assistance for the Polish opposition in the eighties says: ‘The strongest memories I have are from the war. Up till this day, when I walk along Krakowskie Przedmieście towards the Royal Castle, first I see the smoke of a burning side of a building, only after that am I able to see the actual castle (...). When the war started, I was 9 years old. The siege of Warsaw was a difficult experience, because for the first time I saw people killed, and we were trapped in a basement. I survived heavy bombings. Close to home there were wood warehouses, which were set on fire on the 8 September and were burning until the end of October. I can still recall the smell of the burning. Now, when I walk towards Sienna, Ogrodowa or Lwowska, Poznańska Streets... I am always accompanied by surprise that fate honoured me so much, that from two big families of my mother and my father, I am the only one who lives and who can walk here’ (Lebenbaum, 2018).

Another fragment of an interview, which was given by a famous film director Jerzy Skolimowski: ‘(...) In Warsaw we had a big flat on Rozbrat Street, in a building where I was trapped by debris in the basement in 1939 and my mother uncovered me with her nails from the bricks. When she reached me, my face was deformed, which is why I have got a crushed nose now, this was also why I started stuttering (...). When mother rescued me from the debris, not only did I have a deformed face, I also did not make a sound for many weeks. And then, when I finally started talking, I would stutter terribly. Even today, I sometimes stutter (...). Also, during the war, I went through a whole series of diseases, everything which was possible, even meningitis. I was sick and malnourished. After 1945, five hundred of the most severely ill children were sent by the Polish Red Cross to Switzerland. They also took me and brought me back to life there (Skolimowski, 2018).

The memory of war cannot be deleted, it is inside people until the end of their lives. The time passing does not bring closure of the traumatic past. It refers mostly to the prisoners of death camps. Zofia Posmysz, put in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück, and author of many camp memories, explained in 2017 ‘(...) today I can say that I did not leave Auschwitz. I have been there all along (...)’ (Posmysz, 2017). This is not the end of these

tragic relations, influences, and effects. The memory of war is transgenerational. It is present – to a different degree – in a biography of the second and the third generation.

In the Second World War period (1939–1945) in Poland, due to war actions and the extermination policy of Nazi Germany, around 6.3 million people including 3.2 million of Jewish origin (together around 22% of the country's citizens) died. Population losses connected with the occupation and terror of Russia towards Polish citizens are estimated to reach around 1 million people (Report..., 1947, p. 26).

In this overwhelming number of victims, a significant part were children. German occupants killed 2,025 million children and minors including 600 thousand Jewish children. After the Second World War, a group of orphans, half-orphans, and children abandoned by parents consisted of around 1.5 million young people (22% of the whole young generation of Poles) (Radlińska, Wojtyniak, 1946). It is estimated, that 1.5 million Jewish children were killed by Nazis in Europe and around 8% survived. In Poland, the war and occupation was survived by around 5 thousand Jewish children, which is around 3% of the overall population. The number goes up to 28 thousand if one counts children who came back to Poland from Russia after 1945 (Cohen, 2018).

The data cited, although it is not complete and was reported only as an estimate, reveals the vastness of unspoken tragedies. They talk about crimes against children and the direct extermination of the youngest part of society, and also about circumstances, which indirectly, but with great power and deeply were destroying and restricting the development of children and youth over a long period of time (see, among others: Wnuk, 1975; Kowalik, 1986; Lukas, 1994; Bartuś, 2016; Bartuś, Trojański, 2017). Hiding behind these 'war statistics' is also a 'light side of force': an effort of people of good will, who against all circumstances, fought against the occupant, protected suffering children and defended the youngest from mortal danger. They protected the fundamental human right – the right to live.

## **“WAR COMPLEX” – A GENERAL PICTURE**

The overall devastations, which were cause by the Second World War and occupation in Poland in the personal and physical development of children and youth were named a 'war complex' (Baley, 1948). The term – 'complex' is understood here as a set of things and events mutually matching one

another – it refers to both typical and atypical circumstances, in which children found themselves during wartime including situations of a severe danger, as well as the results of these abnormal, particularly dangerous and tragic events ruining childhood.

The main parts of ‘war complex’ were: psychological and physical injuries (e.g. a feeling of guilt towards those who were killed, a tendency for crying and an overall sensitivity, nightmares full of fear), limited contacts with surroundings and also deviant behaviours, e.g. an increase in childhood crime, prostitution (Batawia, 1948). However, the strongest element of war destruction was the fact that children were ‘used to death’ and therefore reached a conclusion that ‘human life is not valuable’ (Jedlewska, 1947).

The Nazi death apparatus also assumed a plan of direct destruction of the youngest generation of Poles. Children were sent to concentration camps (e.g. in KL Stutthof there were around 4,800 children and minors) and to mass extermination camps, Gestapo arrests, and police. A distinct category among these institutions was a separation camp for the youth (*Łódź-Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei*). The children imprisoned between 2 and 17 years of age were the youngest prisoners of the Third Reich (see Wnuk, 1975).

The experience of young prisoners, who survived the extreme camp conditions are defined as a ‘KZ-syndrome’ (a so-called concentration camp syndrome). Indirect results of being in a camp include: delays in intellectual development, numerous mental illnesses, lack of family, a low level of education (more than 30% of the respondents did not gain a basic education). The inhumane conditions of living led to a high morbidity rate: only one in ten children sent to camps regained their freedom. Only one in three or four ex-prisoners of death camps survived more than 30 years after leaving the camp (Kempisty, 1984; Czajkowska, 2016, pp. 137–149; Kubica, 2017, pp. 151–173).

In concentration camps Lublin (*Majdanek*) and in KL Auschwitz, there were ‘children of Zamojszczyzna’ captured from their family homes during the pacification of the Lubelszczyzna region led by Germans from November 1942 to August 1943. Overall, among around 110,000 of the expelled, there were around 30,000 children (10,000 of them died) (Wnuk, 1975, pp. 194–205). Children were also present among 50–60 thousand victims of genocide committed by armed Ukrainian groups mostly against Poles from Polesie and Wołyń in the years 1943–1945 (Piskała, Popek, Potkaj, 2016).

The fate of Jewish children was incomparable with anything else. They shared the fate of the whole Jewish nation condemned by the Nazis to the Holocaust. The Holocaust (Shoah) was a Nazi project of exterminating the Jewish nation. It assumed a racially motivated, planned, and systematic campaign annihilating the Jewish nation. The genocide of European Jews killed 6 million people including 1.2 million children. Jews, forced to live in ghettos – separated and guarded parts of cities, were killed by hunger and diseases, or were sent to death camps. It was an extreme situation, mortal danger, with low chances of survival. Idel Kozłowski, one of a million of Polish children with Jewish origin, survived the war. This is a fragment from his autobiography: '(...) I was born in 1929 in a town called Holszany in Vilnius voivodeship in a family of traders. (...) Our city's 'Ghetto' was moved in 1942 by Germans to the Oszmiańskie Ghetto. When we just arrived there, the following day German bandits shot all the elderly men who were there in the Ghetto. (...) They took us to a concentration camp close to a town Koszedary, to dig for peat (...). Life was hard, and work was hard too. We would dig for peat while standing in a hip-height water. We had to meet the norms, for not meeting them, the consequence was clear. With huge difficulty, I managed to reach 6 cubic meters of peat a day (...). The supply situation was very hard. They gave us 250 grams of bread a day. Sometimes they would give us a tiny piece of horse carrion. This was our life in that camp' (Jewish children..., pp. 155, 157).

In the largest European ghetto, which was located in Warsaw, the Germans captured around 450 thousand people. Around 300,000 people from Warsaw Ghetto were murdered in a Nazi death camp in Treblinka. Janusz Korczak died on 8 August 1942 in Treblinka along with his pupils from a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw.

## **“LIFELINE” – THE MAIN FORMS OF HELP AND RESCUE**

The care of children in Poland during the war and occupation period in the years 1939–1945 was undertaken by organisations of the Polish Underground State, social organisations, churches and convents, and also individuals. This activity had its beginnings in different sources and ideological perspectives. However, at its bases was universal human solidarity, supported by humanitarian and humane rules, with children's right to safe development put first. In such times, saving children equalled fighting against German Nazism and protecting society and the nation against destruction.

In October 1939 – the Care and Health Department of the City of Warsaw was established, which acted with the permission of the German occupational powers. One of its most important official aims and also secret actions was to help endangered children. In the various centres of this organisation, children were taken into a daily care, they also received food, could play and were offered educational support. Campaigns of rescuing children from the Ghetto and sending them somewhere safe were in place. The brave chairman of this organisation, Jan Starczewski, was a forgotten, but great person. As a consequence of helping children from Zamojszczyzna, he was enslaved in Auschwitz and Bergen Belsen. Among his co-operators, there were among others: Irena Sendler, Irena Schulz, Mikołaj Łącki, Antoni Chaciński and Jan Dobraczyński (Starczewski, 1995, pp. 59–66; Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska, 1993, pp. 151–153).

One of the important areas of the Care and Health Department's work was a centre where a graduate of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University – Wanda Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska worked, who was also a close collaborator of Helena Radlińska in the Free University. This is a fragment from her memoirs that reveal the hidden dimensions of social rescue during the war: 'Zofia Bożymowa, who was employed in our centre, would come and put on my desk, without saying a word, a piece of paper with information for me to come to her. She would then pass on to me tasks, how and where to go, what to do – without giving any details. Following that, I would make phone calls or arrange a meeting in a coffee shop, for example at Hirszfeld on Marszałkowska Street. One time, in that way, I managed to rescue from the ghetto and save a daughter of a Jewish theatre actor – Turkow. Another time, after entering a temporary home close to Sądy (justice office building) on Leszno Street), I took from there Kazka – a girl taken from a ghetto, who was later brought up by Miss Trzaskalska (...). Or I would go to 'Szop' (a place of forced labour) on Grójecka Street, where women from the ghetto used to work and I would take a child from there to the Boduen House. There was great unrest coming from a feeling of responsibility and plain fear of the fate of the child taken from his or her mother – will I save them or will we both die!' (Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska, 1995, pp. 109–110).

The numerous nationwide forms of helping activities were characteristic of the Central Care Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńcza*) – charity, whose roots go back to the times of the First World War. After the German authorities approved, it was reactivated in 1940 and it was active until the end of the war. Besides managing orphanages and supplying food and clothing,

the Council would give financial support to war captives, prisoners and also refugees and emigrants, among whom there were many children, including those who were abandoned and separated from their parents. The organisation's activities were especially honourable during the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 (Kroll, 1985).

On 27 September, The Council to Aid Jews (*Rada Pomocy Żydom*), more commonly known by its code-name *Żegota* was founded. It was one of the biggest conspiracy organisations of those times. It was founded by the Delegate of Poland's Government in Exile and was based on a broad social platform of various Catholic Democratic organisations. The broad spectrum *Żegota's* activities included financial, food, clothing, and medical support for people of Jewish origin. Also, assistance for Jews was organised as well as those aiming to hide them in a safe place. The council was active not only in the capital of Poland, but also in the whole country (Prekerowa, 1982; Bartoszewski, 2013).

The Section of Child Care played a very important role in *Żegota*. Its chairman, Irena Sendler, is now remembered as the organiser of a campaign which saved the lives of around 2,000 Jewish children (Mieszkowska, 2018; Smolińska-Theiss, 2017). This would not be possible if not for the above mentioned Care and Health Department, the Central Care Council and people from various resistance units including institutions which took children into further care. An important landmark on this route from a 'danger situation' to a 'safe place' were so-called 'ad hoc helping points'. Such marks were – as explained by Krystyna Kowalik – situated in several special flats and they served as a small ambulatory. Children there were not only cared for, but were also prepared for preliminary psychophysical restitution after their experience from the ghetto and shocking events from the period of the Jewish Uprising. Simultaneously, the fake documents were prepared for children, among others – church records. After a shorter or a longer stay at such a place, a child would be then taken for further care by a family or another institution (Kowalik, 1986, p. 106).

Another part of the history of the Second World War worth mentioning is the engagement of various institutions of the Catholic Church in rescuing and helping Jewish children. Overall, it is estimated, that as a result of life saving actions made by around 35 convents in Poland, around 1,200 children were saved (Kurek-Lesik, 1992).

A separate and glorious part in the history of social assistance and rescuing children in danger belongs to a Jewish charity founded in 1924: The

Central Union of Associations for Jewish Orphan Care (Centos). During the war in the Warsaw Ghetto, Centos took care of the majority of 100,000 children who lived there. The range of this care was broad – from managing orphanages, boarding schools, organising kitchens and dayrooms for children, to healthcare and organisation of religious celebrations. The work of Centos was managed by a known and devoted activist Adolf Berman, with the assistance of a board member Józef Gitler, and chief physician Zofia Rosenblum-Szymańska, a collaborator of Janusz Korczak from before the war. The patronage of homeless children was held by Felicja Czerniaków, wife of Adam Czerniaków – the chairman of the Jewish Council in Warsaw Ghetto. Those named here do not by all means exhaust the list of people fighting for the lives of children in Warsaw Ghetto. While mentioning famous and well-known organisations that helped and their activists, memory of numerous nameless teachers and carers of Jewish people is lost. People, who together with their pupils were killed either during ghetto's pacifications or in death camps in Treblinka, Sobibór, Majdanek, and Bełżec. The fate of these quiet heroines, born activists, who saved children as their paramount or were solidary with them in dying together were described in a book entitled 'How could I leave them? On Jewish carers of children during war times' (Kicińska, Sznajderman, 2018; see also Kowalska-Leder, Woźnicka, 2017, pp. 141–172).

In attempt to keep the conspiracy, there are no official data informing about the number of people who were saving Polish citizens of Jewish origin, including children was recorded. One of the people engaged in this activity wrote: 'The hidden – were people of different ages, who would not leave a flat or even a hiding cabinet and they would not communicate with anyone except for the family, maybe sometimes with a linking person. (...) After the war, I met a young man who told me that for more than two years of occupation, as a child, he would stay behind a wardrobe, because he had the 'wrong appearance'. Many Jews would spend years on a countryside in a secret place, dug underneath houses, pigsties, or barns or in dugouts in the middle of the woods (Balicka-Kozłowska, 1988).

Among people who saved Jews during the war period, there was a family – to reach the dimension of microhistory – of Marianna and Michał Kowalczyk from Węgrów – a town located around 100 km away from Warsaw. They were childless married couple took care of three-year old Gittel Przepiórka. There were two other Jewish girls in their barn. The Kowalczyk family received a diploma from the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem and



the Righteous Among the Nations title for their bravery. This honour was given to 6,750 Polish people (Piórkowska, 2012, p. 126). Another typical form of saving children during the war is illustrated by the story of Maria Perlberger-Schmuel – a 14 year old girl from Wieliczka at the time. The child survived the mortal danger thanks to the ‘lifeline’ – a chain of actions of different people undertaken in many different places. This – in her own words – ‘game of hide and seek with death’ was a constant escape on route: Wieliczka – Kraków – Warsaw (in two different places) – a countryside close to Warsaw – Kraków (4 places). Just after the war, the girl looked for a safe place in Łódź, Warsaw, Piaski, Opole, and Kraków (Perlberger-Schmuel, 1988).

Thanks to the assistance of Polish people, 40,000 Jews survived the war in hiding. A shameful amendment to the act of the Institute of National Remembrance – a Commission of Chasing Crimes against the nation from 26 January 2017, later changed by the parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (the change referred to abandoning criminal provisions) brought about numerous controversies and arguments. Historians in the country and worldwide would speak of ‘Polish camps’ and ‘defiling honour of Polish people’, the responsibility or co-responsibility of Polish people for crimes committed against Jews and so on. A well-known Israeli researcher of Polish-Jewish relations Yehuda Bauer, estimated that a number of Poles, who helped save Jews during the Second World War, to be around 200,000, which was around 1% of the population at that time. Therefore Bauer’s question was: ‘Where is the remaining 99%?’ (Bauer, 2018). Part of the answer to that question is included in a book written by Władysław Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna ‘He is from my country. Polish people helping Jews 1939–1945’ (1967).

Just as some Poles saved Jews – full of sacrifice and while risking their own lives as a part of social solidarity, others would blackmail them, rob them of precious possessions and also hand them over to the Germans. Other Polish people murdered Jews (Engelking, Grabowski, 2018). The cruelty was limitless. Two Jewish children from a nun’s care institution in Turkowice were caught and hanged by members of an armed mob (Children..., 1993, p. 107). Aggression, crime and violence against Jews, including children, also remained after the war. In 1945, grenades were thrown into a Jewish house in Rabka. Similar events took place in a Jewish orphanage in Zakopane. A headmistress of this institution Lena Kuechler (Kichler-Silberman, before war she did her PhD in psychology at Jagiel-



lonian University – WT), while justifying her decision concerning closing the institution and taking the children abroad, wrote: ‘I do not see safe conditions for children in Zakopane or in any other town and I believe that, after the hell they have been through, I do not have the right to put them in danger again (...). That is why I will take them to a safe place, where they will have the same home (...). I do realise that the Committee (Central Committee of Polish Jews) is unable to guarantee them conditions for free development, and I do think that this is the most important right free human being (Panz, 2016, p. 197; see also: Bażanowska, 2011, p. 47; Cohen, 2018).

In such, an in other cases, the ‘dimension of social solidarity’, and post-war educational efforts aiming to give back a relatively normal childhood for Jewish children turned into ruins. Furthermore, the rule of an ‘active good’ would lose to – as put by Miriam Mariańska – a ‘wall of hatred’. She wrote: ‘there still was in the air an echo of this murdering scream ‘Jude’ and again the word “Jew” was becoming a new conviction’ (Mariańska, 1966, p. 7).

In 1966, Theodor W. Adorno, in a radio-broadcasted speech ‘*Erziehung nach Auschwitz*’ (Education after Auschwitz), indicated that the claim for Oświęcim not to come back ever again reflects an elementary task which can be a part of education of everyone (Weber, 2011b). This stand resulted in a known in German pedagogy rule of referring knowledge about the past to today’s reality. It is a universal concept, referring not only to Nazi problem. It assumes applying historical material to nowadays – to the knowledge and problems which are experienced by today’s world. It was also the aim of the analyses sketched here concerning helping and rescuing children during the Second World War.

In such dialogue between what has already happened and what is happening now, new experiences emerge, notions, and ideas. This also means that bringing up children and education does not rely upon remembering past experiences and warning that they may come back, but it should rely on remembering and inspiring. This is about inspiring and shaping positive changes in thinking and action towards a ‘different one’ (Weber, Rathenow, 1996; Weber, 2011a; Weber, 2011b). It is an important educational target that relies on building and developing a so-called ‘third dimension of what can happen’ – a system of values and knowledge, following rules of actions focused on the protection and realisation of children’s right to live. The problem is even more important, because in today’s social life, there are

third and fourth generations – grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who survived the Second World War and the occupation, and whose knowledge of collective trauma is either small or non-existent.

Moreover, the imperative raised by Adorno – Auschwitz cannot happen again – means one more thing: shaping a critical awareness directed towards helping and caring for children who have suffered or are still suffering as a result of today's military conflicts. Together with that, there is an 'education towards the truth and reconciliation' (Paulson, 2011). Therefore, researching the relationship between war and military conflicts and children's right and education is still – unfortunately – our 'ongoing mission' (Hammarberg, 2007).

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## IRENA SENDLER – THE ETHOS OF SOCIAL SERVICE<sup>1)</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Irena Sendler is one of the most distinguished figures in Polish social work. She earned this honour saving Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto. This indisputably heroic action *in extremis* reflects her social and professional grounding from the School of Social-Educational Work at the Polish Free University. Hers was an unique educational and social approach, combining professionalism with social attitude – professionalism with the ethos of social service.

**Keywords:** Irena Sendler, School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University, social service, professional ethos

Irena Sendler was an ordinary yet exceptional figure. Her biography earned her the title ‘Person of the Year’, in 2018. This is, without doubt, a great distinction but also presents a challenge to biographers and historians (Grubowska, 2014; Mieszkowska, 2009; Bikont 2017) who try to interpret the evidence to create a picture close to the historical truth. Much attention is focussed by particular incidents, notably, the rescue of Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto. Various interpretations and different contexts in Sendler’s biography confront historians or journalists owing to the shortage of reliable, unambiguous sources. Irena Sendler did not leave much written evidence nor did she document or record her personal life. Therefore, her modern biography has been pieced together from sometimes contradictory and incomplete narratives, stifling the authentic voice of Sendler’s life witnesses.

A comprehensive biography is still seeking an author, who with her notes and diaries, would have to paint the picture of a woman, who not only saved Jewish children from the ghetto, but also was an exceptional, creative and independent woman with the lifestyle of a free thinker.

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Some questions persist – not only from researchers. People, increasingly want to know, how it is possible that only a few people stand out as extraordinary from the group – otherwise roughly equal in terms of developmental capital. This question has been posed by psychologists, sociologists and teachers. Charlotte Bühler (maiden name, Malachowski), was the first woman in Germany with a professorial qualification in psychology. She was a famous researcher in child development, who in the 1930s, discovered that explanations for human development could not be restricted to the context of childhood development. Bühler, paying great attention to detail, analysed various biographies in search for what are termed objective structures in human life – to be more precise – the course of life (Bühler, 1999). While examining the biographies of politicians, explorers, artists and ordinary people, she investigated events that might permit an individual's achievements to outlive them. Bühler related this phenomenon to a person's creativity, achievement and actions. At the same time, she refers to the biographic structure of their life to isolate a critical watershed moment. She also emphasised the significance of specific, not entirely behavioural factors, fate and individual lifetime choices.

This stand corresponds with what, 10 years earlier (in 1923), was expressed in a postscript to 'The Polish peasant in Europe and America', by Florian Znaniecki (1976). Znaniecki wrote about socio-cultural reality, human endeavour infused with humanist values, which has an identified agent, a set of values, meaning and significance. 'A human being, while becoming rooted in the civilization of their environment and playing their part in normalised social relationships and groups, learns, with others' help, to consciously organise his or her social personality into several systems, shaping themselves as a social being' – Znaniecki writes (1974, p. 105). He develops the human biography through the theory of knowledge, ascribing it an ontological and epistemological dimension. He builds a new methodological paradigm.

This precise element of value is clear in Jan Szczepański's (2003) biography, which explored the peasant ethos of work and land. Szczepański described a specific place and culture, Cieszyński Silesia, a region of protestant culture and religion. Both he and later Piotr Sztompka (2005, p. 53), in the steps of the great philosophers of the last century, focus on two fundamental biographical aspects: time and place. Time and place determine development, change, the process of creating a society and the human being. These timings, not only include the physical, biographical, historical or



biological but also linearity or circularity, permanence and change – time vectors, being in one's time and going beyond (Adam, 2010, p. 64). Józef Kozielecki (1987) wrote about transcendence. Other similar people doubtless included Janusz Korczak and Irena Sendler.

What was the essence of this transcendence, where were its roots, what achievements, sense and meanings did it imbue on Sendler, in her professional environment and for us today?

For the teacher, the question is about the Sendler phenomenon – What was seminal to her extraordinary life and how was it created? Today there are other interpretations to those described by Büchler, Znaniecki and Szczepański. Today's developmental psychology and adult pedagogy regard human development from horizontal and vertical perspectives, linear learning and experience, with reference to constructivism, (Alheit, 2011, p. 12). Horizontal development is basic and linear, concerning knowledge gathering and experience – cumulative and part of every individual's reality. However, there is a further vertical transformation, which brings about a change of perspective on reality – a transformation of consciousness. This exemplifies the life-stories of people who were extraordinary, creative or innovative. Their development might metaphorically be described by height (knowledge) juxtaposed to breadth (reflecting a greater ability to understand complexity, create new meanings and a higher skill of finding connections or associating them with their circumstances), and finally depth, which unravels different perspectives and allows ultimate arrival at values.

These major studies by American psychologists illustrate post conventional human development, which, as emphasised by Marzanna Kielar (2015, p. 59) – leads the individual into individualisation and autonomy and then towards a growing feeling of unity with others and with the Universe. In this light, a person might declare, 'I am creative, independent, different and at the same time I can see a common good, common values'. People characterised by post conventional development, as shown by research, consciously direct their life story, take matters into their own hands and at the same time, they turn to people who think in a similar way, they look for a community of values and actions (Perkowska-Klejman, 2013). Speaking symbolically or in plain language – these unusual life stories do not sprout from fallow ground. We do not approach them with neutrality.

In contemporary educational theory, biography embraces an important, attractive and maybe fashionable message, both a narrative and an approach to learning. We learn from our own and others' life stories. This aspect of

learning from biography is today promoted by educators. It may embrace a whole life or chosen stages. One might possibly describe a biography as a trajectory of suffering or bravery. Biography reveals and brings the Other One closer to us. The Other One, found on our life's path, presents through different media: perhaps word of mouth or film. We can examine a life trajectory, biographical stages, cognitive structures – the cruxes for change, passage and transit. The most important of these, however, is embarkation on a personal relationship shared with us (Dubas, 2011, p. 7).

Not every relationship is one of learning. Reflection on a biography, application of another's life to augmenting one's own core knowledge about the world, professional knowledge and self-awareness is a requirement. Reflection on a biography brings about changes in ourselves. According to researchers who study learning processes, this is transformative learning (Illeris, p. 66). This learning becomes more pronounced, the nearer the Other One is to us. The more we identify with them, the more emphatically we identify them as hero, enigma or challenge.

Today, the biography of Irena Sendler has an exceptional polish. She is especially close to us. We might boast that Irena Sendler is one of us – having grown up in our environment of educators and social worker. She belongs to this community.

In 1927, Irena Sendler started Law as an undergraduate at the University of Warsaw. However, she quickly moved to Humanities, where she studied Polish philology. It was a difficult time for the University. While its prestige was growing, student numbers increasing (10 000) and more professors were being appointed (250), otherwise, nationalism and antisemitism were on the rise and the Academic Branch of the All-Polish Youth and other nationalist organisations were actively demonstrating their aversion to students of Jewish origin (see internet sources: *Dzieje*, 2017; *Rzeczpospolita*, 2017). Proposals for 'ghetto benches' (segregated seating) were declared *numerus clausus* and later sanctioned by ministerial decisions and by rectors. The Humanities Faculty at The University of Warsaw was strictly against national and religious division. Irena Sendler, in protest, crossed out a stamp in her student documentation, which stipulated her seating instructions for lecture halls. In consequence, her student rights were suspended and her return to the University was not easy. By this seemingly small act, Irena Sendler had registered her independence of thought, action and readiness to accept the consequences of her own actions and values.

## PROFESSIONAL FORMATION OF IRENA SENDLER

In 1932, Irena Sendler found herself in new surroundings. She had started a job in the Mother and Child Care Unit for the Civil Social Assistance Committee in Warsaw, working together with the Polish Free University (1). She entered a remarkable environment, in which Polish social work and social pedagogy were being shaped. Here, she received a special intellectual, social and professional grounding, to which she remained loyal until the end of her life. Without this relationship with the School of Social Pedagogy and the students of Helena Radlińska, it would be hard to explain Irena Sendler's biography. The Polish Free University was a private university, obtaining institutional status during the Second Polish Republic, embracing the Association for Scientific Courses and other seats of learning. From the outset, the University had to fight for its independence in order to resist social and political influence. It accepted students of various nationalities and religions. Some students were from the working class and the countryside. There were also ex-nuns and priests and supporters of left-wing political parties. Lecturers at the University held a variety of social and political views. Figures included Ludwik Krzywicki, Konstanty Krzeczkowski, Aniela Szycówna, Józefa Joteyko, Jan Wł. Dawid, Kazimierz Kornilowicz, Stefan Czarnowski, Antoni Bolesław Dobrowolski, Józef Chałasiński – members of the intellectual elite of that time (Skubała-Tokarska, 1967, pp. 109–213).

At the Polish Free University, there were no special seating requirements for Jews and all attempts to disrupt lectures by gangs of youths were met with firm resistance. This was not in step with the official ministerial position and the Free University was omitted from the official register of Polish universities – the official problem was in its declaration of staff qualifications.

- (1) *The unit was created as the initiative of students at the School of Social Pedagogy at the Polish Free University. It was the place for students to find work placements. The chair was held by Maria Uziembło. The unit offered open care for children and families, also offering parenting and careers guidance. Additionally, it provided legal advice and support. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1935, the unit closed and workers were transferred to the department of Social Care and Public Health. Dr. Czesław Wroczyński, an initiator of changes and reformer of the care system in Warsaw was missing from the team, see A. Uziembło (1995, p. 20).*

In accordance with the 1919 statute of the Polish Free University, four faculties were created: Mathematical-Biological, Humanities, Social and Political Sciences, and Pedagogy. It was Pedagogy, which became pivotal to the shaping of pedagogical thinking. This was the first independent Polish institution to provide teacher training, providing teachers for middle schools and educational research teams. In 1926, several years later, the first Department of Pedagogy was created at the University of Warsaw, led by Bogdan Nawroczyński, pp. 124–131.

In 1925, the School of Social Pedagogy was created and led by Helena Radlińska in the Education Faculty at the Polish Free University. It responded to an educational movement, which had flourished in what had previously been Polish territory, under Russian administration during partition. Norman Davies referred to this sensation as the ‘only success’ in interwar Europe (Davies, 1997, p. 534). This was clearly described and documented by Ryszard Wroczyński. The aim of the Socio-Educational School was to incubate adult educators, librarians, cooperative members and other educational activists (Skubała-Tokarska, 1967, p. 182). It quickly emerged, however, that needs for Social Pedagogy extended much further. The School established subject specialisation in: adult education, organisation of cultural life, also dealing with problems of local government and co-operation, librarianship and child social care, which was led by Czesław Babicki. The curriculum for child social care also covered subjects such as: child society – led by Janusz Korczak, social hygiene lectured by Dr. Czesław Wroczyński – a doctor, a general Director of Health Care at vice-ministerial level and preschool education and social care for the village environment (Szubert, 1966, p. 39).

The School of Social Pedagogy was an exceptional place for research and practice. It was created to respond to serious social issues such as, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, poor hygiene, infectious illnesses and poor housing, particularly in Warsaw. It was intended to shape leaders for social change; social workers and social pedagogues.

Radlińska, in creating the School, looked to Western educational examples, while, at the same time, she turned to face the social challenges of the Second Polish Republic. The fight against illiteracy, educational and cultural work in the countryside and in the working class environment, universal education, local government and cooperation, and help for mothers and children – were all intended to facilitate the building of Independent Poland.

They managed to create a unique environment for students and lecturers in the School for Social Pedagogy. There, inter-war, an elite of socio-educationalists was founded and graduates from the best foreign universities brought with them new forms of social thinking. Jean Piaget chose the Free University, not the University of Warsaw, on his tour of institutions dealing with child education (Smolińska-Theiss, 2013, p. 87).

The School was a very up to date for its time. It coupled education with research and practice (*action research*). Students were most often people who had already graduated from education, economics, administration, farming, medicine or nursing and had at least a year's professional social work experience. They had to demonstrate maturity and social conscience. Courses were over a 2-year period. The first year was academic and the second year was practical alternating with the writing of an empirical thesis supported with students' own field experience.

Radlińska set herself the ambitious task of building Poland's social services with the theoretical and organisational framework she created for them. The term 'social services' appears in Radlińska's work with two meanings. Firstly, an organisational and professional structure, establishing the foundations for social work and the role of the social work profession, in Poland. Radlińska defined the social services very broadly. She included: the adult education teacher, as a community worker (in local government, agronomy or in social activism), librarians and mother and child carers, (covering: nurses, midwives, health visitors, hygienists, nursery workers, kindergarten teachers, child minders in day centres, orphanages and other care institutions), therapists, probation officers, careers advisors and social workers concerned with street children, the homeless or prostitutes, and those recovering from addiction or sickness and prisoners. This perspective on social work extends beyond a modern understanding for statutory provision of social work and is far beyond the role of typical social work. There are, however, those who call for a return to this broader concept in Polish social services (Każmierczak, 2017).

In her second, narrower definition, social service meant professional ethos. As reported by Zofia Skubała-Tokarska (1967, p. 189), the School educated personnel useful to promote or maintain 'the normal life of the nation'; they were also 'down-to-earth'. Social workers combined the ideals of fighters for an independent Poland with the work of instructors and professionals in the Second Polish Republic. Radlińska called them 'model workers'. 'A modern leader belongs to a group, as a comrade and co-worker,

they should never patronise like a benefactor who looks down on people. The value of their work should be assessed, not by what they have achieved on their own, but by what they managed to achieve by working with and within the group' – wrote Radlińska, in 1928. As envisioned by Radlińska, social work and social education should be a service in the name of values – in the name of the future state and nation, in the name of the fundamental concept of providing help to fellow human beings in need. Social service required an ethical norm from students of the School. It was also the educational principle for work and the social role of graduates of the School.

The meaning of the ethos in education was strongly underlined by Bogdan Nawroczyński, Kazimierz Sośnicki and Zygmund Mysłakowski. Kazimierz Sośnicki (p. 58) emphasised that ethos appears where there is a collision, a conflict between various normative rules. Sometimes these are discrepancies between moral and legal norms. Ethos implies action, not in subservience to rules but to individual values and choices. Ethos is created on the basis of knowledge about the world, oneself and one's own profession but it is also shaped by emotions and the will – and according to Sośnicki (p. 129) – by a conscience that can differentiate good from evil.

In the School of Social Pedagogy, owing to many educational, social and political factors and also to a special atmosphere and the relationships between professors and students, something very unusual was accomplished. A collective ethos was established, which became a normative reference for the whole group, irrespective of individual moral norms. Group ethos builds not only on common aims but also on experience, socialisation and from direct relationships. It builds a community (Nowak, Cern, 2008, pp. 31–32). Today we would describe it as an understanding that extends beyond self-interest. Group ethos is expressed in difficult situations and in relationships. It is often based on simple messages.

Irena Sendler was familiar with these messages from her family background. Together with her father, she would announce to everyone that 'you should lend a hand to anyone drowning'. The School of Social Pedagogy taught her not only to lend a hand, but also to recognise and find the drowning. Under the auspices of the Free University, the Mother and Child Care Unit of the Civilian Committee of Social Assistance in Warsaw, where the 22-year-old Irena Sendler was now on placement, was bound by this task as a duty. While primarily intended as an institution for diagnosis of children's circumstances in Warsaw, as it was an institution providing aid, it also accepted the challenge to build the child and family support system for Warsaw.

Very quickly, it emerged, that in the social assistance programme developed by Radlińska's students, the mother and child were central. Radlińska (1928, p. 170) wrote: 'all children have an identical right to all the world's goods, as all of them carry the beginnings of a new human life' and then she would add: 'helping a child starts with helping the mother'.

The situation for children and pregnant women in the crisis period of the thirties was a tragedy. The death rate among new-borns was around 31%, 1 in 10 children suffered from tuberculosis, 20% were at risk of it, 67% had swollen glands and 33% had rickets. A huge problem in inter-war Warsaw was housing. As many as 98% of homes did not have toilets, 87% did not have running water and 28% were located below ground level (Uziembło, 1995, p. 22). At that time, epic unemployment, poverty, infectious diseases, sexually transmitted diseases and the use of primitive tools to attempt abortion – were identified by social workers as an everyday reality for women in Warsaw. In such conditions, social work became an ethical and professional responsibility.

It was no coincidence that mostly women stepped up to the challenge. The beginnings of social work in the West and in Poland were tightly bound to the feminist movement. In Poland, however, it had a different character. It put women in the role of leaders, model workers who were there to change the reality. The foundation to this work was repeated many times by Radlińska (1935, p. 288) in her thesis on social pedagogy and social work: 'If we want to change relationships, we have to reach for the support of the life forces from within this very environment. We cannot change people's way of life other than in the name of an ideal, but with human effort. We cannot be indifferent to people's misfortune, harm, evil, abuse or injustice – social workers cannot distance themselves from their environment. Willing to live according to ideals, they must change the world.'

For students of the School of Social Pedagogy these words were a profoundly assumed imperative. Today we would say they encapsulated the habitus for Polish social work. A select rank was created from those who had entered the profession. They shared professionalism coupled with personal and group ethos and joint convictions about their social mission. This mission gave meaning to their lives and social status. For this mission, sometimes, they would neglect their own families or even resign from them. They had the feeling of being a chosen group, one that had been given a special task. This was the ethic of a defiant generation. They were not revolutionaries. They believed in rational and ethical action. It gave



them the feeling that they formed a social elite, working at the grass roots of human need.

In 1992/93, this was reported pristinely by a special research study by Wiesław Theiss, Aniela Uziembło and Małgorzata Gładkowska. The project was called *'oral history'*, in which Radlińska's former students described their wartime and post-war experience (Gładkowska, Uziembło, Theiss, 1995). Unfortunately, Irena Sendler's version of events could not be included directly, although, naturally, her presence was embodied by the narrative of others. These oral histories very clearly depicted the ethos adopted by social workers linked to the Polish Free University. They were always on duty. The War, the ghetto, the Warsaw uprising, POW camps and those ill-fated children of Zamojszczyzna – all landed them with professional challenges.

'Do not make a hero out of me', Sendler repeated in press interviews. It might be said – she was on eternal duty. Actually, in the years 1932–1943 she was employed in the Warsaw Social Assistance Division, responsible for helping children – all children.

The greatest tragedy was the fate of Jewish children condemned by Hitler's torturers. Sendler, as a social worker managed to obtain an identity card for herself and Irena Schulz – her co-worker in the sanitary unit, whose task it was to fight infectious disease in the ghetto. Several times a day, they entered the ghetto with food, clothing and typhus vaccine. They established contact with Centos, then with the Council for Aid to Jews and next with the Jewish Combat Organisation.

In March 1979 Irena Sendler, Jadwiga Piotrowska, Izabela Kuczkowska and Wanda Drozdowska-Rogowiczowa issued the following statement:

*We, the undersigned, state that in the war period, years 1939–1945, while working in the Department of Social Care and its agencies – The Centres for Health and Care – we were at the same time activists engaged in 'Żegota', the Council for Aid to Jews. As a result, we took part in action to save Jewish children from annihilation, in close association with Irena Sendler – head of the children's care unit, 'Żegota' (Prekarowa, 1982, p. 215).*

The authors estimated about 2500 children were rescued, including roughly: 500 taken in by orders of nuns in convents, around 200 taken in by Care Rescue in the Boduen Children's Home, around 500 by the General Care Council, around 100 were sent to partisan formations in the forests and around 1300 found shelter with foster families.



Irena Sendler (code name, Jolanta) was indisputably central to saving children from the ghetto. This could not have been possible, however, without the engagement of the whole community of social workers, activists and doctors who helped children – in both Aryan and Jewish areas of Warsaw. This included a large group of Social Care Unit co-workers, Radlinska's students, as well as others who conformed with School of Social Pedagogy principles for social work and social service. These included: Jadwiga Piotrowska, Irena Schulz, Izabela Kuczkowska, Wanda Drozdowska-Rogowiczowa, Jadwiga Grabowska, Lucyna Franciszkiewicz, Wincenty Ferster, Helena Małuszyńska, Halina Nowak, Stanisław Papuziński, Kazimiera Trzaskalska, Franciszka Nowak, Stanisława Bussolowa, Jadwiga Deneka, Róża Zawadzka, Stanisława Orzechowska-Sroczyńska, Anna Kowalska, Wanda Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska, Ewa Rechtman, Józef Zyskan, Jan Starczewski, Jan Dobraczyński and Julian Grobelny.

This was the generation of professional ethos. The ideals for Polish social worker ethos were forged in Helena Radlińska's student circle and the School of Social Pedagogy. Irena Sendler was the brightest shining light of the community.

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## PSYCHOLOGY OF HOPE IN THE SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF IRENA SENDLER (1910–2008)<sup>1)</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Hope is a significant element of human life. It is very hard to build our everyday life without hope for a better tomorrow. This article presents the psychology of hope in Irena Sendler's social activity which saved around 2,500 Jewish children during the Second World War (1939–1945). It consists of an introduction, two points which present following issues: in the first point, according to the structure of hope by Józef Koziński, there are some elements presented that create active hope: cognitive, emotional, temporal, affiliative, agency. These elements have been confronted with life and activities of Irena Sendler. In the second perspective, the sources of Irena Sendler's hope are described: 1. Childhood experiences, especially the beauty of a family home's atmosphere where openness of heart to other human beings was visible, in particular to those in need. 2. Irena Sendler's confidence in herself, and not overconfidence, had an essential influence and translated into the success of her actions. 3. Faith – which has never been expressed by Sendler, although we still can assume that it was her strength, silent support for her actions which can be proved by her own words: 'A long time ago I found in my pallet a small, destroyed picture with a sentence: *Jesus, I trust in you!* I hid it and had with me always' (Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 200). It is undeniable that Irena Sendler can be a remarkable example of how crucial the role of hope is in human life and how much people can do, if they live in hope every day.

**Keywords:** psychology of hope, Irena Sendler, social activity

### INTRODUCTION

**W**e all need hope to live. It allows us to survive every condition we experience, as it answers the question: 'What for...?' (Frankl, 1998). It motivates a human being to act, to persist, to develop, and sometimes to

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: "Praca Socjalna", 2018, No 1, pp. 57–66, DOI:10.5604/01.30001.0012.4706.

simply survive. In common talks, one can hear the saying, that hope is the last to die. Hope is explained as a ‘complete, filled with a will waiting, more or less motivated for a positive, dreamt of event... (...) it implies a state of growing bravery, or a faith which gives relief (to raise hope, to let hope into one’s heart), full of trust and optimism conviction (hope for a victory, success, hope that everything will be all right), or an ambition or plans for the future (to have hope in somebody or in something)’ (Zavalloni, 1999, p. 9).

Not always, however, a human being is capable of raising hope in oneself. He or she needs another human being in order to do so, especially when everything seems so difficult and hard to change.

Such person for many, throughout the time of the Second World War (1939–1945) was Irena Sendler. The times in which she lived and was active were not easy. It was a time of fear and anxiety which created everyday reality together with hope. The last one was born in people’s hearts, who experienced days full of authentic, the brave closeness of a person sensitive to their fate.

Irena Sendler was not the only person of these hard times, who gave hope and courage to others to live. There were many more of such people. However, it was her bravery, which they saw, remembered, and called out. It became a symbol of everyone who, while risking their own lives, was protecting Jews, especially children. This is why 2018, declared by the Parliament of the Republic of Poland, following a proposal made by the Ombudsman for Children – is the year of Irena Sendler. Therefore, it is worth again, even briefly, to look at her attitude, teaching, and her social activity, especially because the absence of hope and bravery in life, despite a lack of war, can be very distinctively observed in today’s world, also in Poland, when information reaches us of self-destructive, fatal behaviours among children and youth. This is clearly indicated by statistical data of the Police Department, from which it follows that from year to year, a number of people taking their own lives is growing, and also the mean age of these suicidal behaviour is decreasing.<sup>2)</sup>

## HOPE NEEDED TO LIVE

Roberto Zavalloni (1999, p. 10) wrote that ‘one does not have hope if he or she is unaware of the situation which is characterised by contradictions, suffering, and lack of freedom. Having hope means to be able to see such

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<sup>2)</sup> <http://statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/zamachy-samobojcze/63803,Zamachy-samobojcze-od-2017-roku.html>, access: 20.07.2018.

a situation not as a tragedy, to believe that it is possible to overcome it, to plan free life and to reach for it while fighting against evil forces.

Irena Sendler had such a perspective of hope in those difficult times of Hitler's occupation. To analyse her social activity from the perspective of the psychology of hope, we will use mostly Józef Koziński works (2004, 2006), where he pointed to the main elements of active hope, which 'dominates in human's life': cognitive, emotional, temporal, affiliative, and agency (2006, pp. 42–46).

### *Cognitive element*

In the cognitive structure of hope, a significant place is taken by the conviction that reaching a planned target is real and within the capacities of a specific person. However, in order to reach such conclusions, one has to be open for *tomorrow*, for the future, and has to be able to assess a probability of hope coming true (in the future).

Irene Sendler wholeheartedly opened herself for *tomorrow* – for the future, and always made an assessment of a situation (including a social simulation). She assessed the institutions engaged in saving Jewish children, she was aware, that a probability of a success is close to or equals certainty. This was seen not only in the following actions of saving children from the Warsaw ghetto, but also in a thorough securing information about them, in a famous bottle, so that one day they can come back to their roots, so that they can find their relatives, so that the hope for a meeting can be fulfilled (Czerwińska-Rydel, 2018). 'Sendler believed that children will survive war' (Smolińska-Theiss, 2018).

### *Emotional element*

With hope, a whole spectrum of emotions is tied, both positive and negative ones. However, positive emotions play the main role here. Joy, satisfaction, happiness, and the awareness of the success of an action, all stimulate for even more intensified activities that create hope in others (Koziński, 2006, p. 44).

Our heroine, Irena Sendler, despite the fact that she often experienced anxiety, fear, uncertainty, sadness, lack of any expectations or predictions regarding the torturers' actions many times, she was not fully influenced by these emotions. The honest joy of every human life saved gave her courage

to fight for life, not her own, but that of a defenceless, helpless, and stranded child. A child's smile, although sometimes behind tears of separation from parents, was an enough and special award for her, confirmation of her action's rightness. This joy stimulated further actions, even when the risk of being exposed by Germans was very real. Sendler was never worried about her own safety, but always about saving children. She would say: 'I often was thinking about what their future will look like' (Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 277).

### *The temporal element*

The time of hope is tomorrow, as hope is set mainly for the future. Koziellecki (2006, p. 45) claims, that 'there is no hope without the future'. However, in the structure of hope, an important part is also played by the present moment and the past. How we feel now, in what psychophysical condition we find ourselves, shapes our concentration on actions for the future, on planning tomorrow, on being engaged in the development of a given situation. When a human being is satisfied with the present, they try and prolong it at every cost. They see then a sense of their engagement and become more and more creative. The past in turn, convinces us to make conclusions, teaches us to overcome obstacles, and resolve conflicts. Experiences from the past opens up a choice of real means for reaching the a possible target.

An enormous sensitivity and an ability to see things allowed Sendler to accurately analyse the past, draw conclusions, and plan future actions. The joy of the present motivated her and lesson from the past protected from making mistakes.

In her activity, she was inspired by Korczak's courage. She admired his engagement and wisdom in loving children. She would say: 'Of all of my most dramatic war experiences, such as tortures at Pawiak, Gestapo in Szu-cha Street, dying youth at uprising's hospital, where I served as a nurse, nothing left me with such sorrow as seeing that procession led by Korczak with children walking calmly to face their deaths...' (Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 146). That is why she confessed with a great honesty, that she regrets only one thing, 'that I could have done more. This feeling of regret will accompany me until I die'.<sup>3)</sup>

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<sup>3)</sup> Words for an interview given to a French director Marek Halter, published in a journal 'Haarec' in 1995. [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5207057,Irena\\_Sendler\\_foreign\\_press\\_review.htm#ixzz1Fv0zulhA](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5207057,Irena_Sendler_foreign_press_review.htm#ixzz1Fv0zulhA), access: 15.05.2018.

### *The affiliative element*

Hope is directed towards people. We do more because of others. These are parents, siblings, partners, friends, teachers. In one word – people who are close to our heart, but not only them. Everyone becomes an element of hope, even a stranger, hence altruistic actions of medical workers, lifesavers, undertaken in order to save lives at all costs. Thinking about human beings protects us from a feeling of hopelessness. The care of a person raises hope directed at others and it is always a special care (Kozielecki, 2006).

Sendler's hope was difficult. Especially when she took children from their parents in order to save them. Separation was very painful, but it gave hope for a better tomorrow. Although it took away fear, it also caused, after all – anxiety. Sendler, being aware of the meaning of family bonds in human life, did not save children using force, but she would do that very patiently, although sometimes it was a bit like a race against time. She also respected the decision of the adults of postponing the moment of separation, which sometimes led to a moment when it was too late (Czerwińska-Rydel, 2018). The affiliative element is very emotional, which is no wonder. In many situations, it can be very helpful, however, it can also be an obstacle.

### *The element of agency*

It has a dynamic character. It has a special meaning for human beings. It influences our feeling of sense and actions. Being aware of their own agency and efficiency, a person protects themselves from a feeling of emptiness, from the obstacles of everyday life. A person increases their activity as they see its sense (Kozielecki, 2006).

Irena Sendler would say that 'If you see a person drowning, you should lend a hand...' (Mieszkowska, 2009, p. 20). Seeing the success of saving children, she tried to engage in this process everyone, for whom the fate of another human being, especially a child was not neutral. She looked at the huge indifference towards children's suffering with great pain and fear: 'And what does the world do about that? Mighty countries? The world was silent. And silence sometimes means acceptance of what is happening...' (p. 134; Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 144). Such attitude was very distant for Sendler, which is also why she experienced the misunderstanding of her actions among her friends, acquaintances, and close ones. It was even believed to be irresponsible of her to constantly risk her own life in order to save children.



## SOURCES OF HOPE FOR IRENA SENDLER

It is very special to meet a person with so much strength, determination, and energy for action, so that they can pass it on to others. To meet a person who has peace, good and limitless love for humankind, has inside resources of hope, which can change so much in a society, in particular in people's lives (Tucholska, 2012).

Irena Sendler was among such people. In those looking at her life an awe, respect, admiration, are born, but also a question concerning the source of such strength, courage, and love in one person. Answers can vary (Smolińska-Theiss, 2018). For sure, there is not one single answer. Let's look at three theses, which I hope, will help us to read the life and attitude of Irena Sendler in a correct way.

### *Childhood experiences*

Sendler confessed: 'That one should help those in need, I learnt in my family home. That is why I am not any hero' (Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 146). Her family home gave her many beautiful examples of care for others. Always with joy, she came back to these moments, which shaped her personality. 'My family home was always open for all in need. Everyone could come with their problems and received help' (p. 75). To grow up in a home that supplies a person with such resources of hope for life is a great and special gift. Sendler received this gift. That is why her attitude, her style of looking at humans does not surprise. This was characteristic of her not only in war period, but also after the war, when in Warsaw 'she joined a huge action of helping children orphaned by the war, injured, lost, demoralised. She created institutions and caring-educational centres' (Mieszkowska, 2018; Smolińska-Theiss, 2018).

### *Confidence in oneself*

Modern literature addresses self-confidence, not rarely deals with confidence in oneself (Kozdęba, 2014). Quite often also these notions are used interchangeably, yet they do not mean the same thing. Confidence in oneself is definitely something different than self-confidence. This is an awareness and acceptance of own strong and weak points. It is acting without complexes, with certainty, with a conviction about the righteousness of

undertaken steps, but without putting oneself above others. It is an action whose base is another person's wellbeing, not an approval, admiration and gratification from society. Therefore, an important factor in building confidence in oneself is modesty.

In Irena Sendler's attitude, we can see modesty, both regarding her own capabilities, herself, as well as regarding accomplished honours and words of admiration addressed to her. She would say; 'Do not make a hero out of me. All I did was what everyone should have done..... (3).' On another occasion she said: 'Every Jewish child saved as a result of my actions is a justification of my being on this earth, not a reason for glory' (Mieszkowska, 2005, p. 36).<sup>4</sup>

Confidence in oneself assumes the courage to act without destroying others. Looking at Sendler, we can see respect for everyone, despite different views, and an efficiency in convincing others to own beliefs, based on pointing to the good as a consequence of these actions, not sticking to one's opinion without the possibility of conversation.

### *Faith*

It is hard to find texts which would talk about Sendler's faith directly and extensively. However, there are fragments, which suggest that the spiritual world was not alien or neutral for her. While remembering childhood experiences, she said: 'I remember myself dressed up in a Cracovian outfit walking and throwing flowers with other children in church processions' (p. 78). This experience left a mark, which was never removed from her life. That is why, despite various complications, a closeness of the transcendental world was important for Sendler. She confessed to many people's surprise: 'A long time ago, I found in my pallet a small, destroyed picture with a sentence: *Jesus, I trust in you!* I hid it and had with me always' (p. 200).

## CONCLUSION

The psychological aspects of hope in the social activity of Irena Sendler described here show unequivocally that hope is an important factor in hu-

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<sup>4</sup> Words for an interview given to a French director Marek Halter, published in a journal 'Haarec' in 1995 [http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5207057,Irena\\_Sendler\\_foreign\\_press\\_review.htm#ixzz1Fv0zulhA](http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5207057,Irena_Sendler_foreign_press_review.htm#ixzz1Fv0zulhA), access: 15.05.2018.

man development and in the perception of oneself and others. Her attitude becomes an incredible example for all, younger and older, of respecting life, every life, as the most precious and exceptional gift. She would repeat: ‘A human being should give life to people, not take it away from them’ (Mieszkowska, 2009, p. 341). In meetings with young people, she would call forth: ‘You are the future of the world! Do something to make it a better place. Without wars, innocent deaths. Spread goodness. Be sensitive to the fate of those weaker than you’ (p. 324).

In her message for the New Year 2004 (Sendler, 2004) she shared wishes, which can become a direction and an action plan for today and for every tomorrow, for everyone who values life:

‘I wish therefore for the coming year 2004 to put an end to all wars in the world. So that the flames of the fire which destroy whole nations and spread blood in many parts of the world, killing thousands of people, including those most innocent creatures – children – will be put out! I wish everyone in the world, who regardless of their race, religion and origin – are close to my heart – so that they, in all their actions, remember about human dignity, their suffering and needs, always looking for a path towards mutual understanding and agreement. Finishing this year, we have to be full of faith and hope, so that despite so much suffering and evil in this world – goodness will finally prevail!!!’

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## THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN A TRIBUTE TO IRENA SENDLER

### ABSTRACT

An introduction to the subject is a brief outline of the history of the Federation's creation, its efforts to create a global definition and principles of ethics in social work, and its strive to create a global framework for a work in defence of children's rights. The subject of honouring Irena Sendler by the Federation as a role model for social workers is presented from a perspective of prof. Joachim Wieler, who obtained her permission for this distinction. Honouring Irena Sendler with a title of the *Most Distinguished Social Worker of IFSW* itself took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 at the World Conference of Social Workers in Munich. It is described on the basis of a laudation delivered by Imelda Dodds, President of the Federation, as well as on the account of a laureate Elżbieta Ficowska, who was saved as a five-month-old baby from a certain death, thanks to the Warsaw ghetto life-saving action run by Sendler. The article ends with a review of memories of a message that Irena Sendler left for social workers and all the people in the world.

**Keywords:** Irena Sendler, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Federation of Social Workers, IFSW, International Permanent Secretariat of Social Workers

### ABOUT THE FEDERATION

An initiative of creating an international organisation uniting social workers was born during discussions at the First International Conference of Social Workers in Paris in 1928. It is hard not to notice that going back to this topic in year 2018, the year of Irena Sendler, also marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event. Surely, this conference created an atmosphere encouraging a creation of such initiative, as it gathered 2481 people from Europe, Asia, Africa, and both Americas (Kuilema, 2014, p. 2). The initiative was undertaken during the Second International Conference of Social Workers in Frankfurt in 1932 by the representatives of Belgium, Czechoslovakia,

France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, USA, and Great Britain, who also created the *International Permanent Secretariat of Social Workers*. Economic problems of those times were caused by a crisis plaguing the world from 1929, and together with the Second World War made a broader activity of the Secretariat impossible up until 1950. It was then when attempts to use the Secretariat's heritage to create a stable organisation were undertaken (Healy, 2008, p. 177). Its status was formalised under the name *International Federation of Social Workers* (IFSW) at a conference in Munich in 1956 by the representatives of social work from Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Holland, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, USA, Italy and United Kingdom (*50 Years of International Social Work*, 2006, p. 4).

Currently, in year 2018, IFSW unites organisations representing social workers from 126 countries (<http://ifsw.org/what-we-do/>). 'The Mission of IFSW is to advocate for social justice, human rights and social development through plans, actions, programs and the promotion of best practice models in social work within a framework of international cooperation' (<http://ifsw.org/what-we-do/governance/constitution-and-by-laws/>).

The Federation aims to achieve a global integration of social work around its common understanding as a profession and with regards to new challenges. Its definitions discussed in an international debate, accepted at the General Meetings of IFSW representing more and more countries, speak of a progress in this aspiration. This progress can be observed when comparing definitions from 1982 with preambles to the definitions from 2000 and 2014<sup>1)</sup>.

1982, Brighton: 'Social work is a profession whose purpose it is to bring about social changes in society in general and in its individual forms of development'.

<p>2000, Montreal: 'The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their</p>	<p>2014, Melbourne: Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work.</p>
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<sup>1)</sup> A laconic definition from 1982 was replaced by more developed definitions, whose full texts (cited in Polish translation) a more and more detailed way define a range of social work's understanding (see. Szmagalski 2018, pp. 289, 291).

environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work’.	Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels”
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From year 2000 in social work’s definitions accepted by the Federation in the preambles there are included human rights as fundamental, main rules of social work. It should be also underlined, that in the elaborations of these preambles, such rules were defined:

In the year 2000: ‘ [...] Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice has focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action’.	In the year 2014: ‘[...] The overarching principles of social work are respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings, doing no harm, respect for diversity and upholding human rights and social justice. Advocating and upholding human rights and social justice is the motivation and justification for social work.
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## SOCIAL WORK IN DEFENCE OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The federation does not stop at proposing a common for all members understanding of what social work is. From 1976 it has also been working on proposals of common deontology of social work containing a pledge to defend Children’s rights. In an accepted then at the General Meeting of the Federation *International Code of Ethics for the Professional Social Workers* from many years before the definition from 2000, there was a principle: ‘Every human being has a unique value, irrespective of origin, ethnicity, sex, **age** (bold by J.S), beliefs, social and economic status or contribution to society’ (IFSW, 1985, p. 9).

In the next accepted deontological document of the Federation from 1994 entitled *The Ethics of Social Work. Principles and Standards* a literal reference to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was included, by the way – it so happened, that we write about it at the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its acknowledgment – and also there was a reference to other international conventions which followed from this declaration ([http:// ethics.iit.edu...](http://ethics.iit.edu...)). It can be assumed, that in this package of human rights, the *Convention*

on the *Rights of the Child* established by the United Nations in 1989 was implicitly included.

Literally, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was named in the accepted in 2004 by the General Meeting of the Federation *Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles* next to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other international more detailed pacts and conventions on human rights as documents particularly significant for a social work practice ([http:// ifsw.org/policies...](http://ifsw.org/policies...)). It has to be mentioned, that the Federation started working at educating social workers with regards to children's rights' defence before the decision about including the Convention in the ethical rules of social work. The first result of this work was published in 1992 by the United Nations and renewed in 1994 in a textbook of applying the Convention in social work. The next edition of the textbook was published independently by the Federation in 1997. All these versions were published traditionally as books. Currently, there is an open access internet version from 2002 entitled *Social Work and the Rights of the Child. A Professional Training Manual on the UN Convention*. In the introduction to the textbook we read: 'This manual provides stimulation and guidance to social workers, social work students and educators, as well as colleagues in related fields, who wish to live up to the high ideals of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to implement them in their work with children.'<sup>2)</sup>

## PATH TO IRENA SENDLER

Initiators of the World Conference of Social Workers which took place in Munich in 2006 decided to present there a profile of an outstanding person, who could become a role model for development of social work all around the world. It was then when the Federation entered a path which led to Irena Sendler. The first one to mention her was Tom Johannesen, Secretary General of IFSW in years 1993–2009. He described her as a 'Schindler unknown to anyone' citing her discovery by Megan Stuart, Elizabeth Chambers, Sabrina Coons and Jessica Shelton – high school students and a teacher supporting them – Norman Conard in Uniontown, a town of

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<sup>2)</sup> A laconic definition from 1982 was replaced by more developed definitions, whose full texts(cited in Polish translation) a more and more detailed way define a range of social work's understanding (see. Szmagalski 2018, pp. 289, 291).



several hundred people on the countryside of Kansas State, USA. It was only after their discovery in a form of a theatre drama *'Life in a jar'*, that the epopee of rescuing Warsaw ghetto's children from destruction by Irena Sendler and her co-workers become, with time, known around the world.

A mission of reaching Sendler and informing her about an intention of honouring her by the Federation was undertaken by Joachim Wieler, a professor (currently retired) of social work at the University of Applied Sciences in Erfurt, who, at that time, knew nothing about her. In a published report from this mission, written directly after meeting with Irena Sendlerowa, he confessed that getting to know her was one of the most pleasant and warmest private and professional meetings which happened in his life (Wieler, 2006<sup>3</sup>). It should be added, that his report speaks not only about a great impression which Irena Sendler made, but also about his thorough preparation to the mission he was in responsible of. In this report he included in the introduction a story about Irena Sendler life and about Warsaw ghetto. It so seems, that he recognised this story, addressed to social workers around the world, as necessary to create an intent of honouring Irena Sendler by the international Federation of Social Workers as worthy becoming a model of professional integrity in extreme challenges.

The meeting of prof. Wieler with Irena Sendler took place in February 2006, thanks to the Federation contacting the association of *'Children of the Holocaust'*. It took place with a great help of Ewa Chałasińska, who, as worded by the professor '(...) offered to translate for us and took me to small home for the elderly which is part of a Catholic Convent near the Old Town of Warsaw (Ibid., p. 179)'.

In Wieler's report of this meeting one can clearly see an awe for Irena Sendler as a person of a lively mind and a friendly attitude. A great shape in which Sendler was, is noted very clearly and is confirmed by everyone who had a chance to meet her. He mentioned with an approval the black hairband with which, as we all know, she did not part in the last days of her life: 'Her hair is rather short and very light. A black head band, fitting with her black dress, made her look elegant and rather youthful (Ibid.).

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<sup>3</sup>) Referring to the title of the publication 'The Long Path to Irena Sendler – Mother of the Holocaust Children' J. Wieler noticed, that he was inspired by the title of a book by Anna Mieszkowska 'Mother of Children of the Holocaust, MUZA, Warszawa, 2005 published also in German ('Die Mutter der Holocaust-Kinder', DVA, München 2006).

In his report, Wieler noted also her life credo. She told him that she: *'Sometimes wondered why there is so much fuss about 'heroic acts'. It is something that came rather naturally as a result of my early upbringing and education. When you know that something is basically at stake, like real life, you do everything to save it. You don't talk about it and discuss it. You do it. – Once a journalist asked me if I would have saved only Jewish children. I found this to be a strange question. How do you feel about that?'* „Well”, I replied, *„I feel the same way – very strange! But I have not been in such an extreme situation. Yet, I wonder how someone can distinguish between children or even adults.'* He also expressed a honest apologies for a cruelty directed towards Irena Sendler by German people from his parents' generation, and she, in a reply, slowly, as if in a forgiving way, nodded (Ibid., p. 180).

In a finale of the meeting, professor Wieler asked Irena Sendler a formal question whether she would accept an invitation to honour her by the International Federation of Social Workers. Without any hesitation, and with an honest, radiant smile she answered *Yes*. She said goodbye to Wieler by kissing him in a forehead and with such surprisingly strong hug, that he had to stop himself with a great difficulty not to hug her with equal strength.

An added value to the article by Joachim Wieler is an exposure for an international circulation of an issue of a not so well known history of development of social work in Poland. He asked Sendler, if by any chance she knew Helena Radlińska, a director of the first school of social work in Poland. Her answer is worth to cite in full: *'Oh yes, I have. But I did not go to that school. When I was employed in an organisation that helped unemployed people, the school of social work sent us students for practical experience. Mrs. Radlinska was Jewish and later was hidden in a nunnery by the Ursuline Sisters. Helena Radlinska was not only the founder and director of the first school of social work but she more or less created a new profession of social work in Poland (Ibid.)'*

A final message for readers of Professor Wieler is clearly addressed: *'This was an extremely moving encounter with a real pacifist who has saved so many lives. But she has also suffered severely for her strong convictions. Through her entire life and particularly during the most trying times she remained true to herself and to mankind. And she still has one of the brightest and most encouraging smiles that I have ever seen. I am very grateful that I found and met with Irena Sendler. She gave me her blessings and I pass them on to our international organisation and to all social workers in the world (Ibid., p. 181).'*

## IRENA SENDLER IS BECOMING A HERO OF SOCIAL WORKERS

Irena Sendler has always refused to be called a hero, however, one can state, that she deserved to be called that by all means. A symbolic, modest accent of confirming her merits for the world, by proving that regardless of the consequences, a human being can in daily, quiet work fight against powerful antihuman evil, was honouring her by the International Federation of Social Workers with the title of the Most Distinguished Social Worker. This was performed during an opening ceremony of the World Conference of IFSW, which took place from the 30<sup>th</sup> of July to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August in Munich. It was organised at this date and in this city due to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creation the Federation with a leading slogan: *A World out of Balance – working for a new social equilibrium*. On the conference there were more than 1700 partakers from 85 countries (Tang, Tsang, 2006). So many people were witnesses to this act fulfilled in a great hall of *Internationales Congress Center München*. Irena Sendler did not decide, due to her health condition, to personally arrive to Munich. As her representative arrived Elżbieta Ficowska, who as a 5-month-old baby was saved from the ghetto, after her parents' approval. In the conference programme there was a following announcement together with an up to date photograph of Irena Sendler in her characteristic hairband:

### Tribute to IRENA SENDLER, POLAND

“The first official tribute” to an extraordinary social worker as “Most Distinguished Social Worker of IFSW”.

It goes to a social worker and nurse from Poland, Ms Irena Sendler, “the mother of the children of Holocaust”. During World War Two, Irena Sendler, the “Schindler that nobody knew” saved 2.500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto and found them new homes with foster families.

### LAUDATIO

Imelda Dodds, IFSW President

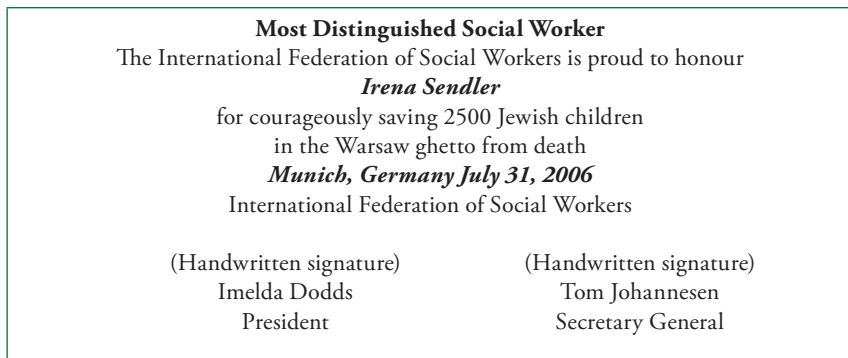
### EXPRESSION OF THANKS

Elżbieta Ficowska

President of the Association of the “Children of the Holocaust”, POLAND

Ms Ficowska was herself one of the saved children and is still in close contact with Irena Sendler. She will bring the tributary documents to her.

The most symbolic from the tributary documents handed to Elżbieta Ficowska turned out to be an astonishingly modest, framed in a black, wooden frame diploma with IFSW logo and with the following text:



This document (reprint: see. Mieszkowska, 2018, p. 308) was obviously delivered to Irena Sendler, as it is confirmed today by a photograph which can be found on the internet under the following link: [http://img.desmotivaciones.es/201104/irena\\_sendler1.jpg](http://img.desmotivaciones.es/201104/irena_sendler1.jpg).

Imelda Dodds in a laudatio stated in a tribute to Irena Sendler took care of presenting her life and work to the community of social workers from all around the world, being aware of the fact, that for many of them, she can still be an unknown person. She summed up her statement with the following words: Irena Sendler, hesitated before receiving the IFSW distinction, because she does not like “heroes and heroines”, but simply starts working when life is in danger. She wanted to know: Why do we (IFSW) want to honour her? Here is our summary answer: We would like it to be known and appreciated for what it did as a social worker – not only in relation to the past, but as an example of a professional role for the future. Her example, we hope, will help us not only to make the smartest, life-saving decisions, but also to make a test when external pressure appears. Irena Sendler has proved that this can be done despite extreme pressure. Thus, she set an admirable example for social workers and for all other people.

In a response to the laudation, Elżbieta Ficowska read Irena Sendler’s letter, in which the most important was a message for social workers seems to be formulated in the following passage: ‘I have dedicated my entire life to social work and to the survival of the most needy. With the

acceptance of this award I need to let you know that without the help of many co-workers and other helpful people I would have not been able to accomplish as much as I did. The concrete action of a social worker requires professionalism, devotion, tenacity and much heart. Through helpful actions one feels much empathy and on the other hand much joy and satisfaction (Wieler, 2008, p. 388).’

## A FAREWELL TO IRENA SENDLER (OR MAYBE NOT..?)

A task of informing social worker from around the world about Irena Sendler passing away was undertaken by Joachim Wieler by publishing a memory in *International Social Work*, an official organ of IFSW (Wieler, 2008). In his article, he recalled her life and work from before the war, during the war, and after the war: her extraordinary persistence and efficiency in rescuing children from the ghetto, escaping death when on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1943 she was arrested by Gestapo and put in Pawiak, notorious political prison in Warsaw during WWII, under a charge of helping Jews, a years-long necessity of hiding after the war her wartime biography in political-social life conditions under communist rules, a recognition in 1965 in Israel as the ‘Righteous among the Nations’ a long awaited recognition of respect for her in homeland and abroad. Wieler name such symbols of this respect as: Order of the White Eagle, Jan Kar-ski Award, blessing from John Paul II, Commander’s Cross with A Star of the Order of Polonia Restituta, honorary citizenship of the state of Israel, and the Order of the Smile given by children.

In this article, Professor Wieler pointed out that the International Federation of Social Workers did not forget about the importance of the role-model which Irena Sendler gave to the world. When in 2007 she was nominated to the Nobel Peace Prize, then chairman of IFSW David N. Jones – it so happened that while celebrating the First World Day of Social Worker declared by the Federation – sent to the Nobel Committee a letter supporting this nomination. When it turned out, that the Prize was awarded to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Federation declared a statement, in which, while congratulating the laureates and underlining that social workers are aware of a seriousness of the global warming issue for the world, expressed however a deep sorrow, that: ‘(...) the life work of Nobel nominee Irena Sendler, social worker, did not receive formal recognition. Irena Sendler and her helpers took personal risks day after day

to prevent the destruction of individual lives – the lives of the children of the Warsaw ghetto. This work was done very quietly, without many words and at the risk of their lives. This is so typical of social work, an activity which changes and saves lives but is done out of the glare of publicity and often at personal risk (Ibid., p. 839).

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February David N. Jones signed a statement of the Federation entitled *The Best Interest of the Child* (IFSW, 2009) which started with a motto taken from Janusz Korczak words: ‘Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be – the unknown person inside each of them is our hope for the future.’ In this statement there is no reference to Irena Sendler’s heritage, although it for sure was not forgotten, as there are references to tragic situations of children during wartimes and assistance which should be delivered by social workers.

Social workers in Poland try to cultivate the memory of Irena Sendler, a proof of which can be an acceptance of her name in April by the first institution of social work in the world – Social Welfare Centre of Aleksandrów Łódzki<sup>4</sup>). The memory of her is sustained in Poland, and not only here, in a movement of schools which took the name of Irena Sendler documented in the Internet on websites such as <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/edukacja-i-zrodla/edukacja/szkoly-imienia-sprawiedliwych> and <http://roksendlerowej.pl/><sup>5</sup>).

A moving example of the memory of Irena Sendler among young people living far away from Poland and our initiatives of commemorating her, for whom not only Second World War, but also a year in which Sendler passed away belong to history, is an article by a student Auroara-Juhl Nikkels from Saint Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas entitled *‘I’m No Hero’: The Life Saving Acts of Irena Sendler*, which was published in February 2018 on the student historical essays’ portal of this university. The article starts with a sentence: ‘At the age of twenty-nine, Irena Sendler was a social worker with the Polish welfare department when Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, launching World War II (Nikkels, 2018)’. In the article, written

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<sup>4</sup>) <http://roksendlerowej.pl/irena-sendler-patronka-ops-w-aleksandrowielodzkiem/>, access: 26.06.2018.

<sup>5</sup>) See also: <http://roksendlerowej.pl/iv-miedzynarodowy-zjazd-szkol-im-ireny-sendlerowej/>, access: as above

based on English sources, including post-mortem memorials published in 2008 in *The Guardian* and *New York Times* and the beforementioned article by Wieler (2008), the author delivers a thorough description of life and work of Irena Sendler. A reader will also see her picture with the inseparable hairband. It should be added, that the article was awarded the Spring Award STMU History Media in categories: *Political History* and *World History*. The article received at STMU History Media to the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 eighty six comments from readers, mostly young, judging from their photos included in the comments section. They all expressed admiration for Irena Sendler, she was considered a role model to follow, especially in difficult situations. The author herself in a mailing correspondence with the author of this text wrote: *I think it's such an important mission to insure that people remember those who went above and beyond to save lives, such as Irena Sendler. She was an inspiration.*

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*Transl. Hugh Patrick Karl Fox*



HALINA POSTEK

## THE HERITAGE OF IRENA SENDLER IN CONTEMPORARY GOOD PRACTICES IN SERVICE OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS<sup>1)</sup>

**I**n a session devoted to presenting practices aiming to fulfil Irena Sendler's message for the modern world in accordance with her motto: 'If you see a person drowning, you should lend a hand...', organised by the Ombudsman for Children and The Maria Grzegorzewska University the following people took part: **Beata Kopyt**, a representative of the Kulczyk Foundation, **Marina Hulia** – a volunteer worker organising humanitarian help for children – refugees from Chechenia, Fr. **Marcin Schmidt**, a priest from Caritas Polska and **Baszar**<sup>2)</sup> – currently a student of the University of Warsaw, engaged in helping children in Aleppo, **Katarzyna Ludwiniak** – a teacher from the Irena Sendler Secondary School no 23 in Warsaw.<sup>3)</sup> The moderator of the session was Joanna **Starega-Piasek**.

The session was preceded by an introduction given by Dr. Joanna Starega-Piasek, who posed a question referring to Poland's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining independence: to what degree were we prepared for independence in the context of actions within social work area.

An answer given by the session's leader suggested that we were in fact well prepared for that. Starega-Piasek called to mind names such as Krzywicki, Strzelecki, and Radlińska. The latter spent several years in Siberia, which could have shaped her views regarding the essence of social work, especially a method of working within a local community. In 1923, an act on social care was passed, which, although it did not become legally binding to its full extent, was significant as an effect of previous theoretical

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: "Praca Socjalna", 2018, No 1, pp. 81–85.

<sup>2)</sup> Baszar from Syria shares only his first name.

<sup>3)</sup> The secondary school on the 1 September was combined with the Battalion 'Zośka' Elementary School no 163.

thought regarding the state's role in social policy. The interwar period was a time of building community, shaping ideas, awakening a feeling of patriotism – on these values a generation was brought up, one to which Irena Sendler belonged.

After this presentation, Joanna Starega-Piasek invited the guests to share their presentations asking them at the same time to share their motivation, which encouraged them to work for children.

Beata Kopyt was first to speak and answered Starega-Piasek's question by quoting figures: 3 billion people live for less than 50 cents a day. The foundation is helping because there are people waiting for this help and the Foundation has the potential to help. In the next part of the presentation, Beata Kopyt explained the essence of the Foundation's actions which is expressed by the phrase: 'domino effect'. The Foundation initiates cooperation with local aid organisations that supports their actions. In Poland, the Foundation became engaged in a program supporting children's nutrition – Yellow Plate, it also financially supported Trust Line for Children and Youth, thanks to which the line could also operate at night-time, which resulted in a measurable outcome of 40 children saved. The Foundation representative showed a seven minute long movie entitled 'Little heroes', which was a story of two children, chosen from many, who were offered help by the Foundation, which is also active abroad. The first little heroine was a small girl from Bangladesh, working at a tailor's warehouse, whose dream was to go to school. Thanks to the Foundation's help, she could give up working there, moved to a boarding school, and take part in school lessons every day. When asked by Dominika Kulczyk, who she would like to become in the future, she answered – a teacher, although she did not hesitate to include an answer suggested by her – the first female president of Bangladesh. The second hero of the film was a boy from Malawi, 16 year-old John, an orphan brought up by relatives, who is infected with the HIV virus and who started begging on the street when he was 8 years of age. He also could start learning thanks to the Foundation's support given to a local organisation helping to create schools for orphans. At school, John turned out to be an excellent student – he won a competition for the best essay and as a reward, he went to meet the Queen of England.

The next presenter was Marina Hulia, who introduced herself as half-Russian, half-Belarussian, born in Ukraine. For the last 25 years, she has been living in Poland and has been engaged in helping children – refugees from Chechenia. Hulia was talking about a democratic school she estab-

lished at a railway station in Brześć, where small refugees from Chechnya live. Polish border guards do not allow their parents to enter Poland, so some of them stay and live at the station even for 2 years. Marina Hulia prepared a short film showing her pupils' life. One could see a fragment of a lesson led by Marina – starting with a prayer and a singing of Chechnya's national anthem. The school's functioning was possible thanks to a collection organised by Hulia in Poland to purchase notebooks and school utensils. Marina received help from a Greek-catholic priest, which allowed her to buy desks for the school. By means of a trick, she gained permission to walk with the children outside the railway station – to parks, to a ZOO, to a museum. After starting the school for children, Marina also established a school for mothers – the majority of which were the sole carers of their children, as the fathers were fighting in Chechnya against Kadyrov regime.

Of Marina Hulia's children-pupils in Brześć, only few came to Poland, which turned out not to be a very friendly place for small refugees. Similarly as in Brześć, Marina organises activities aiming to compensate the children for their trauma after staying at refugee centres. Both in Belarus as in Poland, Hulia receives help from people, thanks to which she can travel with the children around Poland, showing them their new homeland.

The most touching moment of the presentation by Marina Hulia was a film showing a cooperation of children from Chechnya with a care home for the elderly in Radość. For the elderly, the visits of Marina's pupils are a reason for celebration – the children also have satisfaction from presenting their vocal and dance talents.

Marina's newest idea is a project 'How exile and homelessness mended the world' – together with the homeless from Warsaw, the young people from Chechnya are to build and paint bird houses.

Marina Hulia is full of enthusiasm and energy, and she is also convinced, that even one person without financial means, can fulfil a mission to save anyone who is drowning.

The next one to talk was Fr. Marcin Schmidt, who was talking about his life saving campaign organised by Caritas Polska in Syria, and to be more precise – in Aleppo. Schmidt, a laureate of an Honorary Badge for his contribution to protecting Children's Rights – *INFANTIS DIGNITATIS DEFENSORI* – also shared his memories from working with children from Syria. It was very touching to listen to him talk about children who were playing in recognising a type of a bomb based on the sound they made. The children stopped reacting to the sound of bombs – they became

a part of everyday life for them. Schmidt encouraged to join the activities of helping others – it is not time to just say ‘one should help them’ and do nothing about it. One can help not only by giving financial support to the mission such as those organised by Caritas, one can also help by inviting a child from Syria to Poland or supporting refugees from Syria who are in Poland. An example of such young Syrian people was Baszar, who was there with Schmidt, currently a student of the University of Warsaw. Baszar was talking about his work in Aleppo, where he cooperated with Christian and Islamic organisations (Baszar is a Christian), taking care of children struggling with depression and those who were in need of an immediate help due to their mental state. Baszar met children who wanted to die or to be shot – in order to be in a place where they could find food and where it was warm. Many times he risked his own life, crossing check points in order to see his pupils. Unfortunately, Baszar said that they were not lucky enough to meet somebody like Irena Sender, but he also expressed hope that this will happen in the future. So far, they are proud to say that one of day rooms in Aleppo is named after Irena Sendler. The presentation summarised by Schmidt in a postulate referring to an exhibit displayed in a conference room in a cabinet with Irena Sendler’s memoranda – a pair of glasses – that we all wear Irena Sendler’s glasses and see the world through its lenses.

The last person to talk was Katarzyna Ludwiniak, who was talking about educational institutions all around the world named after Irena Sendler. There are 44 of them, including: 10 elementary schools, 12 secondary schools, 1 high school, 10 groups of schools, 3 educational institutions for youth, 2 scouts groups, 1 student’s dormitory, 1 social housing area, 1 institute, and 2 schools located in embassies. The next school will be named after Irena Sendler in September, in the year of Irena Sendler. Among 13 secondary schools who have been named after Irena Sendler, there is also one where Ludwiniak worked. The presenter also was talking about preliminary difficulties connected with giving a school a name (the potential patron was firstly accused of being Jewish, then of being alive – it was year 2008 back then, and it is uncommon to name things after somebody who is still living). She also talked about the projects organised in the institution (‘memory for history’, ‘Jewish children’), about grants which were won by the school. One of them was a grant supporting a project entitled ‘Divide people only on the basis of whether they are good or bad’ which addressed ideas and values shared by Irena Sendler. Another grant ‘Tikkun olam means to repair to world’ was intended to fight against negative ste-

reotypes. A grant 'How to help another human being' encouraged empathy, understanding and a will to help others. As part of the grant, the children sold gadgets they made themselves and they gave the money they raised to help those in need. One hundred children took part in the project. Another event which took place in the school was performing a play 'Life in a jar' devoted to Irena Sendler.

The next initiative of the school was awarding the Medal of People Spreading Good, to those who believe in the same ideals as Irena Sendler: goodness, tolerance, love, and modesty. The laureates of the first edition were, among others: Maria Kaczyńska, Gołda Tencer, and Janina Zgrzemska. In the following years, medals were given to: the director of the International Janusz Korczak Association – Batia Gilad, Małgorzata Chmielewska, Marcin Schmidt, and Maria Komorowska.

In Secondary School no 23, there was a patron's class where there were workshops for groups coming from abroad. The school took part in reunion meetings of schools named after Irena Sendler, which are organised in various Polish cities: Warsaw, Białystok, and Gdańsk.

Katarzyna Ludwiniak ended her presentation by referring to a statement made by Irena Sendler, who was nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize: 'This school is my Nobel Prize'.

*Transl. Ewa Butowska*

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# IRENA SENDLER: APPROACHING POST-WAR SOCIAL CARE PROBLEMS

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IRENA SENDLEROWA

## RING THE ALARM BELLS<sup>1)</sup>

**W**hat now is happening in Warsaw is, without a doubt, astonishing. However, perhaps not everything deserves the same amount of attention. The scale of the destruction is imposing in the bestiality of those who caused it, although otherwise, work so far visible on rebuilding of the city is an awesome feat and those responsible deserve true praise.

Besides destruction and rebuilding, there is another matter more deeply shocking and for this very reason it has escaped people's attention and as a result its gravity is underestimated, and nothing changes. Besides that, it is somewhat surprising that it is talked about it so much and so little is done. From what people say – there is not a man alive who would not understand its scale, and from what is plain to see – it seems that no one cares enough to organise a fitting solution to this burning problem.

The issue I am going to relate concerns open childcare, or in other words – care for children in their family settings, or to express it differently – it is an institution that provides outside help. For a while this matter presented as bad, now it can only be described as catastrophic. It is not exclusively a Warsaw problem but in Warsaw, it is certainly particularly intense as a result of the horrendous living conditions: housing, clothing and food, and also education.

It is quite understandable that in Polish post-war conditions, miracles will not occur, however, just the same, that is no reason to leave matters as they are now.

Using our common sense let us just ponder awhile: official data included in the 'Statistical Journal of the capital city of Warsaw' show that in comparison to pre-war, the cost of maintaining a working family has increased 113 fold and the cost of basic food has risen even more. In plain terms – help offered to those in need an open care is zero. Of course, wage compen-

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: "Praca Socjalna", 2018, No 1, pp. 87–98.

sation quotas are out of the question, as here we are talking about people who are unemployed; to be more precise – people who cannot work.

However, these people live, at least, they want to live and those in public office with the power are responsible for look after them, after exhausting all available means (after first demanding that people pay overdue maintenance or alimony). The onus is on the state to prevent the death of citizens when they lack the means to survive.

Let us not express any shocked disbelief that the ranks of people, responsible for distributing social welfare funds have not even come across a small fraction of the cases, which fully justifies ringing the alarm bell. Their duties are different and do not empower them to crawl through the burrows of the devastated Old Town, or to trip between the heaps of rubble covering the post-Jewish district where, people still attempt to live. This is a task for social workers, who try their best and deserve our esteem as true heroes. Still, the unfathomable lack of trust in us deserves equal attention, as the Social Care Unit, is shunned and indifference is expressed towards all the cases, which according to their own merits deserve respect and are included in every financial report of the Unit, their every application and every appeal.

We cannot regard this as anything other than a basic lack of trust. We have not accused anyone of carelessness when reading our reports or of lack of interest in one of the most important problems facing Poland now – childcare. It is almost the defining issue for health, population, care and educational policy. We should not accuse anyone, other than antisocial individuals, of disregarding the problem, because we all know that would be a crime against the nation and state. So, the reason must be, either lack of trust or our failure to be sufficiently explicit, giving rise to a perhaps deficient understanding of the seriousness of the matter. Taking this into consideration, we should move onto the full offensive to expose this catastrophe, for what it is.

I do not intend to be vain, my message is supported by numbers, which, I believed, required no further explanation – I discover, however, that I was entirely wrong.

Children and adolescents remaining on file at the Unit requiring social assistance numbered, 32230, in April 1946. The reader is reminded again that only children requiring open care were included, not those on file with Social Cooperation or in institutional care.

Of 32230 children there were:

Aged 0 to 3 y.o.: 4461 – 218 were in nurseries (4.9%)

Aged 3 to 7 y.o.: 4983 – 1224 in kindergartens (25.7%)



Aged 7 to 14 y.o.: 16251 – 11546 in state schools (71%)

Aged 14 to 18 y.o.: 6171 – 3479 in middle and vocational schools (56.3%)

Above 18 y.o.: 364

As can be seen above, in relative terms, the youngest have the least care cover. The question logically arises: What is happening to these children, since they need help and no one has the means? The answer is simple – these children just die, or at best – they become prematurely chronically diseased.

It is no secret that Poland has always had the poorest of records in the sad infant mortality rankings. According to Sroczyński in the 3–4<sup>th</sup> issue of “The Welfare Assistant”. In this respect in 1928, only Romania (20.9 in 100 births) and Hungary (18 in 100) were placed worse than us, Poland taking third place with 15.1 in 100, nearly twice as many as in Germany for same period (over 8). For purposes of comparison, data from 1930 to 1932 allow examination of the optimum outcomes in other countries. The following data were drawn from the ‘Small Statistics Almanac, 1939’ (p. 50 table 14) ‘Death in chosen countries according to age’. Each table described here offers relevant figures for a broader age group (0–4) but still the conclusions are overwhelming. And so, for instance, for Holland – the figure is 1.86 in 100, in Australia (years 1932–1934) – 1.79, while in Poland, numbers never dipped below 13 in any pre-war year. We will not of course discuss the war period, but it is still worth discussing Warsaw in March 1946 (according to Statistical Journal of the city council). There were 392 live births, and 96 deaths of infants aged under one, therefore, there were 24.7 deaths per 100 live births. This is still nothing when compared to August 1945, when for 405 births there were 161 deaths, almost 40 deaths per 100 births. We can safely conclude, although we are unaware of relevant statistics from other countries for that period, that probably no other country has broken this record. In such conditions, while, owing to the incredibly intensive activities of the Social Care Unit, together with really effective cooperation with the Health and Work and Social Care Ministries, we managed to reduce this to 13 deaths per 100 live born – we still face daunting tragedy with a complete lack of funds for child open care. Descriptive statistics for care in the last school period are shown in the following table:

Of the 46 534 children who received food aid:

The Social Care Unit was helping 7787 children

Caritas was helping 15547 children

The Workers’ Association of Children’s Friends was helping 1350 children

School Care was helping 18000 children

The Kindergarten section was helping 3850 children

For this action the Social Care Unit spent 5.900.000 zloty in grants over one year. Also, importantly, significant aid arrived through UNRRA, from which 10 district warehouses have distributed 77548 items of clothing and 2000 pairs of shoes. It should be noted, however, that this intervention will soon close and even with the best will, our Swedish and Danish friends will not be able to fill the shortfall in funding for planned social care.

Awareness should be drawn to a catastrophe that will not be limited to the range presented above, because, in addition to this tragedy, the Warsaw National City Council denied the Social Care Unit grants for schools in public and middle education (as quarterly aid: 150 zloty per student attending elementary school and 500 zloty for middle school students). These responsibilities were transferred to the city council's Office for Culture, Education and Propaganda. The results were sudden. While financial help for all pupils was obtained in the first quarter of school year 1945–46, in the second quarter no one received it, as the Resort of Culture and Education had not assigned any money – this was the biggest shock. I do not intend to play prosecutor or judge and it is not my intent to find or investigate the guilty, however I state here quite categorically – the guilt is enormous, irrespective of whether those responsible were guided by ill will (which would classify as a crime), or for any other reasons, for example, inadequate understanding of the matter, which in turn, would be difficult to explain, as such matters have been repeatedly covered in the press. I personally tried to underline the burning need for action in special reports to the City authorities. This had a good start, for which the prognosis had been bright if appropriate aid had been forthcoming.

Unfortunately, everything failed. But ultimately that is not the worst news; it is not that somebody failed in their responsibility, nor that somebody did not understand this relatively very simple matter, nor that somebody was careless or intransigent to significant matters of state and social issues – people can be forced to do their jobs or influenced with appropriate means: somebody who does not understand can be sent on a course which would educate them before returning to work; carelessness or indifference to public interest can be stopped, for example, by pointing out the loss and a careless and irresponsible person can ultimately be fired – all of these things are possible and the situation can be rectified. However, harm done to a Polish child, loss of health or life, lost school years, delayed socialisation

or normal social activity (positive) – are all difficult to repair. I risk stating that mistakes made in this area are of great and daunting consequence and that each day spent waiting makes the loss even more serious. Of course, I also think that immediate intervention regarding issues pointed out earlier can prevent further human wastage, of this great irreplaceable commodity for the rebuilding of our homeland, which is in such short supply. I admit that I used this comparison with sorrow – this material comparison of humans, but unfortunately – all earlier analogies consistently failed – so maybe this will not.

When I discussed these matters with friends and co-workers, I faced the counterargument, that prescient political matters do not allow social care funding to the extent that I consider appropriate. Other areas of public life require equally intense financial support. In truth, this is a serious argument, however, I recognise that the political moment is often overexploited to cover more minor or more serious quirks of the nature of the job. I fully appreciate our special situation and understand Poland's present alignment with the world and towards the world and understand that we sometimes must resign from seemingly fruitless action.

However, it is precisely because I see all the needs so clearly that I can also grasp the implications of some exemptions made, in the political interest, from social norms, so I shall underline them with even greater emphasis: See the human being – See the child! And here there are no differences between children of whichever parents, wherever children are born or whether they look different. I know and believe, that anyone who cares about the wellbeing of society and state, should realise that any child in need should be offered immediate help. No one should be fooled into believing that a child in an institution is 'poorer' because they are orphaned and a child living in a cellar or in a bunker does not need such intense care, because 'they have a mother, who can earn' (I am quoting the real opinions of various social-welfare quasi-professionals, who talk publicly in this vein about this issue). I do not intend to assert that a child living in an institution enjoys better conditions than one in open care. Social care is a problem close to pure humanitarian nature, therefore it requires an individual approach, so carers are employed to have a trustworthy picture of each family that requires support. For the same reasons, there are field inspectors for institutional care on duty (unfortunately still in insufficient numbers) to constantly update the picture for individual institutions with respect to the care perspective.

Not following these rules for social care must accelerate the extinction of the Polish nation. This is not just a *cliché*; this is an incredibly sad message in clear figures. Last year we lost 150 000 (one hundred and fifty thousand) people! If this were to remain at the same intensity, in 150 years there would be not be a single Pole left in Poland. I believe that this is an appropriate place to put forward a most serious political argument: before war the ratio of Poles to Germans in the population was 1 : 2, now it is 1 : 3. Is political rhetoric in the context of current damages in Warsaw still so supremely weak? What else can opponents add to these reports? What else will convince them to sabotage aid to Polish and Warsaw children? What will cement them into their stubbornness, truly made for greater matters, to confound all reasonable relevant action, and with equally strong stubbornness, close their eyes in the face of reality?

I consider not that it is high time to return from a mistaken, deceptive path. Quite the contrary, I believe that it is too late for that. We are on an increasingly slippery slope and by the laws of nature, we will accelerate towards destruction, unless we immediately make a concerted effort to stop this tragic slide.

As much as the situation is appalling, I believe it is still not hopeless, but on the other hand, I think that the biggest mistake would be to again have this naïve faith, that in such difficult situations, one can remedy a situation with a single, abrupt well-aimed blow. This type of solution is, however, very short term, just a brief return to *dolce far niente* and reminiscences of incredible moments and cheering for the great victory. Such things are only possible if there is a military offensive properly prepared for when the plan is to capture some land and that is all. Others will have to organise the administration; others will deal with economics. However, the main goal is achieved, and the land taken. The remaining aspects are non-essential as they do not risk life, or something equally interesting, become the subject of songs to sing and be admired for years to come. Whoever venerates the nurse crawling through debris or a headmistress literally working day and night?

It is precisely this kind of work which finally needs to be appreciated – without doing so we will sink irrevocably deeper into the social mire, immediately before the inevitable political vacuum. We must finally recognise what is happening today and what soon will happen to the children that the nurse never reaches.

As an example, I present the first data from this area that I managed to find, just by chance – in an article by Jan Szymański entitled: ‘Tasks for so-

cial care in fighting with alcoholism among children and youth' ("The Welfare Assistant", issue 3–4, p. 38):

In 1909 (Jodkowski and Glass, Warsaw), of around 5000 children attending elementary and middle schools in Warsaw, 85.62% of boys and 89.41 % of girls abused alcohol.

In 1936, in Łódź (reported by Jarosław Neczaj-Hruzewicz), of 52399 children in care, 85.2% used alcohol and of whom 1165 drank every day! And the opinion of one of the most famous Polish doctors, Professor Władysław Szenajch is very clear: 'Alcohol even in very small doses is literally poison to a child'. Who should then ultimately decide about these matters: a true and burning need, based on the best professional expertise, or a random clerk, who in their irresponsible actions, like a modern Erostrate, attempts to obtain immortality?

We should remind ourselves here that the data above were chosen at random and were drawn in pre-war times, when no one was thinking about intensive production of cheap alcohol and no one had even dreamt about 10 year-olds, (according our Criminal Code, not yet responsible for their actions), would have to maintain their families.

If we wanted better and more in-depth youth criminal statistics, prostitution and alcoholism among them, we would obtain terrifying numbers, as horrendous as the situation with children suffering from tuberculosis.

We cannot tolerate this at any cost!

We also cannot close our eyes to the truth by avoiding statistics or forbidding their publication. We must end this ostrich-like policy once and for all. The danger will not go away or abate if we do not see it or if we do not want to see it. Its consequences, on the other hand, will escalate with every moment not seized to fight it with all our strength. We must exploit all our means, all we can afford, we must eliminate all forces standing in our way or that postpone action. Above all, we must take this very seriously and act in a concerted manner. We must choose competent activists and plan our action. We must operate conscientiously, starting from the basics with an understanding of the big picture, its social importance and its implications for the future of the state and nation. This is the only way! Whoever does not understand it should immediately withdraw so as not to make the job harder for those who can do a great job without them. We do not expect anything else of them and we do not expect any other help, however I believe we should expect one thing – that they will go!

I repeat one final time: the situation is critical, alarm bells are ringing and those who are deaf to the sound and will not respond to its signal will have to bear an incredibly heavy responsibility for the next generation of the Polish people. The future, if they live to see it, will shackle them with the great and shameful guilt of a crime, the destruction of the life blood of the Nation.

*Transl. Hugh Patrick Karl Fox*

## ON THE PROPAGANDA OF SOCIAL CARE<sup>1)</sup>

I am well aware that I have taken on a very difficult task by initiating a discussion of social welfare propaganda. This difficulty is manifest in two key ways – to be precise, from a psychological perspective and in the nature of the subject itself.

The modern reader has grown tired of propaganda – even veiled. They would probably also reject overt propaganda that does not even avoid the explicit use of the word, particularly following the propaganda era of propaganda minister Goebbels. This specific reader attitude has to be tackled and locates the first major difficulty.

The subject implies pulling in a direction, which in terms of purely social engagement, has so far, been firmly avoided. “Social care cannot and need not resort to advertising” — a statement frequently repeated before the war was the assertion of my most distinguished colleagues (although post-war, less frequently). Such a claim is not wholly unjustified but only when a society is fully aware of its faults, shortcomings and underachievement; this is patently not true in ours.

We have to accept that, in Poland, profound social changes have recently taken place, not necessarily as a consequence of war. These changes have not only been brought about by social reform, simple disappearance of a certain number of people or the physical transfer of certain groups of people within the country. We must not forget that because of the war, new people have been assimilated, from groups previously outside the country for many decades, with very little familiarity with Polish society. Professional and cultural changes had occurred in that former population. Owing to the long separation of a large portion of Polish society from its cultural resources, we have all – to a greater or lesser extent – grown wild and psychologically degenerate, and for many of us – unfortunately, too many – this wildness and degeneration has become entrenched. We have ceased to

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: “Praca Socjalna”, 2018, No 1, pp. 97–114.

understand each other. Sometimes, we even have difficulty recognising one another. So, it should come as no surprise that today, still enduring a tough patch in the post-war, we cater primarily to our own needs and for a small group of our nearest and dearest, neglecting everything outside the scope of our immediate sight and perception.

I fully anticipate attracting my share of outrage for these words, attacking a comfortable common habit, regarding social problems as taking care of themselves – just automatic and natural processes for benefit to the public and social contentment. For the homespun ‘social activist’, it is enough to build a new orphanage here or there or maybe a correctional facility, just sending a couple of sentimental elderly ladies around hospitals, prisons or railway stations on a ‘mission’ – and social issues will be settled once and for all. Reality will finally merge with the perfect path, designed and dreamt up long ago. Sadly! They do not know what they are doing, so we should not be angry but it is difficult to forgive them!

Social problems, if destined for serious discussion, must first, be thoroughly investigated. Otherwise, time and effort will go to waste. Experience from the depths of the countryside can be extremely constructive, if conversations are skilfully recorded. They may allow further conclusions about topics of concern – not restricted to the limitations of the observer.

Unfortunately, social issues in general, in particular, social care, involve work, which, by its very nature, is of little interest to the public. Isolated cases may arouse passions when someone, perhaps in a warehouse, commits an offence, irrespective of the underlying reason.

This explains why, in spite of clear reluctance to address it, I reiterate: We have to place the case for social care propaganda firmly on the agenda. We have to adopt a broad and reasonable approach to these public awareness campaigns. They should be fact-based, without cheap tricks or facile marketing techniques – and start raising awareness to the issues of social care and its true demands – without figments of the imagination of highly dubious social benefactors, who replace effective support or benefits; whose hollow slogans and gestures are a type of modern black magic presumed to cure all social ills.

So, we may ask: Why propaganda, and not routine, normal training for trusted social workers? Of course, I do not intend to challenge the legitimacy of that option. However, I would stress that I do not intend to limit myself to a close circle of individuals who are already committed to care work – but to our entire society. Nobody can be allowed to avoid



drawing their own conclusions from the number of orphans in Poland exceeding 100,000. Nobody can ignore the gruesome toll of tuberculosis among our schoolchildren. Finally, everyone must become actively enraged by the fact that, excluding moonshine, monthly expenditure on vodka in Łódź – the most highly populated city in Poland – could sustain and nourish seventy thousand children in care (not just paying lip service, as has been the case to date). This assumes the average monthly cost per child to be 5,000 zlotys.

To achieve this, we must start a society wide recruitment campaign. We need to reach everyone – those already receiving or likely to need social assistance in the near future, as well as, all the others who do not need such assistance, but who – because of the very nature of social welfare – due to its social nature still, irrespective of state subsidy, have to contribute themselves. This is explained by the extraordinary post-war conditions affecting many individuals and the State, which the grey citizen, so eagerly burdens with all responsibility. He would just like to be left alone to use his privileged ‘greyness’, even if there is something less than transparent about it.

There is no alternative to breaking the old, sometimes even justified mould and approving of propaganda, which – in this respect – only informs the general population, in a digestible form, detailing the essence of social care, its scope and range in Poland today, covering the importance of the work and the disaster that would follow from failure to act. They should highlight the most suitable means for targeted efficiency by the relevant institutions for care.

Some might also question – maybe only theoretically – whether promotion of social care is really necessary, since ultimately, everyone knows what social welfare is for and where to find it, if necessary.

To avoid criticism that I have ignored this, I pre-empt with my reply: Very few know what social care really is or whom it should help or how. Very few are fully acquainted with the objectives of social work; even for those intelligent laymen who have some connection with it, social care workers who are themselves active, because they are often uneducated and unprepared for the role of social worker and tend to reiterate the misconception that social care is not a profession, not a job, that anyone can do it and that all you need to be a good social care worker is a good heart and some money for the poor. There are also some in society – fortunately, in steadily decreasing numbers – asserting that in fact, social welfare should be honorary, and that the ‘carer’ should... pay themselves. I do not think

I need to argue that if such an absurd view were still acceptable for the vast majority, then there would be no bad means to oppose it.

Furthermore, we must remember that those who need help also misunderstand their role in society, the help they are forced to rely on temporarily – just like the role of the care institution. “Welfare is there for me and I should get it, because I deserve it” – But why do I deserve it and what do I actually deserve? – the answers are unknown and unsought by the recipient. He just wants what he can get. Of course, this does not represent the only sort of client, perhaps not even most; but it can be safely assumed that the vast majority are not only unaware that social care is only intended to support them in their efforts to regain independence and that in no way is the intention to create social stagnation or keep certain people in a state of permanent, and perhaps even hereditary, dependence.

It is this chaotic chorus of views and misconceptions from the general public, including both the pseudo-aware and those overtly and loyally ignorant to the essence of the problem that social work propaganda has to combat.

Finally, I would like to add that perhaps in so doing, we might score another ancillary goal. As a result, perhaps the humblest social worker, crawling through the Warsaw rubble or wearing out his last pair of shoes to reach the Czerniaków wastelands or perhaps the misery of the Old Town, to be the first to report incidence of TB, extreme malnutrition, infants without a carer or, amounting to the same, in the custody of 4 or 5-year-olds, will finally win the recognition he deserves. Perhaps the eyes of the uninterested public, unappreciative of him or his work, will finally start to see him as a professional whose social significance is in no way inferior to the achievements of a doctor or teacher, even though the results might be less conspicuous and less readily observed. More time and attention are needed to focus on his efforts compared with a bustling and successful surgery or success with high-school graduation exams. A well-sutured wound or a good high school diploma can be shown off by the individual, while a field interview is seen only by social workers, who can use it as a stepping board to rescue the socially challenged.

I do not wish, at present, to discuss whether this is the most successful of systems – but recognising that these things should not be under constant public scrutiny, I am insistent that this is something that all should be aware of. Only the broadest possible familiarity of society with relevant incidents can demonstrate the gravity of social work, a solid job, with foun-

dations that are scientific and equally substantial. Only such awareness can, in effect, lead to adoption of the right stance by society towards social work and its practitioners. Consequently, supporting this work by equipping the social worker appropriately – with the right theoretical and practical training, suitable tools, as well as appropriate material compensation to ensure their secure existence that they themselves need for diligent performance of their duties in the face of the extreme demands of social service.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I emphasise that I do not intend to distort reality or bias head counts or other facts to arouse any untoward sensation. I am, however, uncowed in my belief that Polish reality is, in every respect, more sensational than any of the most fantastic reports – the levels of destruction and the fortitude of the people who rise above it are both more sensational. Neither do I seek to promote social work to support my own, personal ambitions in any way nor do I intend to permanently extend the scope of social work. Quite the opposite, by properly highlighting the immense work begging to be done in this field, I advocate the position that only concerted and immediate effort can pre-empt a future scenario of uneconomical, but otherwise necessary, escalation of public spending on social welfare. Appropriate recognition of the gravity of this present issue, would not only allow us to avoid this in the short term, but also payback from care expenditure to date.

Social care propaganda must penetrate universally, as stated earlier. My explanation of this term is along the horizontal and vertical dimensions. Awareness of social welfare issues should reach, not only the general population, but also propagate throughout society from the top, down.

I recall a certain public servant, when asked to contact a head of a related, though not directly connected authority, answering ironically, in a bold voice, but with well-mannered superiority, “I’m so sorry, but here, we are all in the habit of minding our own business.” This is testimony to a total lack of awareness of the rules for proper conduct.

Absolutely – minding one’s own business! We are unable to perceive or comprehend the overwhelming interrelatedness of all the issues, in particular, in the social arena. We are unable – although we should have learnt already – to recognise the common bond between all human matters. This reply is reminiscent of the irritating response made by waiters in cafés, “Ask my colleague.” Yes, this table is in the “business area” of another waiter, so when asked, he cannot serve us and refers us to his colleague. This behaviour of the public servant – of course, from the “good-old, pre-war” times and the

self-indulgent, ruling elite – is a relic of the fossilised procedures of mindless bureaucracy. However, today in public life we should not accept this waiter's attitude. Not what a few minutes of delay and a little bit of irritation in a café or restaurant cost the diner, when it comes to serious matters, there cause unforeseen consequences. No area of life is foreign to social work, so, no one can plead ignorance of the issues with any justification; whether it is transport related – (special or sanitary waggons on trains), industrial (worker welfare, occupational health, health and safety or the factory nursery) or security (social security services, supervision of hygiene or behaviour), or postal services (waiving fees for certain types of correspondence, prioritising certain messages or reduction of delivery times for notifications concerning minors), not to mention related fields, such as health, education or in cultural activities – wherever there is contact, there is always a relationship with social welfare issues, whether it is close or more far flung.

This explains what I mean by describing propaganda in the horizontal and vertical dimensions. There is one more explanation, however, which I owe to all those people who would prefer to eschew this type of awareness raising *a priori* logic, without examination of the essence of the problem; it has absolutely nothing to do with bombarding the public with slogans; statements which are variably far from reality, but which sound attractive and represent their evangelists' desire as a *fait accompli* (paying relatively little attention to whether the audience feel the same). To achieve its aim, social welfare propaganda must be societally based and include only accurate data, since, as has already been pointed out, data can itself be sufficiently sensational to require no embellishment. If these statistics are not shocking enough, and there is always that chance, I will attempt to explain their vital importance below.

In this part of my commentary, my intention is to focus only on the issue of propaganda, as such, in relation to social work.

Having described motivation, we should now discuss social welfare propaganda and how to juxtapose it with real life by addressing another related problem. How should delivery of propaganda be effectively implemented towards the principal goal – to truly raise public awareness about the relevant issues that either mediate the prevention targeted by social welfare to those who need it, or to encourage people to take advantage of more specific opportunities?

The scope considered appropriate for social work should, in general, be much narrower than at present. It should be restricted to the preparation of

a limited range of preventative interventions in addition to running a relatively limited number of closed facilities for those who are incurable, realistically speaking, and not expected to be able to return to society. The objectives of social care propaganda, as I understand them, include: informing the public about the existence of relevant care institutions and their numerous roles – using summary, but content-laden numerical and percentage data covering both running campaigns, and those already completed. The aim would, therefore, be to forge a public connection with work in the field. Yet another aim for propaganda would be to raise concern about issues and problems, nurturing a willingness to cooperate with institutions to help achieve desired goals. This would promote the efforts of individuals who counteract aspects of everyday life exacerbating the constantly (at the moment) intensifying stream of activity for facilities to deal with, aggravating social anomalies and leading to expansion rather than contraction in certain branches of care.

So much for questions about propaganda: by why and to what ends exactly?

Now we should understand what information should be promulgated and how, reminding ourselves the details which should not be revealed and about methods that are unacceptable. Both these points are of equal importance, since we are informed by daily observation that propaganda can do more harm than good. Slogans suggesting that the situation in Poland will only be good when the whole country is serviced by a network of work houses, because, while there are not enough at the moment, it would be inappropriate. It is true that there are too few, whilst, unfortunately, we have too many trained individuals avoiding voluntary unpaid work, when they are needed virtually everywhere. Given this state of affairs, we, unfortunately, do need more places for compulsory work, but such an expansion should not be perceived as a positive phenomenon – it is, rather, a necessary evil, just like at other times when it was necessary to build special delousing stations.

However, one should not forget that too many delousing stations, as a fixture, would reflect an unfavourable impression of residents in lasting need of such places for their cultural rejuvenation.

Similarly, it would be inappropriate to promote the slogan, “An Orphanage for Every Village”, because existence of an orphanage is, in itself, a sad reminder to the nation that so many children have been deprived of guardians or abandoned by their carers. So, these provisions are not suitable themes for propaganda, but what is appropriate is the idea of combatting

the evil itself, with the proviso that at some stages of combat, selected measures may be temporarily applicable, slated for alternatives at a later stage. Delousing stations or care facilities are indicators for prevailing change according to the needs of an area. Intensification of measures can only be determined by current needs or their anticipated growth, while exaggeration, only to show off the broad range of care work, without genuine need or, even worse, creating needs which are otherwise absent, are a social absurd which cannot be served by rational propaganda.

One can and should, instead limit certain measures and methods to defined situations: so, pregnant women facing difficult family or home conditions could be advised to attend the right clinic (clinic C); a mother, whose husband spends all his pay on alcohol, should take a legal route; so a court could suspend his right of custody and accord temporary care of her child to a care facility while she finds an independent source of income. Finally, all citizens should be provided with information about availability of social welfare services and, in particular, local availability. It should also be made clear where solutions to more complex problems, otherwise in the remit of higher authorities, are to be found and how to contact the relevant officers most expediently.

I think that this local data should include information about shortfalls in provision considered crucial to the given area, e.g., homelessness, lack of specific medicines, food for infants or widespread begging; indicators for social intervention either individually or in cooperation with the administration (e.g., admission to TB clinics, state convalescence spas or provincial care facilities and establishing contact with the Education Authority concerning vocational school placement).

It is neither possible nor my intention to exhaust all possibilities for properly implemented social care propaganda which could be helpful. The examples mentioned above are sufficient to raise the reader's awareness about the directions in which it should develop and its content. Irrespective of its merits, social care propaganda has to encourage, or even necessitate, set behaviour for citizens in predefined circumstances. We should not forget that regardless of differences between social care propaganda and other propaganda, propaganda – if that is what it is – should evoke a particular feeling, not through academic discourse but by imposing a condensed conception on the public and virtually excluding any opposing arguments. This owes to its reflection of psychological responses which are judged appropriate and in the circumstances are the most approachable. In one case, this might

involve presentation of a big number, in another – attack on parental feelings, in yet another – allusion to the state of the economy or personal safety. The choice of method is the direct responsibility of the social worker.

In this way, we arrive at the final difficulty, namely, how to promulgate social care propaganda. This all drives towards a means to familiarise society with the possibilities and previous achievements of social work and about its most proper use and deployment, which all depends on a variety of circumstances (human resources, type and range of area, type of activity, level of cultural achievement in respective circles and finally – the nerve centre – financial and material resources available to the promoters).

Fundamentally, the various means to publicity may be divided into those which impinge upon hearing and vision (mediated by the intellect and emotions) and those with combined impact.

First, I shall consider graphical materials; on the front line, a major role will be played by posters or billboards. The billboard has to be edited and crafted to attract even disinterested passers-by. A characteristic slogan or a significant piece of information should be displayed and content should provide further elaboration. The main message must be emphasised, either using font styles, special spacing or a different background colour. Something else is required of a poster.

Posters offer a combination of illustration with text, which is limited to a main message and is also reflected in the illustration (e.g., “alcoholism destroys the family”). Further, a poster should be well-balanced, i.e., should not be overloaded with an array of distractions which lose the viewer’s attention, losing the main message, which should be clear and not demand much effort to be understood as intended. Otherwise, this would not achieve the propaganda aim. There are also certain advantages to colourful posters: a gaudy colour palette might be excusable in a poster promoting the recreational garden plots maintained by a manufacturing plant; the same palette might be inappropriate for a poster to implore people for aid to flood victims. In both cases, details would be left to the artist. They should match the palette to suit the contents, as well as the characteristics of their audience.

Another form of promotional graphic representation is photography and its more refined version – film. The difference is that a photograph can only capture a frozen moment, framing the most defining qualities, which is not a trivial task and which must, at the same time, be representative of the problem at issue. A film, on the other hand, can realistically track the course of certain processes, e.g., life of children in an institution through-

out the day, not frozen at a particular moment, which, otherwise, often needs to be manipulated for the purpose of a still image.

A film with sound is a hybrid form, both visual and auditory, allowing an even broader range of expression.

Purely acoustic publicity includes special conferences, social welfare talks at schools, public speeches and lectures, or cycles of lectures and finally, special courses. In all these cases, it is particularly important to ensure that the living word meets a properly primed audience – a professional lecture is not suitable for an unprepared, disinterested audience. Specific means should be adapted according to a hierarchy, as otherwise, instead of being encouraged to understand issues, people will only shrink from contact with social welfare publicity campaigns, creating hostility rather than making needed allies. Radio should not be neglected as a powerful technology for propaganda. It allows, a larger, potentially unrestricted number of listeners to be targeted simultaneously. Many types of presentation are possible, depending on circumstances and current needs: from loose news items – through conversation, a popular lecture or report, or a short radio course – up to the level of scientific lecture. Through our war-time experience, we have all learnt what radio is and how it can be used but we should not imagine that its great social importance ended with the political tumult of war. As I stated before, it is today that Poland abounds in sensation – and this must be publicised, not only by the written word (still too rare), but also in words delivered firmly, boldly and unambiguously. There are topics to address, not only in speech but also in raised voices; this not only applies to Poland, but also around the world. Our voices must be louder than those who claim that we no longer need international help, because in terms of production figures, everything will go smoothly from here. Only radio can penetrate those places which are beyond the reach of our diplomats or where overseas Poles have no access to truly Polish publications. Only Polish radio can let the world know about the needs of flood victims or collection of money for various purposes; only radio, by skilfully inserting slogans between pieces of music, can remind listeners – perhaps the majority of the country's citizens – about their duty towards those less fortunate and more in need.

In my view, while far from being completely neglected, this medium has not been fully exploited in Poland. One should bear in mind that only short programmes, or those with diverse appeal, can deliver the hoped for results – so it is definitely not all about monotony or constant repetition of irrelevant slogans but the careful selection of vivid details within the



colourful grasp of current issues in their entirety to stimulate the desired audience reaction.

Finally, there is the most intense type of propaganda campaign for social care – only available over short periods – interventions employing various media – starting from exhibitions, e.g., a film followed by discussion or a lecture with slides or perhaps a lecture to accompany a collection of photographs.

Now, exhibitions covering issues of social care must combine a variety of media, including leaflets and brochures, not for use outside this context. They should also include statistical tables, diagrams and a poster. A film screening would accompany a presentation of photographs. The arrangement of exhibits in rooms must ensure that the visitors do not become bored and that everyone finds what they came for. The exhibition, a relatively rare intervention, is in its nature for the widest possible audience – it must cater for people in all walks of life.

I have taken the liberty of discussing detailed technical aspects of social welfare propaganda – but this was intentional, assuming that only in-depth description of my position would convince a reader of its merit. I needed to argue that social welfare propaganda was more than just a figment of my imagination or a dream – it all needs to be fully put into action, the relationship between the field of social work and the technical means for propaganda is clear – social care propaganda cannot be dismissed using the typical cowardly argument: “OK, but where should we start?”. The preceding collection of advice is specifically intended to demonstrate that successful welfare campaigns are indeed in the realms of possibility – as explained in my arguments.

Following these instructions is an urgent postulate for the social interest; this demand must be satisfied and one key means to achieve it is intrinsic to properly conceived social welfare propaganda. Propaganda, which apart from all its other characteristics is responsible – not fearful about substantiation of claims in its slogans or statements – but also willing to engage and to encourage everyone to learn its arguments. The outcomes from public welfare campaigns must be published frequently and shown as often as possible. Perhaps it would be worthwhile even to organise visits to dwellings which are, at present, only known to social workers and – less frequently – to doctors. We are not scared of the truth; we live by honesty and believe that only truth can win us the ultimate victory!

*Transl. Hugh Patrick Karl Fox*

# PEOPLE FROM THE IRENA SENDLEROWA'S GENERATION<sup>1)</sup>

## ASZOFF, MARIA (1904–1988) NURSE, SOCIAL EDUCATOR

Maria Aszoff was born on 28 August 1904 in Warsaw. Her father was a clerk, and her mother was a teacher. After obtaining her secondary school certificate at the secondary school in Łomża in 1924, she joined the two-year Warsaw Nursing School founded by the Rockefeller Foundation. After graduating in 1926, she worked for three years at the Karol and Maria Children's Hospital (Szpital Dziecięcy im. Karola i Marii) in Warsaw. In the 1929/30 school year, she enriched her experience by working in the school health service in Łomża. For the next five years, she was subsequently employed at the Health and Social Care Centres in Nowy Targ and in Warsaw. The irresistible need to deepen her pedagogical and social knowledge led Aszoff to enter the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University (*Studium Pracy Społeczno-Oświatowej Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej*) in 1934, where she graduated in 1939 by defending her thesis entitled *The Activity of the care worker at the 2nd Health and Social Care Centre in the downtown district of Warsaw*.

During her studies, until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, she worked at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Health and Social Care Centre in the Ochota district. At the same time, she was the “granddaughter” who took care of the health and organization of life of Prof. Helena Radlińska, seriously ill with heart disease. Let us add that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Centre was located opposite the Free Polish University building in which Prof. Helena Radlińska, head of School of Social-Educational Work, lived.

During the occupation, she continued working at the Department of Health and Social Care at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Centre of Health and Social Care Cen-

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<sup>1)</sup> Bibliographical note of the first edition: “Praca Socjalna”, 2018, No 1, pp. 115–169.

tre, acting as an instructor, clerk and district care worker in Warsaw. After the Warsaw Uprising, she stayed in her hometown of Łomża for two years as a teacher of hygiene, human nutrition and childcare in teacher training courses as well in occupational schools of tailoring and household management.

Starting in September 1947, she was connected permanently with Łódź. At the Social Care Workers Training Centre there, she was responsible for courses for junior paediatric nurses. At the same time, she gave lectures on hygiene, physical development and childcare in courses for social clerks. In 1950, after the Ministry of Health took over the Training Centre, she was the head of the Training Centre for Young Paediatric Nurses. Within two and a half years, she prepared 300 graduates of six-month courses.

On 1 August 1952, she was employed in the Department of Maternity Protection and Child Health at the Board of Health Service of the City of Łódź. As a nurse instructor at the Central Maternity and Child Health Clinic (1953–1956), she organized and ran 80 one-hour courses for ward nurses and non-vocational nurses employed in nurseries, as well as thirty-hour pedagogical courses for nursery managers. About 250 people attended these courses. If you add the four-week specialist courses to educate nurses from all over Poland, in the care of new-borns and premature babies, which she taught at the same time, Aszoff's merits prove to be great. In the years 1960–1963, she was the instructor-pedagogical nurse at the Centre for Training of Social Paediatrics and Obstetrics in Łódź, launched in cooperation with UNICEF. The last institution managed by Aszoff in the years 1963–1968 was the Occupational Medical School of Childminders in Łódź. At the same time, Aszoff sought to improve her professional qualifications. She participated in a three-month International Course on Child Care – Victims of War in Geneva (1948), organized by the institution founded at the initiative of Switzerland in 1944: *Semaines Internationales d'Etudes pour l'Effence Victime de la Guerre* (SEPEG). At the written exam, she wrote about Swiss paediatric schools and courses for nurses which she ran in Łódź. Ten years later, she took part in a ten-week international Child Care Course at the *Centre International de l'Enfance* in Paris. The task of the course was to familiarize students with the issue of care for mothers and child in French open and closed treatment. Aszoff printed her impressions of the course in *Pielęgniarka i Potożna* (Nurse and Midwife) (1960 No. 1).

After retiring in 1968, Aszoff began intensive social activity. She continued the work of the secretary of the Łódź Circle of Nurses at the Trade

Union of Health Care Workers started in the 1950s. She was a member of the Circle of Graduates of the Warsaw School of Nursing at the Polish Nursing Society. From 1958, she actively participated in the work of the Łódź Branch of the Polish Society of Friends of the Łomża Region, and from 1974 she was the secretary of the Board of the Branch of this Society.

She died on 5 December 1988 in Łódź.

Documents and materials in the archive of Maria Aszoff's family.

*Irena Lepalczyk*

## **BABICKI, JÓZEF CZESŁAW (1880–1952)** **EDUCATOR, THEORETICIAN, CO-CREATOR** **OF THE CHILDCARE SYSTEM**

Józef Czesław Babicki was born on 20 August 1880 in Michałowice (Miechowski County) as the son of Stanisław, a postal clerk, and Helena (née Treпки). The Babicki family left Galicia first to Łomża, and then later moved to Łowicz.

After graduating from high school, Babicki entered the Lviv Polytechnic, but soon changed his field of study – he became a student of philosophy at the university. At that time, he was interested in theatre, played in amateur groups and intended to enter acting school. However, his difficult family situation caused him to interrupt his studies and take up a job as a home teacher in Łowicz. He also taught at private schools in Łowicz and Skierniewice, which were opened after the events of the Russian Revolution of 1905. Attempts at educational work in various care institutions proved unsuccessful.

Taking over the management of the Third of May Dormitory in Pruszków, remaining under the patronage of the Principal Protective Council (RGO)<sup>2</sup> was a turning point in his life. He combined this function with the function of school head and Polish language teacher. He participated in the work of the Executive Department of the Dormitories of the RGO. As

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<sup>2</sup> Principal Protective Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, RGO): the Polish charity organization functioning during the World War I with the consent of the German occupation authorities and after the war till 1921 as well as from 1940 to 1945, operating inside the General Governorship also with Germans consent.

the head of the RGO in Pruszków, he ran four elementary schools, a secondary school, ten educational institutions, three kitchens, nurseries and kindergartens during World War I (from 1917).

After his mother's death, he married Jadwiga Kwiekówna, a kindergarten teacher. Their marriage was childless.

After the war, many war orphans and lost children found shelter in the facilities run by Babicki. As an educator, he was the organizer of the broad social activities of young people, he valued and supported especially *harcerstwo*, the Polish version of scouting. At that time, later eminent educators such as Kazimierz Jeżewski and Aleksander Kamiński came into contact with Babicki. From 1923, he cooperated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. Therefore, he moved to stay permanently in Warsaw in 1925. He was a counsellor and then head of the Child and Youth Care Department in this ministry.

The interwar years were the period of Babicki's most intense and at the same time fruitful activity. He practically created the child care system from scratch and gave real shape to the Social Care Act of 1923 in the section devoted to the issues of children and youth. In addition to a number of legal regulations regarding the functioning of care facilities, family assistance, creating foster families and a wide range of forms of open care, he mainly dealt with the selection and training of employees for childcare. He believed that the only way to make radical changes in the functioning of care institutions and other forms of care was to educate specialists in this field. It was he who initiated the crystallization of the educator's profession in childcare. He was also very active in the creation of the Educators' Trade Union.

He was an excellent organizer and manager of courses provided for educators. He initiated the theoretical reflection on caring activities and the basics of caring and educational work methods. The main assumption was to approximate the conditions of functioning of forms of care, especially care facilities, then commonly called orphanages, to the family life system, hence, attempts to create a family system in care institutions.

He not only passed his experience on to the participants of tutors' courses. In 1933, he started to publish articles on the upbringing of an abandoned child in the *Life of a Child* (*Życie Dziecka*) and in other magazines dealing with care issues. Starting in 1926, he lectured on the problems of care and upbringing of a child abandoned at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University, working with Helena Radlińska.

He remained in close contact with Kazimierz Jeżewski, Janusz Korczak, and Kazimierz Lisiecki. He also lectured the principles of group education at the Maria Grzegorzewska Institute of Special Pedagogy, the State Teachers' Institute, the Catholic Social School in Poznań, and the School of Social Work in Lviv. It should be emphasized that as early as in 1935, he introduced the term 'care pedagogy', anticipating the emergence of such a direction in pedagogy.

He was a co-founder of the Warsaw Circle of Child and Youth Care, which developed preventive activities among children and youth who were homeless and at risk of crime. The circle formed after-school clubs in Warsaw, providing life support for these minors.

Babicki's important achievements include his active participation in the organization of the First National Child Congress, which took place on 2–4 September 1938 under the patronage of President Ignacy Mościcki and with the participation of eminent representatives of care thought and practice. Babicki was one of the secretaries of the Congress.

In September 1939, he was evacuated to Lublin, but quickly returned to Warsaw and took up activity in the Principal Protective Council, leading, among others, the action of placing orphans in foster families. In the years 1941–1944, he managed the Underground Association of Participants in the Struggle for the Polish School, which, among others, maintained a pedagogical course for employees of childcare facilities. The dangers of the occupation were joined by a difficult personal situation of Babicki – the need to take care of his seriously ill wife.

After the Warsaw Uprising, he was in a transit camp in Pruszków.<sup>3)</sup> After escaping it, he hid until the Germans left Pruszków. Then – thanks to the help of a friend and associate Henryk Dinter – he went to Łódź, where in February 1945, he started working in the Social Care Department as a manager of a closed care unit. He combined work in administration with teaching at the University of Łódź.

Babicki lived in the Stefan Żeromski State Boys' House in Łódź. He participated in the organization and improvement of care and educational work in this institution. Dismissed from work in the City Council on 1 February 1950, he moved to the post of educator in the Boys House in which he lived. The reason for the authorities' reluctance to him was his

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<sup>3)</sup> This was a place where the people of Warsaw, which survived the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising that lasted from August 1 to October 2, 1944, were banished.

relentless fight for children's rights. Moved to retirement in August 1950, and relocated from the Home to the social care residential institution in Wiśniowa Góra, he felt very badly about the loss of contact with children. His caring attitude is evidenced by the fact that in that institution, he at his own request, shared a room with a crippled man. Babicki's deteriorating health condition resulted in his transfer to the chronically ill institution in Łódź, where he spent the last months of his life.

He died on 22 November 1952.

Bibliography see <https://e-pracasocjalna.pl/resources/html/article/details?id=194149>; p. 122

*Albin Kelm*

## **BOCK, EUGENIA (1904–1941)** **EDUCATOR, SOCIAL WORKER**

Eugenia Bock was born on 1 October 1904 in Jasło. She graduated from high school and a school for educators in Vienna.

In 1925, she moved to Warsaw. She completed an apprenticeship and then worked in educational institutions managed by Janusz Korczak. In 1929, she entered the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. In the years 1930–1935, she worked as a receptionist, and then a care worker in the Mother and Child Aid Section of the Civil Welfare Committee (*Sekcja Pomocy Matce i Dziecku Obywatelskiego Komitetu Pomocy Społecznej*). After the liquidation of the Section, she moved to the 'Orphans' House', an educational institution for Jewish children located at 92 Krochmalna Street, then – during the occupation – she was the head of the Main Home for the Shelter of Orphans and Poor Orthodox Elders at 127 Leszno Street (formerly 18 Wolska Street).

She refused to leave the ghetto with the help of her friends (including Anna Chmielewska). She remained with her pupils until the very end.

Archiwum Pracownika Społecznego TWWP, sygn. sł. 47, wspomnienia Anny Chmielewskiej i W. Czyżewskiej.

*Aniela Uziembło*

## CHMIELEWSKA (NÉE SZLACHCIŃSKI), ANNA (LAST NAME FROM FIRST MARRIAGE, WALICKA) (1905–1981) SOCIAL EDUCATOR, RESEARCHER, THEORETICIAN

Anna Chmielewska was born on 29 January 1905 in Wola<sup>4</sup>, Warsaw in a large family of a shoemaker. Her parents were Stanisław, son of an insurgent in 1863 Uprising and Maria (née Ziemiński).

She attended the Regina Gaczeńska and Ewelina Kacprowska Female Secondary School in Warsaw. She received her secondary school certificate in 1922. She joined the scout team at that school, first as a scout in 1918, later a patrol leader and finally a team leader. During this time, she came into contact with Władysława Martynowiczówna and Józefina Łapińska, whose influence on shaping her personality and passion for social work was emphasized in her diary. Later, during her studies, she was the head of the Department of Polish Women's Scout Teams in Exile at the Female Headquarters of Polish Scouting Association. She took part in the training of scout leaders at instructor courses in Poland and abroad (Czechoslovakia, Germany, France). She continued her work in scouting until 1928.

She studied at the University of Warsaw, first Polish philology (starting in 1922) then art history until graduation. In the years 1922–1925, she attended the Painting School of Wojciech Gerson.

In October 1925, she entered the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University in Warsaw. She was referred to the university by the Cultural Aid Society for Working Youth. Kazimierz Kornilowicz<sup>5</sup>, who knew her from working in youth clubs for workers, gave her support. She obtained her diploma based on the thesis entitled: *Spectacle theatre in the community centres of the Municipal Council of the Capital City of Warsaw in the years 1925–1926*. In the years 1929–1932, she studied educational psychology at the University of Warsaw under the supervision of Prof. Stefan Baley. In the school year of 1929/30, she served as a school psychologist at the Roszkowska and Popielewska Female Secondary Schools.

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<sup>4</sup> A working class district of Warsaw.

<sup>5</sup> Kazimierz Kornilowicz (1892–1939), was a leading social and educational activist, an organizer of adult and working youth educational system in Poland between the First and Second World Wars, a lecturer at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free University.



In the years 1923–1930, she worked in the community centres for adults and working youth. From 1927, she was an assistant, and from 1929, an assistant professor at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. Until 1939, she lectured on aesthetic education and taught classes in the techniques of mental work and a proseminar on social pedagogy. She took part in researching the living conditions experienced by the residents of the Ochota district in Warsaw (with a particular emphasis on problems relating to children and the reasons for their successes and failures at school), conducted under the guidance of Prof. Helena Radlińska. For several years, she participated in studies on children's readiness for school at an experimental facility in Ochota, and in studies on primary school graduates' path to the profession..

Beginning in 1927, she participated in the training of workers for community centres, the teachers of extracurricular education, instructors for folk theatres, educators for closed institutions and school teachers, organized by both the Extracurricular Education Department of the Municipal Council of the Capital City of Warsaw and the Institute of Adult Education. She was the manager of community centres in the peripheral districts of Warsaw including Wola, Powiśle and Mokotów. At the Instructor School of the Society for the Promotion of Folk Industry, she met the youth from rural areas. At the Institute of Folk Theatres, she served as vice-president and a member of the board. Her special interests were aesthetic education and volunteer theatre. In the years 1936–1938, she lectured in environmental science at the State Pedagogical High School. In 1939, she ran a club room at the Main Railway Station in Warsaw and participated in the training of social-educational staff in the Railroad Trade Union.

In the years 1939–1944, she worked at the Third Health and Social Care Centre at 8 Srebrna Street. She was the instructor of the counselling centre for children and youth in Health and Social Care Centres. She conducted inspections at the agencies of Principal Protective Council: day centres for children, summer play centres and summer camps. She organized staff training for these institutions. She took part in clandestine teaching at the Free Polish University (courses educating social workers for so-called postulated lands – Pomerania and Masuria<sup>6</sup>). She prepared studies on the needs of children and youth and the caregiving function of the school. During

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<sup>6</sup> These lands belonged to Germany until the end of WWII and the activists of Polish Resistance Movement during the war expected to take these lands for Poland.

the Warsaw Uprising, she led a shelter for the elderly and mothers with children at 4 Górskiego Street, registered with the insurgent authorities of Śródmieście district.

After the war, she lived in Łódź for several years. She worked as an adjunct in the Department of Social Pedagogy headed by Prof. Helena Radlińska at the University of Łódź. She was a member of the Scientific Council of the Polish Institute of Social Service which was founded by Prof. Radlińska. In the years 1945–1946, she edited the annual magazine/periodical? *Social Service*. As a contract professor of social pedagogy, she worked at the Higher School of Agriculture Sciences in Łódź. She lectured at numerous courses organized by the Ministries of Education, Labour and Social Welfare and Culture and Art, she developed programs for educational centres for social workers and educators.

After returning to Warsaw in 1949, she took the position of head of staff training for the Workers' Society of Friends of Children, where she was also a scientific consultant and editor of talks for parents (also the author of many of them).

In the years 1953–1961, she worked at the Institute of Pedagogy (*Institut Pedagogiki*) as head of the Cooperation Section of the School and Home. At that time, she undertook research on the living conditions and development of the children and youth of the Wola district. These studies included the so-called difficult children that attended kindergartens and schools, as well as the activities of educational and care centres in Wola. She presented research results and conclusions to teams of teachers and tutors.

From 1961, she was on the Main Board of the Society of Friends of Children as the head of staff training, a scientific consultant and editor of the magazine *Child's Friend* published by the Society. In the years 1961–1969, she worked as a lecturer in the methods of social work and social pedagogy at the State School of Social Workers of the Ministry of Health and Social Care in Warsaw.

She was a tireless animator of many childcare and upbringing activities for the benefit of the child and family, an inspiration and co-founder of social and educational counselling centres at the Warsaw University for Parents, which she assisted in developing the program and conducting lectures.

She participated in the establishment of the Society of the Free Polish University<sup>7)</sup>, and later in creating programmes for educating social work-

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<sup>7)</sup> The Free Polish University did not resume operation after WW II.

ers. She initiated the Archive of the Social Worker in the Warsaw Branch of the Society of the Free Polish University.

In 1957, at the Congress of the Social Educators in Warsaw she delivered a speech setting out the needs and problems of basic training of social workers.

She took part in the First International Social Service Conference (Paris 1928), the International Congress "Children War Victims" (Zurich 1945), and the International Conference "Parents and Children" (Brussels 1957).

Between 1927 and 1935, she was married to Michał Walicki, an art historian. In 1935, she married Roman Chmielewski, who was drafted to the army in 1939. His further fate is unknown (they had a daughter Anna, born in 1938, journalist).

She died after a long illness on 23 June 1981. She was buried in the family grave at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw.

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*Maria Szubertowa*

## **CSORBA (NÉE MILLER), HELENA (1907–1985)** **MEDICINE AND SOCIAL CARE SOCIOLOGIST**

Helena Csorba was born on 24 October 1907 in Warsaw as the daughter of Teodor and Teresa (née Bauer). She came from an intelligentsia background. She was brought up in Lublin and was active in scouting. She graduated from secondary school in 1925 and went on to study sociology at the University of Poznań (1929). She wrote her doctoral thesis under Prof. Florian Znaniński in 1931. She left for the United States, recommended by professor Helena Radlińska for fellowship in The New York School of Social Work. After returning, she became a senior assistant at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University under Prof. Konstanty Krzeczkowski. Until 1939, she taught social policy and community work methods modelled on American experiences, especially those of Mary Richmond. She organized student internships in the field of social assistance and care. She wrote scientific articles in the *Opiekun Społeczny* [The Welfare Assistant] and *Wiedza i Życie* [Science and Life].

During the siege of Warsaw, she participated in the organization of assistance for the people of Prague district. For this activity, she was awarded

the *Krzyż Walecznych* [the Cross of Valour]. As a wife of a Hungarian citizen, she was forced to leave for Hungary during the occupation. There, she was active in the life of Polish refugees and keenly assisted them with their problems. She collected extensive documentation on this subject in the form of surveys and diaries. On the basis of this documentation, after the war, she published many works, giving a very thorough and comprehensive sociological analysis of the issue of Polish war history.

After the war, she returned to Poland and settled in Krakow. She lectured in sociology at the Jagiellonian University, the Pedagogical University and the University of Social Sciences. In 1953, she moved to Warsaw. There, she wrote several papers on social assistance, among others *O kształceniu pracowników społecznych* (On the Education of Social Workers) in 1960, and *Dwie koncepcje społecznego oddziaływania. Model pomocy i opieki* (Two Concepts of Social Impact. Assistance and Care Model) in 1961, thereby continuing her interest in social assistance issues. She took part in the research work of the Institute of Pedagogy in the field of the living conditions of children and youth in the Wola district. However, more and more – apart from other teaching jobs in the field of sociology – she focused on issues related to the sociology of medicine. In the years 1966–1967, she started researching hospital services as an employee of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She habilitated with Prof. Jan Szczepański based on the work *Szpital – pacjent. System społeczny kliniki internistycznej* (Hospital – Patient. Social system of internal medicine clinic) in Wrocław in 1966. At that time, she also published several articles in this field, widely disseminating the problems of sociology of medicine, and above all hospital services, in the journals *Szpitalnictwo Polskie* (Polish Hospital Service) and *Zdrowie Psychiczne* (Mental Health).

Starting in 1967, she was professionally associated with the Medical Education Centre as an adjunct in the Health Care Department, and later in the Department of the Theory of Social Medicine. She developed extensive teaching activity at the Faculty of Nursing at Medical Academies in Białystok and Lublin, where she introduced the issues of sociology of medicine as a humanistic aspect in the education of doctors and nurses. Her research results had an impact on the effectiveness of treatment, especially in hospital, the proper relationship between the patient and the doctor or nurse. She participated in numerous national conferences devoted to the problems of the elderly by giving the following papers: *Psychospołeczne aspekty chorób ludzi starych* (Psychosocial aspects of diseases in the elderly),

in 1968, and *Spoleczne problemy leczenia ludzi starych w świetle zebranych pamiętników* (Social problems in the medical treatment of the elderly in the light of collected diaries) in 1970. Her foreign trips include participation in the Conference of Postgraduate Academic Schools in Dresden (1973), in France she lectured, among others at the *Ecole Nationale de la Santé Publique* in Rennes.

The 1970s proved to be her most effective period of creative work. The continuation of her habilitation thesis (on hospital and patient) was a wide campaign of collection of patients' diaries. She published the excerpts of these diaries in the professional press. Although she retired in 1977, she did not cease her activities, but was employed part-time in the Third Age Study. She was the chairwoman of the Sociology of Hospital Services Section at the Polish Sociological Association, which she created and for which, in addition to sociologists, won over doctors, psychologists and even architects.

She died on 13 March 1985 in Warsaw.

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*Wanda Wyrobkova-Pawłowska*

## **DENEKA (NÉE SAŁKO), JADWIGA (1911–1944)** **EDUCATOR, SOCIAL WORKER**

Jadwiga Deneka was born on 27 July 1911 in Łódź as the daughter of Franciszek, a railwayman, and Marianna (née Baranowski). She received her high school diploma in 1933 at the Woszczyńska Grammar School.

She moved to Warsaw and worked as an educator in “Our Home” in Bielany<sup>8)</sup>, in cooperation with Maryna Falska. She also lived there for several years in the dormitory. At the same time, she ran a club room of the Polish White Cross for soldiers of the 1st Air Regiment. In 1934 she started to study at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. She was interested in raising small children. After a two-year break, she graduated in 1938. From 1936 to mid-1943, she worked in the Committee for Placement of Orphans in Families. In the course of this work, she

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<sup>8)</sup> “Our Home” (Nasz Dom) was an orphanage build at the initiative of Janusz Korczak and Maryna Falska and run by them between 1928 and 1935. See: <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/korczak/photos/naszdom/> (Accessed 2019.10.01)

collected extensive research materials on raising children in a foster family. These very valuable and well-developed materials were destroyed during the war. She was extremely persistent and insightful in research work, and cordial in educational and caregiving work.

In 1939, she took part *in the battles on barricades* in the defence of Warsaw. In 1941, she joined the Organization of Polish Socialists. She organized PS groups in the Koło and Wola districts, she also cooperated with activists of the “Barricade of Freedom”. Her work in the Municipal Council made possible her contacts with Janusz Korczak and his associates at the Jewish orphanage on Karolkowa Street in the ghetto. Some of them were sent to the partisans, while others were hidden. She was arrested on 25 November 1943 during the clandestine printing of the *Biuletyn Robotniczej Polskiej Partii Socjalistycznej* (The Bulletin of the Workers’ Polish Socialist Party). Tortured, she did not betray anyone. Imprisoned later in Pawiak, she sent out a number of secret messages warning her comrades.

Shot in the ruins of the ghetto on the night of 6–7 January 6–7 1944.

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*Wanda Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska*

## **DINTER HENRYK STANISŁAW (1912–1980)** **SOCIAL EDUCATOR, TEACHER, WRITER, SOCIAL WORKER**

Henryk Stanisław Dinter was born on 29 March 1912 in Łódź in a working-class family. He graduated from elementary school and having high level standing at the ‘Ewaryst Estkowski Teachers’ Seminary’ in his hometown. Then he continued his pedagogical studies at the Pedagogy Department of the Free Polish University in Łódź. Intermittently, he studied there until 1934. From the beginning, Dinter’s professional and social work focused on educational and social issues. He held the following positions in Łódź: tutor-teacher at ‘Stefan Żeromski Educational Home’, organizer of summer camps and guardian of youth employed in craft occupations.

In October 1935, he moved to Warsaw. In the years 1935–1938, he was a student of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. In addition to studies, he started working at the Institute of Social Issues and Juvenile Court. Despite the fact that in 1938 he wrote his diploma thesis

*Środowisko podsądnych warszawskiego Sądu dla Nieletnich* (The Environment of Defendants of the Warsaw Juvenile Court), he did not pass the final exam. However, years later, he used his experience as a probation officer in his literary work *Patrząc na Warszawską Nike* (*Looking at Warsaw Nike*), 1972.

He worked with Józef Czesław Babicki. For three years (1936–1939), they both lectured at the Study of Social Work in Lviv. They also started to work closely in the autumn of 1937, when Dinter took up a responsible position in the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. Their cooperation and cordial life lasted until Babicki's death.

In September 1939, *when the war broke out*, he started to cooperate with Stanisław Papuziński in the 4<sup>th</sup> Care District of the City of Warsaw covering the Wola and Koło districts. There, Papuziński was the head of the 4<sup>th</sup> Health and Social Care Centre, while Dinter was a manager of the 4<sup>th</sup> District of the Social Self-Help Committee, appointed on 5 September 1939. Soon afterwards, Dinter entered the Committee's Head Office, the so-called Local Organ Section for the position of district instructor. As the District Head of Social Care at the Government in Exile Delegation in Poland, who knew the Łódź environment well, he brought money to Łódź for families affected by German repressions. At the same time, he participated in the work of 6<sup>th</sup> Department of the Social Self-Defence Organization (SSO, its acronym in Polish: SOS), which was called "Human Protection". Its first manager was Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and after her arrest, the department was taken over by Dinter. Help for the families of those arrested and executed, sending food parcels to concentration camps, intelligence activities in Warsaw and provincial prisons – these were the basic actions undertaken by SOS.

Despite his many responsibilities, Dinter did not lose touch with the people and institutions close to him, with whom he was emotionally and intellectually connected. In the spring of 1941, Prof. Helena Radlińska asked him to organize a clandestine team of studies in social pedagogy. From spring 1941 to January 1944, he constantly supervised a six-person team of students of the School of Social-Educational Work. Dinter conducted classes on social care organization and practice, while Babicki lectured on childcare.

From the beginning of 1941 to spring of 1944, Dinter was also a lecturer in refresher pedagogical courses for employees of care institutions. The courses were sponsored and subsidized by the Underground Association of Participants in the Struggle for the Polish School, and headed by Babicki.



Dinter was in turn a member of the Service for Poland's Victory, the Union of Armed Struggle and the Home Army. He took part in the Warsaw Uprising. As a corporal cadet, then a lieutenant, he fought in the Old Town in 104 Company. After the fall of the Old Town, he managed to make his way to Śródmieście. He was awarded the Cross of Valour twice for his combat activities. He was awarded the Medal of the Polish Army "Poland to its Defender" four times for his underground military service. He was also awarded the Cross of the Home Army, and posthumously – the Warsaw Uprising Cross. He was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit with Swords for his civilian activity in the underground.

Dinter lived in Łódź in the years following World War II. He gave his strength and health to this city, its people and matters. It is important to emphasize Dinter's special merits in educating social workers for various types of agencies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. At the initiative of this ministry, the Social Care Workers' Training Centre was established in June 1945, and Dinter became its director. For the social care being organised at that time, during the five-year period of 1945–1950, the Centre conducted a total of 49 different courses attended by 1,500 people. Having so much experience in this field of education, Dinter wrote the work entitled *Program, formy i metody szkolenia państwowych referentów opieki społecznej na krótkoterminowych kursach* (Programme, forms and methods of training state social care clerks on short-term courses) on the basis of which he obtained a master's degree in social pedagogy at the University of Łódź in 1949.

After the Centre was closed, the Social Workers' Training Centre was moved to its well-equipped facilities, which under the direction of Dinter continued to work until October 1953. After the liquidation of Centre, Dinter began to work in education. He was the director of an educational institution for morally endangered children in Grodków (1953–1955). Then he returned to Łódź and became the headmaster of the school, a lecturer in a teacher's high school, he was also the first director of the Post-secondary School for Social Workers (1967–1968).

In 1972, he retired. His health began to decline steadily at that time. Despite this, he continued to work in various social organizations. It should be particularly emphasized that he participated in the work of the Society of the Free Polish University. The most significant initiative of Dinter in its Łódź Department was to organize in 1980 a series of seminars on the origins of Polish social pedagogy. In the final phase, he planned to estab-



lish a publishing house of the Society of the Free Polish University. Death stopped him in achieving that plan.

He died on 4 September 1980.

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*Irena Lepalczyk*

## **DUDKOWA (NÉE ZGLIŃSKI), MARIA (1901–1948)** **SOCIAL PEDAGOGUE, EDUCATOR, ORGANIZER**

Maria Dudkowa was born on 19 December 1901. She spent her childhood and early youth in Samara, Russia, where she graduated from secondary school. She studied at the University of Tashkent for two years. After returning to Poland, she worked in the library in Kalisz, and then in Warsaw, where in 1927, she enrolled in the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University to study librarianship as her major.

While still a student, she worked as a librarian in the Library of the Free University. From 1936, she taught after-school classes with soldiers, and then, as a result of her increasing interest in educational contact, in the same year, she began working in the Emergency Service for Children, where she managed to hold out throughout the occupation until the Warsaw Uprising.

In 1946, she returned to care work – despite a severe heart condition – as an inspector of nursing homes for the elderly. The last three years of work were for her a period of particularly creative activity. Revealing the hidden abilities and needs of the elderly, she was able to create the conditions in which they could be active again thanks to the constant search for methods of cooperation and social interaction. She designed the creation of the Circle of Friends of Elders, and was able to attract young people to cooperate. She organized meetings between nursing homes and schools, correspondence exchange, establishing friendly contacts and mutual visits, exhibitions of the artworks produced by the elderly. In 1948, she actively participated in the preparation of the exhibition of the Social Care Department subordinate to the Ministry of Health and Social Care at the Board of the Capital City Warsaw, which showed all the various forms and fields of care work over the past three years, and the enormity of needs. She participated in

four social care conferences which were aimed at acquainting employees and associates, especially foreigners (Swiss and Swedish care institutions), with the needs and forms and methods of social assistance in Poland.

She passed away during her period of full professional activity dying suddenly while at work on 27 April 1948.

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*Wanda WYROBKOWA-PAWŁOWSKA*

## **JEŻEWSKI KAZIMIERZ (1877–1948) EDUCATOR, CREATOR OF ORPHAN NESTS**

He was born on 1 March 1877 in the village of Cierno near Jędrzejów as the son of Aleksander, an insurgent in the January Uprising<sup>9)</sup>, and Maria (née Gaszyński). After the uprising was defeated, the large Jeżewski family (six sons and two daughters) moved to Warsaw. The personality of Jeżewski was also strongly influenced by positivist currents, especially the call for organic work and education for the people. After graduating from the 5th Secondary School in Warsaw, he went to study first to Denmark and later to Switzerland.

At the news of the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1905, he returned to Poland and actively participated in the work of the Sienkiewicz<sup>10)</sup> Committee, created to save the children of working-class Warsaw from hunger and cold. In 1906, this committee was transformed into the Society for the Care of Children, in which Jeżewski initially served as secretary, and then vice-president. Thanks to his efforts, a prototype of a family children's home was created in Warsaw located at 9 Hoża Street, where ten children were brought up in the care of their foster mother. This was a turning point in the Jeżewski's life. At the end of 1906, he left to finish his studies. Abroad, undoubtedly in Switzerland, his project of orphan nests was created – here Jeżewski could familiarise himself with the reformist concepts in the field of orphan child care.

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<sup>9)</sup> The January Uprising (1863–64) was instigated against Russian rule in Poland.

<sup>10)</sup> Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846–1916) was a writer, laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1905), who through his books and his social activity, had a great impact on maintaining the patriotism of Poles under the rule of the Russian Empire.

In 1907, he returned to Poland and started to be active in the part of Poland's land under Austrian partition. In 1908, he published in Lviv a booklet: *W sprawie zorganizowania krajowej opieki nad dziećmi w Galicji* (On the organization of national childcare in Galicia)<sup>11</sup>. He started organizing family homes, the so-called 'Nests' for orphans, guided by the conviction that the right foster-family environment should provide the right conditions for the comprehensive development of children and education through work, and love of nature. In the atmosphere of a large family, working together for a decent living, each child should be provided not only with the necessary individual care, but also preparation for independent life after graduating from a vocational school or even a university. In September 1908, Jeżewski obtained the approval of the statute of the Society of Orphan Nests and, after persistent efforts, organized the first orphan family nest in Stanisławczyk near Przemyśl, which he himself managed for two years. His efforts were supported by such outstanding persons as Maria Konopnicka, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Eliza Orzeszkowa and Władysław Reymont.<sup>12</sup>

From 1911, Jeżewski stayed in Warsaw, managing the development of orphan nests as the director of the Society. The increase in the number of orphaned children during World War I prompted him to further search for forms of full care for them. At that time, the concept of an orphan village was created as a grouping of orphan nests, based on exemplarily run, specialized, interconnected farms. The village was to have its self-government and various schools. Its task was, among others, to fulfil the role of an economic and social culture centre radiating to the surrounding area. When Poland regained independence in 1918, Jeżewski turned to the state authorities to organize a village for post-war orphans and call it 'Kościuszkowska' to celebrate the centenary of the death of Tadeusz Kościuszko, a hero of both Polish and American struggles for independence. In 1919, the Legislative Parliament adopted a resolution, commissioning the government to prepare an appropriate law. Despite Jeżewski's strenuous efforts, it was not until 1929 that a state foundation was established under the name 'Kościuszko Village'. Due to the difficult conditions of the economic crisis,

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<sup>11</sup>) Galicia was a south-eastern region of Poland at that time under the partition of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

<sup>12</sup>) These people, being outstanding writers cultivated the Polish national consciousness in the conditions of the loss of Poland's sovereignty under the partitions. W. Reymont was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925.

instead of the planned ten orphan nests, only five were created. In the interwar period, Jeżewski concentrated all his energy on the issue of villages. Undeterred by the difficulties, he popularized and improved his program. It is worth emphasizing that the village statute granted its residents more than the Social Care Act of 1923, in which the obligation to care for orphans concerned a child up to the age of sixteen. The experience of orphan nests showed that children need care and help until reaching full independence. For this purpose, Jeżewski created a vocational training fund and a dowry fund. He wanted the pupils to remain in the community after leaving the nests. At his initiative, the Union of Nest People (*Związek Gniaździaków*) was formed, later transformed into the Union of Social Workers.

During World War II, Jeżewski did not interrupt his activities, despite prohibition of legal activity of the Orphan Nests Society by the German administration of occupied Poland. In Warsaw, in the villa in which he lived (on Wojska Polskiego Street in Żoliborz), he organized a sort of hostel for his pupils modelled on the family home, where small children were placed (the other was set up nearby on Brodzińskiego Street). In addition to hostels, three orphan nests operated: near Sochaczew, Miechów and Tarnobrzeg. Jeżewski took part in the underground movement against the occupier, preparing young people for the fight. Many of his pupils participated in the Warsaw Uprising.

After the fall of the uprising, Jeżewski stayed with his children in the vicinity of Zakopane and then in Kraków. The main office of the Society was established there, headed by Wacław Welcher. After returning to Warsaw, he made efforts to reactivate the Kosciuszko Village Society. Initially, he received the support of the authorities struggling with the massive problem of post-war orphans at that time. In 1945, he wrote the booklet *Wioski i Gniazda Kościuszkowskie* (Kosciuszko Villages and Nests), published on the 200th anniversary of Kościuszko's birth. The state granted large areas to future villages in the Poznań and Gdańsk provinces. Further nests, schools and kindergartens serving the whole area were established there. Hostels were set up; camps for hundreds of Warsaw children were also organized there. Despite serious illness, Jeżewski continued to participate in the expansion of nests and the creation of villages. After 1948, social organizations were liquidated<sup>13)</sup>, which

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<sup>13)</sup> In 1948, communists in Poland began to implement a Stalinist policy of the rule over society, which excluded independent social activities.

deeply perturbed Jeżewski. He died suddenly on 15 March 1948 after forty years of sacrificial and fruitful work.

What remained of him were the original pedagogical achievements derived from the idea of providing the orphaned child with a family environment. He was for the more than 1,200 pupils of orphan nests a model of father-guardian, patriot and citizen. At the initiative of his pupils, the Kazimierz Jeżewski Circle of Friends of Children was founded in Warsaw in 1957, popularizing the ideas of its patron and conducting various activities for children requiring care, especially for family children's homes.

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*Jan Przewłocki*

*Supplemented by Albin Kelm*

## **JĘDRZEJOWSKA (NÉE PRAUSS), JADWIGA (1904–1978) GEOLOGIST, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CARE ORGANIZER**

Jadwiga Jędrzejowska was born on 13 December 1904 in Warsaw. Her father was Ksawery Prauss, a geologist, an outstanding educational activist, a member of the Polish Socialist Party, Minister of Education in 1918, co-creator of the education system for the then liberated Poland, and mother – Zofia (née Kulesza), a mathematician, member of the Polish Socialist Party, and a Member of Parliament. Family environment had a great impact on Jadwiga's personality and interests. She spent her first years abroad, because her parents, arrested and then released, had to leave the country. After returning in 1911, her father founded, in accordance with his modern teaching concepts, an exemplary school for fragile children in Zakopane. Jadwiga attended the school where her parents taught. It was a very happy period in her life. She lived in a specific milieu of the Polish intelligentsia, met such outstanding people as novelist Stefan Żeromski, novelist, ethnographer and politician Waław Sieroszewski, and composer and writer Karol Szymanowski. She also met her future husband.

The outbreak of World War I meant that the Prauss family had to change their location many times. Finally, they settled in Warsaw, where Jadwiga received her high school diploma and entered the Faculty of Geography at

the University of Warsaw. In 1923, however, she quit her studies to marry Henryk Jędrzejowski and go him (who had just obtained a scholarship from the Pasteur Institute as a future employee of the Radium Institute) to Paris. Jędrzejowska completed geological studies at the Sorbonne. After returning to Warsaw, she worked as a geography teacher at the "Cooperation" Secondary School, while during summer holidays she organized summer camps for children in Małkinia. Her husband, due to his membership in the Communist Party of Poland, did not get a job at the Radium Institute. After his arrest in 1932, Jędrzejowska was deprived of the right to teach. She soon remained alone with her two-year-old daughter, because her husband, who was expelled to Moscow, and there was, as was the case with so many other Polish communists.

In 1934, she organized an experimental institution aimed at preparing women for work. As a result, the Employment Agency was established, which also organized help for single women and young girls. In this way, the Municipal House of Women (MHW) was created on Leszno Street under administration of the Department of Health and Social Care of the City Board of the Capital City of Warsaw. It was a shelter for homeless women, unmarried mothers with children, and attached to it a boarding school for girls directed to vocational courses run partly by the MHW. There was also a hospital there. At the MHW, students from the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University often completed their internships. At the outbreak of war, the MHW was included in the defence system of the population of Warsaw, and during the occupation it became an institution of intensive underground work, providing shelter, sanitary assistance, and fictitious documents to those in hiding. Jędrzejowska managed the overall work, which was continued after her arrest on 13 November 1942. She also ran the editorial unit of clandestine *Tygodnik Informacyjny* (Information Weekly).

Imprisoned in Pawiak<sup>14</sup>), Jędrzejowska participated extensively in all forms of help to her fellow inmates. After a stay in the prison hospital, where she had to undergo surgery, she began working in the sanitary column, which was an element in the Pawiak underground network. Officially, she was supposed to take care of the cleanliness of the prison spaces and look after the sick. Because of this work, she gained access to impris-

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<sup>14</sup>) A prison in Warsaw taken over by the Gestapo to close, torture and kill those suspected of opposing the terror of German occupation.

oned women in solitary confinement, to whom she provided anaesthetics and, more importantly, information, passed in secret messages. The role she played at Pawiak cannot be overstated. On 30 July 1944, shortly before the liquidation of Pawiak, she was taken to Ravensbrück, where she volunteered to work in an infectious hospital. This was the most difficult time for her, which required high mental resilience, because her help often decided the fate of human life. She saved dozens of people, which is confirmed by numerous witness accounts.

On 5 March 1945 she was taken to Stuttgart and forced to work in an inn. Immediately after the French army entered the city, she began to act as the head of the office in centres gathering Poles and again she helped them, making it easier for people to survive. She actively promoted the return to Poland.

Jarzębowska, despite her deteriorated health, accepted the position of a labour inspector at the Ministry of Labour and Social Care immediately after returning to Poland. She was sent to Lower Silesia to organize help and health care for women returning from their wanderings caused by the war. She organized eight centres with a diverse profile: a house in Wrocław in 1946 modelled on the Warsaw MHW and Mother and Child Houses in Wrocław and Janowice, leisure centres and other (e.g. training centres), and work cooperatives enabling women to reach quickly self-sufficiency. The diversity and multiplicity of forms organizing life and work required social imagination and experience, as well as teamwork skills. Jędrzejowska. possessed all these traits up to a high degree.

In 1948, she returned to Warsaw for the position of head of the Social Department of the Polish Radio. She created the Polish Radio Community House, which runs numerous forms of assistance for children and youth – from nurseries, kindergartens, outpatient clinics and colonies to vocational courses and travelling camps. It became a model of the forms of help in the development of children and youth. In 1951, she became secretary general of the Central Office of Radio Broadcasting, however, she still led the Social Department.

She was a member of the Polish United Workers' Party and performed various functions in it.

From 1954, as the director of the Tourist Facilities' Board at Polish Society of Tourism and Sightseeing, she was one of the organizers of mass tourism – until 1967, when she retired. Despite her illness, she was interested in the living conditions of former prisoners during the occupation, whom she

once helped in the extreme conditions of the camp and prison, creating an atmosphere of peace and security around herself.

She died after a serious illness on 27 February 1978.

She wrote about her work at the Municipal House of Women in an article entitled: *Miejski Dom Kobiet*. "Biuletyn Towarzystwa Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej – Człowiek w Pracy i Osiedlu".

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*Wanda Wyrobkova-Pawłowska*

## **KACPRZAK, MARCIN (1888–1968)** **DOCTOR, ORGANIZER, PROMOTER OF SANITARY** **EDUCATION AND SOCIAL HYGIENE**

Marcin Kacprzak was born on 6 November 1888 in Podolszyce near Płock in a peasant family. He studied medicine in Paris, where in 1915 he received a doctor's diploma.

Having returned to Poland in 1921, he started working in Warsaw as a sanitary doctor; and, in 1924, he became a lecturer in social medicine at the State School of Hygiene in Warsaw at Chocimska Street newly founded by the Rockefeller Foundation. In the 1930s, he was a lecturer at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University in the field of social hygiene.

Kacprzak's many years of professional and social activity include training doctors, examining the state of health of the population, the organization of health care and forms of improving the physical fitness of children and adolescents. He devoted a great amount of attention to the health issues of the villages; and, as a result of innovative research, the first monograph entitled *Wieś płocka* (The Villages of Płock Area) was created. He cooperated with the Institute of Social Issues in examining the health status of the population. In the interwar period, he was a co-creator and co-organizer of popularization campaigns in the field of hygiene and sanitary education, including "health in a country cottage" competition. He participated in the work of the 'Wici'<sup>15)</sup>, an organization of rural youth who promoted the ide-

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<sup>15)</sup> An old Polish word that means sending a message to many people for dissemination:



ology of agrarianism. He was a co-founder and president of the Society of Social Medicine. For many years, he cooperated with the Hygiene Section of the League of Nations, transferring world experience to Poland. From 1934, he participated in the work of the Committee for Anti-Tuberculosis Sanatorium for Children in Rudka, and in the years 1934–1950, he was its president. He put a lot of energy into creating and maintaining this important institution. He was happy to spend his holidays there.

During the occupation, in addition to participating in underground medical training, he was the head of the health section at the underground Department of Labour and Social Care – Delegation of the Poland's Government in Exile in the occupied country.

After the war, he became a full professor at the Medical Academy in Warsaw, and from 1953 he was its rector for ten years. At that time, he was the president of the Polish Hygiene Society and the Society of Conscious Motherhood, and also actively participated in the work of the World Health Organization, for which he received its highest distinction – the Leon Bernard Award.

He was a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and many scientific societies in the world.

In addition to the issue of health care and the state of health of the population, which he considered the “greatest treasure of the nation”, his special concern was the problems of medical ethics – the ethos of the doctor shaped in the process of educating medical staff. He was the author of almost 400 popular and scientific publications, among which should be mentioned in particular: the above mentioned *The Villages of Płock Area*, 1937; *Stan opieki lekarskiej nad ludnością wiejską* (The state of medical care over the rural population), 1937, and *Gruźlica na wsi* (Tuberculosis in the countryside), 1938. He cooperated with the journal *Opiekun Społeczny* (The Welfare Assistant).

He died on 14 July 1968.

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*Wanda Wyrobkova-Pawłowska*

## KUCZKOWSKA (NÉE TRZASKALSKI), IZABELA (1911–1988)

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CARE ORGANIZER

Izabela Kuczowska was born on 18 September 1911 in Warsaw, in an artisanal family. Her father was a tailor at the Grand Theatre. She graduated from secondary school in Warsaw and – before passing her final exams in 1932 – took up studies at the Faculty of Education of the Free Polish University. Being interested in the issues of education and social care, she also attended the School of Social-Educational Work there. Already in 1934, she started working in the Health and Social Care Department of the City Board of the Capital City of Warsaw in the field of open care. She married Jan Kuczowski, a zoologist, a close associate of Jan Żabiński, and director at the Warsaw Zoological Garden. She had one son.

After the outbreak of war, she became the head of the social care department at the 12<sup>th</sup> Health and Social Care Centre on Grochowska Street. In her care work, especially with children and young people, she was not limited to activities officially allowed by the Germans, but she sought to identify all the needs of her children and then to satisfy them in terms of material and educational assistance, often by the means forbidden under German occupation. In addition to her professional work in the Centre, she was active in the underground organization Front of the Rebirth of Poland, created by Zofia Kossak-Szczucka<sup>16)</sup>, and cooperated with SOS (Social Self-Defence Organization [Społeczną Organizacją Samoobrony]), saving civilians in the occupied territories. She cooperated with the “Raclawice” Peasant Freedom Organization, of which her brother-in-law Roman Tyczyński was an outstanding activist. Her parents’ house at 19 Krucza Street was a place of shelter for those at risk, both adults and children throughout the entire occupation. Kuczowska’s mother, Kazimiera Trzaskalska, also played a significant caring role, always willing to help those in need. Kuczowska, was also a liaison at the Council to Aid Jews – Żegota, in a unit of care for Jewish children. She raised a Jewish girl until the end of the war. During the Warsaw Uprising, she worked in a hospital, organizing food, medicine and clothing.

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<sup>16)</sup> Zofia Kossak-Szczucka (1889–1968), was a highly acclaimed novelist, a Catholic activist was also a co-founder of Provisional Committee to Aid Jews founded in September 1942. It was replaced in December that year by The Council to Aid Jews, (code name Żegota) supported by the Delegate of Poland’s Government in Exile.

After the end of war in 1945, she went to Silesia to participate in a social campaign organized by the Ministry of Industry. Stanisław Papuziński, who inspired and directed the campaign, brought from destroyed Warsaw his former colleagues he studied with at the School of Social-Educational Work. Kuczkowska was a particularly valuable collaborator there because of her initiative and experience. She started working at the “Pokój” foundry in Bytom, organizing a care unit for children and young people as well as for pregnant mothers. A nursery, kindergarten, recreation room with various activities, as well as summer camps were organized. During these several years of very intense activity, Kuczkowska was able to create many valuable solutions in meeting the needs of the families of miners. She also gained new experience in the field of the concept and organization of care.

In the 1950s, she returned to Warsaw and took up a job at the Ministry of Education in the Department of Child Care as an orphanage inspector. Her bold attitude and bold, innovative concepts have significantly enriched the ministry's legislation. After numerous unpleasant situations, she suffered during the period of “ideological changes”, when she reactivated the activity of the Society of Friends of Children (SFC) in 1958, she took part in organizing new social and educational counselling centres emerging in various districts of Warsaw. The Capital District of SFC entrusted her with the management of the Social and Educational Clinic in the Mokotów district, and later in others as well. She participated in the process of transforming counselling from care and psychological counselling centres to educational and vocational counselling centres. These top-down changes were critically evaluated by some psychologists and educators.

The lack of formally completed studies became a pretext for Kuczkowska's early retirement in 1970, although in 1968, she started second-cycle studies at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Warsaw and received a certificate of completion. Discouraged, she stopped writing her master's thesis under professor Alina Szemińska. This was a very hard time for her, because she could not exist without active participation in social life. Soon, however, she started voluntary social activity in the Ochota district.

She died as a result of a serious heart disease on 13 October 1988.

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*Wanda Wyrobkova-Pawłowska*

## KUZAŃSKA-OBRAŃCZKOWA, MARIA (1915–1976) EDUCATOR, ORGANIZER OF ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Maria Kuzańska-Obrączkowa was born on 15 March 1915 in Pieczeniewo, in the Łódź province. Her mother, who came from a village, worked in Zgierz as a weaver, while her father – only worked on an ad hoc basis, due to his poor health. She completed primary school and then later graduated the Stefan Żeromski Teachers' Seminary in Zgierz in 1933. She began her teaching career in 1936 at the Orphan Nest Society in Olgierdówka. A year later, she went to Warsaw to work as a children's instructor in the "Pionier" organization in Wola. She joined the Communist Union of Polish Youth. In the years 1937–1939, Kuzańska-Obrączkowa was the head of cultural and educational work with children and youth in the first housing development of the Society of Workers' Housing Estates, in which a broad, experimental educational campaign was undertaken. In the children's common room in the Jordanian Garden<sup>17)</sup>, and in the educational counselling centre, she initiated many new forms and methods of work, devoted with all youthful enthusiasm to the upbringing of workers' children.

In order to deepen her pedagogical knowledge, in those years she took up studies at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University, which, after a break of several years in war, she completed with her master's degree in 1949 at the University of Łódź. She obtained a doctorate in humanities in 1965 at the University of Warsaw. Before the outbreak of the war, she briefly worked as a childcare clerk in the "Forester's Family"<sup>18)</sup> – she was dismissed from the Society of Workers' Housing Estates for political reasons despite a high social and professional evaluation issued by its director Jan Strzelecki.

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<sup>17)</sup> The so-called Jordanian Gardens are still functioning in Poland. The playgrounds areas are modelled at its forerunner – a recreation and sports park with out of school educational activities for children created in Krakow in 1889 by Henryk Jordan, a well-known physician, medicine professor at the Jagiellonian University, a social activist and propagator of social hygiene. The park's operation was based on the assumption of comprehensive development of the child and aimed mainly at children from disadvantaged families.

<sup>18)</sup> A mutual aid organization of the workers of the State Forests and their families established in 1935. See: Echa Leśne (The Forests' Echoes), 2014, Special Edition, p. 20, <http://www.lasy.gov.pl/pl/informacje/echa-lesne/archiwum-pdf/echa-lesne-2-2014-do-datek-specjalny> (Accessed 2019.10.02)

The years of occupation were a period of very intense social-educational and political activity so characteristic of Kuzańska-Obrączkowa. In the years 1940–1944, she participated in the works of the Polish Care Committee of the Principal Protective Council in the Child Care Section. Initially, she worked in Warsaw in Rakowiec (The Housing Estate of the Warsaw Housing Cooperative) as the head of childcare and youth care for the housing estate, then as an inspector of children's centres in the Capital City of Warsaw.

In the last period of the occupation (March 1943 – July 1944), she went to Garwolin to organize care for the transportation of children, women and the elderly from the Zamość region.<sup>19)</sup> It was a time of difficult and responsible work, requiring initiative, resourcefulness and courage. A year and a half of this activity throughout the region, when she was constantly travelling by bicycle, obtaining food and organizing various forms of shelter, was one of the most intense periods of her care work, combined with underground activity in the Union of Liberation Struggle, as well as participation in clandestine printing activities.

She also acted as the liaison officer of the emerging State National Council. Since the establishment of the Polish Committee of National Liberation<sup>20)</sup>, she worked in education and participated in the reactivation of the Workers' Society of Friends of Children (originally established in 1926), and youth organizations of the Society of Workers' University (1923–1948). In the years 1945–1947, she was the organizer of the *Czytelnik* (The Reader) Educational Cooperative, simultaneously serving as secretary of the Central Committee of the Youth Organization of Society of Workers' University. She also served as a member of the State National Council in 1945–1946 and 1947–1952. From 1949, she belonged to the Polish United Workers' Party, and previously to the Polish Socialist Party.

In 1949, she returned to the Society of Friends of Children as a director of the Warsaw District. After a temporary break in this job due to the liqui-

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<sup>19)</sup> In the period from November 1942 to March 1943, the Germans displaced 116,000 Polish inhabitants of the Zamość region to slave labour camps in the Third Reich, in the General Government or to concentration camps in order to cleanse the region's fertile lands for German settlements. During transports, these people needed help that was provided by the Principal Protective Council. See: <http://germanwarcrimes1939.blogspot.com/2018/03/ethnic-cleansing-of-zamojszczyzna.html> (Accessed 2019.10.02)

<sup>20)</sup> These two political bodies became footholds of communist power controlled by Stalin in Poland.

datation of the Society, when in the years 1953–1957, she was the head of the Department of Vocational Schools in the Ministry of Municipal Economy, she returned to this organization as the general secretary to focus on caring for and raising children, which were particularly important for her over the next ten years.

At the Society of Friends of Children, she was a co-creator of new forms of care work and new methods of educating educators, as well as of the concept of the centre in Helenów for the rehabilitation of children who require special care. In 1968, she became a pensioner as a result of her health condition. In the following years – she was a lecturer in social policy at the State School of Social Workers, and simultaneously the director of the Teachers' College at the Society of Friends of Children in Helenów, a period of her life in which she could use all her extensive experience in the field of social pedagogy.

She died on 26 June 1976.

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*Wanda Wyrobkova-Pawłowska*

## **LISIECKI, KAZIMIERZ (1902–1976)** **PEDAGOGUE, EDUCATOR**

Kazimierz Lisiecki was born on 9 February 1902 in Pruszków-Żbików to Roman, a carpenter and railroad worker. His mother, Marianna, died of typhus in 1914 along with several children during the cholera epidemic. The older brother Stefan fought in Piłsudski's Legions and died in 1920. His father, missing during the First World War, did not find his son until 1932.

During World War I, Lisiecki wandered. He lived in various dormitories. In the dormitory of the Principal Protective Council in Żbikowo, he met Józef Czesław Babicki, who influenced his interest in the issues of care and upbringing. In 1916, he settled in the Principal Protective Council dormitory in Warsaw and attended junior high school. He accepted a proposal from Dr. Stefan Piętowski, his later friend and enthusiast of the centres, which Lisiecki named bonfires<sup>21)</sup>, and became the leader of the

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<sup>21)</sup> The which become later a grand achievement of Lisiecki.???

29th Scout Team named after Hugo Kollątaj. From 1917, he undertook social activities, organizing material assistance for Warsaw newspaper vendors. After graduating from high school in 1919, he created, together with Alicja Dorabialska, a student and friend of Maria Skłodowska-Curie, the Academic Circle of Friends of Children of the Street. The circle associated mainly students of Warsaw universities who undertook social activities in newsboys clubs. During the summer holidays, colonies were organized for Warsaw newspaper vendors. In 1923 he graduated from the Pedagogical College of the Free Polish University, and completed a course for tutors at the Ministry of Labour and Social Care in 1925.

In the years 1925–1927, he cooperated with Kazimierz Jeżewski as an educator and deputy director of the Society of Orphan Nests. Together with Babicki, he worked to create the Trade Union of Educators. The authorities of this Association included, among others: Aleksander Kamiński, Józef Czesław Babicki, Mother Urszula Ledóchowska, Wanda Szuman, Kazimierz Lisiecki.

In 1927, he married Maria Ciechanowska. They settled in the Dormitory of the Orphan Nests Society on Szara (Stara?) Street in Warsaw. In 1928, she gave birth to their daughter Barbara, and in 1932, their son Andrzej was born.

In 1927, he went abroad as a representative of the Teachers' Trade Union. He participated in the International Congress of Child Care in Paris and visited educational facilities in Western Europe. In 1928, the Academic Circle of Friends of Children of the Street was transformed into the Society of Friends of Children of the Street, which would provide social support for his care activities in educational centres. In 1929, at the Third Congress of the Teachers' Trade Union, Lisiecki was elected vice-president. In 1932, the Society took over from the state the Office of Journals and Magazines, which dealt with the distribution of Polish and foreign press, soon becoming a profitable institution, partially thanks to the good organization of the work of young newsboys.

In 1933, the first independent Educational Bonfire was established in Prague at 9 Środkowa Street, which was officially opened in 1934.<sup>22)</sup> In 1935, the “Śródmieście” Bonfire was established, in 1936, other Bonfires in Łódź, Grudziądz and Toruń. In the same year, the camp tradition of the

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<sup>22)</sup> That bonfire as all others later set up provided day care and educational support as well as hostel services for the needy youngsters.

centres was initiated after receiving land in Fronołów on the Bug river. In connection with the tidying up of the area adjacent to the Royal Castle, the “Śródmieście” Bonfire was liquidated. In return, the largest of the bonfires to date was created – “Starówka” on Długa Street. President Ignacy Mościcki attended the opening ceremony of this bonfire.

During the occupation, two bonfires operated in Warsaw: in Długa Street and Środkowa Street. Lisiecki, called “Grandfather” by all young people under his care, fought persistently to preserve the activity of bonfires, for normal care and educational work. This work involved participation in the resistance movement. Lisiecki created the Academic Legion, to which he brought 350 boys from all over Poland. Only a dozen or so survived. After the Warsaw Uprising, Lisiecki, with his family and a group of boys stayed in the Gieźłów estate between Opoczno and Końskie. The time spent there was filled with work and efforts to get food.

In March 1945, he returned to Warsaw, to the surviving “Praga” Bonfire. In 1946, a new bonfire was created in Świder. Located in the forest, near the river, it allowed to organize summer camps. In 1948, the Society of Friends of Children of the Street was resumed. Soon, however, as part of the centralization of care activities, the Society, like other social organizations, was liquidated along with the institution of educational centres, which were included in the network of state-run children’s homes. Under the banner of orphanages, Lisiecki continued to carry out educational work according to the concept of bonfires despite numerous obstacles on the part of the authorities.

In 1956, Lisiecki joined the struggle to rebuild the orphanages and the entire childcare system. The fight was then patronized by the magazine *Kobieta i Życie* (Woman and Life). Lisiecki’s efforts were supported by, among others Marian Brandys, a novelist and journalist Salomon Łastik. As a result, the Ministry of Education agreed to reactivate the bonfires’ activities, giving them their own statute. In this document, Kazimierz Lisiecki’s concept was considered the fundamental one, and mentioned him as the creator and head of the Bonfires Ensemble. The work of bonfires was expanded. In 1957, the “Muranów” Bonfire was created in Dzielna Street. In 1959, Sopotnia Wielka near Żywiec was included into the Bonfire Ensemble, where summer and winter camps were organized. In 1960, Bonfire “Gdynia” was created on Zygmunt Augusta Street. In the years 1965–1968, the construction of the “Starówka” Bonfire was underway, which was to constitute and still is the central link in the bonfires’ network and the seat of the



management of the whole Bonfires' Ensemble. Thanks to the persistence of 'Grandfather', a project enabling multilateral care and educational activities was implemented. In 1965, the "Muranów" Bonfire was transformed into a girls' institution, because 'Grandpa' preferred work with boys, and such were the beginnings of bonfires.

In 1971, he retired. This retirement was truly painful for him, for he was not only deprived of work, but also of the main purpose of his life. From that moment, their creator no longer visited bonfires.

He passed away on 8 December 1976.

Lisiecki was first and foremost a practitioner. The greatest achievements of his life were and have remained to this day educational bonfires as institutions of a special kind, calculated for material and moral support for children who are at a crossroads in life, for whom the house could not provide sufficient living conditions or an educational direction. At the core of the bonfire concept were the specific needs of Warsaw newsboys – children who had to take up employment early to stay alive.

Bonfires were to create a home for these children. The bonfire was a family with 'Grandfather' as the patriarch of this family: his decisions and authority as well as his ability to reach out to each child influenced the educational atmosphere of the bonfires. The principle of a family pattern also resulted in other educational solutions, such as "nothing for free", preparation through work and fulfilling the obligations to live in a bonfire with the future in mind. The centre helped its pupils become independent when they were to begin to enter adult life.

Lisiecki did not leave a written output. He wrote only one article: *Zadania wychowawcze na Zachodzie Europy* (Educational tasks in Western Europe) in "Wychowawca" 1929 No. 12. The transcript of his famous speech during a conference organized in 1956 thanks to the efforts of "Women and Life" (typescript) has also been preserved. Lisiecki demanded, among other things, that care and educational institutions should employ the educators with a calling representing the desired personal pattern.

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*Albin Kelm*

## **ŁOPATTO, STEFAN (1889–1960)** **SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZER AND ADMINISTRATOR,** **EDUCATOR**

Stefan Łopatto was born in 1889 in Ufa, Urals. He obtained his high school diploma in 1911 as an extramural student, because earlier (1905) he had been expelled from secondary school for political activity. In Moscow, he began studying nature science, which he interrupted due to mobilization to the army in 1916.

In 1918, he came to Warsaw and started working in social care. From January 1919, he was a delegate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Care for unemployment. In 1922, he became the head of the Health Department of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw and held this function until 1928, when he retired. This decision was made due to political considerations – the refusal to join the Non-Party Bloc for Cooperation with the Government.

Later, in the years 1929–1933, he was the director of the National Institute of the Deaf and Blind in Warsaw. In 1933, he was re-appointed to the state service. In the Ministry of Labour and Social Care, he was an inspector in the Department of Social Care, and then became the head of the department.

During the occupation, he was actively involved in social care. He worked in the Principal Protective Council and in the Polish Red Cross. In the years 1940–1942, he was the head of the House for War Invalids in Oryszewo near Żyrardów. Until 1944, he worked at the Benefits Department at the Warsaw Social Insurance Company.

After the war, until August 1945, he was the representative for matters of the returning from Germany. Until July 1949, he worked successively as an inspector, deputy director, and finally director of the Social Care Department at the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. After retiring (1949), he was a contract staff member at the Central Statistical Office and the State Institute of Special Education. From the end of 1950 to 1953, he worked at the Cooperative Construction Company and the Central Construction Board. From there he retired.

For all his life, apart from his professional career, he was active. In the interwar period, he was the president of the School Council of the Capital City of Warsaw, the vice-president of the Children's Aid Committee, he cooperated with social organisations for the deaf and blind.

He was also a lecturer at the Teachers' Institute, at the State Institute of Special Education, at various courses. In the years 1927–1931, he lectured on social care issues in the countryside at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University.

He died on 4 September 1960.

He published, among others, in the journals *Życie Dziecka* (The Life of a Child), *Szkoła Specjalna* (The Special School), as well as in *Opiekun Społeczny* (The Welfare Assistant), where he was also a member of the editorial board. He worked on *Bibliografią dobroczynności* (the *Bibliography of Charity*) and the textbook of social pedagogy – *History of domestic and foreign charity*, *Opiekun Społeczny* (1947 nr 2).

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*Małgorzata Gładkowska*

## **MAJEWSKA ALEKSANDRA IZABELLA (1907–1990)** **SOCIAL EDUCATOR, EDUCATOR, POPULARIZER**

Aleksandra Izabella Majewska was born on 16 November 1907 in Łódź, in a family of an office clerk. Her father, called to the army in 1914, left his wife with three small children. Aleksandra, the eldest of her siblings, started working while attending school as a hygienist and tutor in camps for children and young people. After graduating from elementary school, she passed her high school final exams at the Emilia Sczaniecka Secondary School (1928). From November 1928 to September 1930, as an employee of the Social Welfare Department of the Management Board of the City of Łódź, she was employed as a day-care centre teacher in the S. Żeromski 5<sup>th</sup> Education Home. In 1930, as an external student, she took a diploma exam at the State Teachers' Seminar for primary school teachers. In the same year she went to Warsaw to study at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University (1930–1931). In the years 1933–1935, she continued her studies at its Faculty of Pedagogy, specializing in social pedagogy. The thesis entitled *Warunki życia dzieci rodzin bezrobotnych na Woli* (Living conditions of the children of unemployed families in Wola District) brought an end to her studies at that university (1936). It was only a formal ending, because Majewska was profoundly and emotionally con-

nected with professors and colleagues from the University throughout her whole life.

During her studies, she did not interrupt her professional career. In the years 1930–1935, she worked in the education department of the Mother and Child Support Section of the Citizens' Social Assistance Committee. After returning to Łódź, in the years 1935–1940, she was the head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Child Care Station, the head of the Educational Advice Centre and the head of the Central Club of Public Schools of Vocational Training. After returning to Warsaw, in the years 1940–1945, she was involved in educational, school and vocational counselling, initially as a deputy and then as the head of a counselling centre for children and youth.

During the war, she was a clandestine link between the Social and Educational Section of the Free Polish University and the Łódź community. She helped in underground teaching, which was led in Łódź by participants of pre-war community day centres. She devoted the summer of 1944 to organizing summer recreation for Warsaw children. At the end of June, she took 80 children aged seven to fourteen to Stoczek Łukowski. Due to the anticipated outbreak of the uprising in Warsaw, some children returned home. The rest of the children (64) remained in Stoczek until May 1945. Together with the children of parents who were missing during the uprising, they became residents of the first state-owned children's home after the war, founded by Majewska. At the end of 1945 and at the beginning of the next year, Majewska was a delegate of the Ministry of Education organized children's homes in the Gostyński district (Lucień, Sierakówek, Bartoszewo).

In 1947, she graduated from the University of Łódź. She received a master's degree in philosophy in social pedagogy for her research results in foster families in Łódź. Before the Department of Social Pedagogy at the University of Łódź was liquidated, Majewska had been employed there as a senior assistant.

At the same time, starting in October 1946, she worked as the head of the social interviews section at the Municipal Psychological Laboratory in Łódź. From 1 October 1948 she performed the function of psychotechnician with the following scope of activities: examination of children from day centres and evening schools, educational, school and vocational counselling.

She undertook new cases and new tasks at the Central Provincial Clinic of Mental Health (1951–1959), initially as a senior psychotechnician. As an employee of the clinic, she also served as a senior psychiatric and social assistant at the Dr. J. Babiński Hospital for the Nervous and Mentally Ill "Kochanówka".

In 1962 she defended her doctoral thesis *Dzieci, młodzież i alkoholizm rodziców* (Children, youth and alcoholism of parents) at the Chair of Social Pedagogy of the University of Warsaw.

In the last period of professional work before retiring (1 March 1957 – 30 September 1964), Majewska served as a psychologist-educator at the Vocational Counselling Centre for Youth at the School District of the City of Łódź. After retiring, she did not stop working. She worked at the Łódź Sobering-up Centre, the Łódź-Śródmieście Anti-alcohol Clinic, the Nervous System Diseases Clinic for the City of Łódź (Youth Counselling Centre). In the latter institution, she was particularly active in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as in, which in recognition of her merits awarded her the Child Friend Badge (1963) and the Golden Badge of Distinguished the Society of Friends of Children Activist (1974).

In 1975, she received the Order of the Smile. In the form filled out for the Chapter of the Order of the Smile, she wrote: “I do not work professionally, but I still serve the child – every child, the deeper, more cordial and responsible, the more difficult a child’s life is, the less it can enjoy and smile...”.

As long as she had enough strength, Majewska worked for social purposes. After 1972, she held meetings at her parish with young people preparing for marriage, and conducted two seminars devoted to Janusz Korczak and Albert Schweitzer with the academic group.

She died on 10 June 1990 in Łódź.

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*Irena Lepalczyk*

## **MANTEUFFEL-SZOEGE (NÉE SCHROETTER), EMILIA (1886–1968)**

### **CO-FOUNDER AND SOCIAL CARE ORGANIZER**

She was born on 15 January 1886 in Pabianice near Łódź. Her father, Paweł Schroetter, provided his daughter with a thorough education. First, she studied at J. Kotwicka’s private school in Warsaw, then for a year she took part in underground self-education courses. She continued her interest in nature at the *École Supérieure* in Neuchatel, Switzerland. After returning

to Poland, she was an unrolled student at the Scientific Courses Society (which in time evolved into the Free Polish University). She completed her natural studies with systematic self-education in pedagogy and social sciences. She mastered four languages: French, German, English and Russian.

She started her work in social services at the age of 16 in the a reading room in Warsaw (probably in one of the Free Reading Rooms of the Warsaw Charity Society). She also took part in clandestine teaching.<sup>23)</sup> After 1905, she joined the activities of the Society for Aid to Political Prisoners. After getting married in 1910 (or 1911) with a member of the old aristocratic Livonian family Manteuffl-Szoëge, she and her husband moved from Warsaw to Riga. In the years 1912–1915, she established cooperation with local Polish care institutions. In the years following World War I, she organized the Riga branch of the Society for Assistance to War Victims.

The Manteuffel-Szoëge couple returned to Poland in 1918. Emilia almost immediately began extensive activities in care and education. Fascinated by Kazimierz Jeżewski's concept of foster families of, she joined the Board of the Orphan Nest Society. The most active period of her activity took place throughout her stay in in Kielce (1923–1927), where her husband served as a Head of the Kielce Voivodship. Manteuffel-Szoëge initiated the organization of the Social Committee of the Kielce, a substitute institution for the voivodship self-government in the field of social care. Her activity as the head of the board inspires respect and is astounding because of organizational impetus: in Stradom near Częstochowa she established a social care facility for 500 children with trachoma. In Herby Śląskie, she organized an educational institution for difficult children, the first of its kind in the country, and in Rabsztyn – a preventorium for children with glandular tuberculosis. The Committee built an infectious pavilion in the Kielce hospital for children, arranged a hostel for girls travelling alone and organized children's summer camps, more and more numerous from year to year.

After her husband's death in 1927, she returned to Warsaw and took up paid employment. She was the organizational clerk of the Polish Committee for Child Care (1927–1929). At the same time, she was the secretary of

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<sup>23)</sup> On Polish soil, in the period from the suppression of the January Uprising of Poles against the power of Russia (1863) until the Russian Revolution of 1905, all educational ventures aimed at maintaining Polish cultural independence were persecuted by the Russian administration imposed on this part of Poland, which as a result of its partitions was seized by the Russian Empire.

the Polish Committee of International Social Service Conferences and in this role participated in the preparation of several conferences. She took part in organising a part of an international exhibition of social service in Paris (1928). She participated in international meetings, popularizing worldwide Polish achievements in social work. She lectured at the State Institute of Special Education, she managed the field practices of students of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University in the institutions of the City Board of the Capital City of Warsaw. In the years 1929–1932 she was a correspondent at the Block-Brun Company in Warsaw. She was first an instructor on the City Board of the Capital City of Warsaw in 1932–1944, then the head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Health and Social Care Centre in the Ochota district, which was a model institution introducing the latest forms of family, health, material and educational care until the uprising of 1944.

It was there that the first educational counselling centre for children cared for by the Centre was created. Manteuffel-Szoegé introduced and applied new forms of care in cooperation with Prof. Helena Radlińska and the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University in Warsaw, the latter of which she headed. She also supervised the practices that students of the School held at the Department of Health and Social Care of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw.

After the Germans captured Warsaw in September 1939, the Capital Social Self-Help Committee established District Committees. The first such committee was created at 82 Nowogrodzka Street (District II), initially under the leadership of Manteuffel-Szoegé.

After World War II, she settled in Łódź. She started cooperation with Prof. Helena Radlińska in organizing the Polish Institute of Social Service (1946–1949). As its researcher, she managed the social research department. She was also the scientific secretary. From this period of her work, a non-printed report on the results of research on mother and child homes should be mentioned. She conducted this research as a former long-term (1924–1939) activist of the “Let’s Save Babies” Society for Care for Mother and Child. The anticipated liquidation of the Polish Institute of Social Service resulted in the transfer of Manteuffel-Szoegé to the Łódź branch of the State Institute of Mental Hygiene. She was the head of this institution in the years 1948–1950. In 1950, she became the head of the social department of the central Mental Health Clinic of the Łódź Voivodship.

In 1956, she settled in Warsaw again. During this period, she dealt primarily with educational counselling. She worked as a psychologist in

a counselling centre for children and youth. She developed the concept, organizational structure and work plan of educational counselling For the Friends of Children Society. At the end of her life, she began researching childcare in various countries. In 1958, she represented the Society of Friends of Children at the International Congress of the Child Care Organization in Brussels.

Throughout her life, she wrote articles on raising children and organization of social care in various periodicals and gave talks on Polish Radio.

She died on 8 July 1968 in Warsaw.

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*Irena Lepalczyk*

## **PAPUZIŃSKI, STANISŁAW (1903–1982)** **SOCIAL PEDAGOGUE, EDUCATOR, ORGANIZER OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CARE, RESEARCHER**

Stanisław Papuziński was born on 7 November 1903 in Łódź. His parents moved there from Kalisz at the end of the 19th century, both from one village, to work in the textile industry. Papuziński's childhood, youth and the first years of his career were all spent in Łódź. When he was two years old, he lost sight in his left eye and used his right eye with impaired vision throughout his life.

In 1910, he began studying at the Polish Józef Radwański Secondary School, and during World War I continued his education at the A. Zimowski Secondary School. During his education, he became interested in scouting, which he joined in mid-1914. In 1919, he became the head of the largest scout team in Łódź. During the Polish-Bolshevik war, he voluntarily joined the Army of General Haller. In 1921, he passed his final exams and went to the city of Vilnius, then Wilno<sup>24)</sup> to study. In the years 1921–1923, he studied pedagogy and Polish studies, earning his living from giving lessons and teaching at an evening school for young people.

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<sup>24)</sup> Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania in effect of geopolitical changes in Europe after WW I, then inhabited by Polish majority, has been annexed in 1922 by Poland together with its adjacent region as a Wilno Voivodship.



In 1922, he returned to Łódź and started working at the Department for Morally Neglected Children at 92 Nawrót Street. Polish and Jewish children from families from the margins of society, mostly from the Bałuty district, stayed in this institution. Initially he was an educator, then he was entrusted with the management of the institution. Because the city authorities did not respond to the proposals for necessary changes, he quit this job and returned to Wilno to continue his studies. Eventually, he quit his studies and returned to Łódź again. In 1924, he started working at the Municipal Educational House for youth educated in craft. He again encountered the authorities' misunderstanding, because he demanded that proletarian children should be educated in high schools.

In the years 1925–1928, he worked in educational libraries. He left the scouts in 1926.

In 1928, he married Zofia Wędrychowska, a teacher and tutor, a graduate of the Waław Nałkowski State Teachers' Training School.

In the years 1929–1930, Papuziński managed the work of the Stefan Żeromski V Municipal Educational Home in Łódź. In 1930, he entered the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. His wife studied at the same university in 1936–1938. During his studies, he undertook various paid jobs to support his growing family. He graduated in 1939 with an excellent grade based on the work *Kryteria działalności instytucji społecznych* (Criteria for the activities of social institutions). In the period of 1930–1934 he worked as a teacher, he was also associated with educational institutions, first in the village of Herby, and then in the Union of Military Settlers<sup>25</sup>), from where he was expelled for leftist views. In 1934, he returned to Warsaw and started working at the Institute of Social Issues, demonstrating organizational talent and excellent mastery of social research methodology. The research results were reflected in publications devoted to the budgets of the unemployed families of Warsaw and Łódź, unemployment issues, including those in the book of Anna Oderfeld, *Młodzież przedmieścia* (Suburban Youth).

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<sup>25</sup>) The organization (Centralny Związek Osadników Wojskowych) founded in 1922 on the basis of the parliamentary Act on Granting Land to Soldiers of the Polish Army, gathered settlers in the eastern areas of interwar Poland, later expanded to include civilian settlers. The union was active in the field of self-help and economic development, See: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centralny\\_Zwi%C4%85zek\\_Osadnik%C3%B3w\\_Wojskowych](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centralny_Zwi%C4%85zek_Osadnik%C3%B3w_Wojskowych). (Accessed 2019.10.03)

At the beginning of 1939, Papuziński started working in the Department of Health and Social Care of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw, he managed the 4<sup>th</sup> Health and Social Care Centre in Wola district, and after the outbreak of war – the 5<sup>th</sup> Centre, and then the 5a Centre. He actively conducted care services, which he combined with illegal activities in the resistance movement. He was arrested twice by the Gestapo. He was severely beaten at Pawiak (renal rebound), but this did not stop his activities. He had to change his name (Stanisław Pawłowski), because he was on the wanted list, and a high reward was announced for his head by the Germans. He was an employee of the underground City Council, cooperating with both the “legally” acting Principal Protective Council and Institute of Social Affairs operating underground.

During the occupation, he raised four children of his own, two of his wife's sisters, two of his wife's deceased friend, two of them taken from an orphanage, and one of them Jewish. On February 21, 1944, his wife was arrested, and on April 26, was shot in the Pawiak prison. This was because of her underground activities and the activities of older boys in the Grey Ranks.<sup>26)</sup> After the death of his wife, he placed his children under the protection of his mother-in-law and sister-in-law in Anin, a suburban settlement of Warsaw, from where he moved them to Warsaw at the end of summer 1945. The Jewish community took care of the Jewish child. Children had to be fed, dressed and brought up. Considering his state of health, Papuziński (who had heavy wounds from the period of the uprising), he overcame difficulties, and raised and educated several children only by strong will and endurance, and above all, a great sense of responsibility.

After regaining relative physical fitness, Papuziński started his professional career in March 1945, which, as before, he combined with social and scientific-popularizing work. On behalf of the Ministry of Industry, he was the organizer of a social assistance campaign in Silesia. At the same time, he was involved in the organization of childcare as part of the Workers' Society of Friends of Children, and also was a collaborator of the Peasant Society of Friends of Children. In the years 1946–1952, he participated in the training work of the Centre for the Training of Social Clerks in Łódź, headed by Henryk Dinter, and in 1947–1949, he lectured at the Chair of Social Pedagogy of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Łódź.

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<sup>26)</sup> “Szare Szeregi” was an underground organization of scouts formed for resistance against German occupation to perform sabotage and assault actions.

From 1949 to 1957, he worked in the Department of Municipal and Social Facilities the State Economic Planning Commission. In 1957, he became the vice-president of the Society of Friends of Children and participated in the establishment of the Society of the Free Polish University. In 1957, he was appointed to work at the Ministry of Education, undertaking reorganization work in the field of childcare with Otton Lipkowski, an accomplished scholar in special pedagogy. Papuziński was active in the Ministry until 1960. In the years 1960–1966, he was the full-time vice-president of the Society of Friends of Children.

In 1966 he retired. In the years 1959–1969, he was a lecturer in pedagogy at the Department for Educators at the State Institute of Special Education. He also taught social pedagogy and lectures for probation officers at the Study for Judges and Probation Officers for Juveniles until 1974. He continued to work as a volunteer in the Society of Friends of Children and in the Society of the Free Polish University.

Papuziński was above all an activist devoted to the idea of social service. He combined direct educational work with children in the field of care and social work with deep theoretical reflection ordering and systematizing his experiences, which he then popularized. He is especially known for his work in the field of education and training of personnel for childcare and social work. He was a talented lecturer. He won over listeners for the causes he stood for with his zeal, extensive knowledge, and well thought-out pedagogical concepts. In views on care and upbringing and organizational concepts, he was close to the eminent educators with whom he cooperated, in particular Janusz Korczak, Kazimierz Lisiecki, Kazimierz Jeżewski, and Maria Grzegorzewska.<sup>27)</sup> Helena Radlińska had a great influence on Papuziński as well.

He contributed to the revival of socio-educational counselling in Poland, co-creating counselling centres of the Society of Friends of Children, which became the inspiration for the creation of a network of educational counselling centres in Poland. He also served as an advocate and promoter of the idea of children's rights. In 1938, he participated in the 1st Congress of the Child, presenting in a critical paper a diagnosis of the child's situa-

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<sup>27)</sup> Maria Grzegorzewska (1887–1967), pedagogue, psychologist, a founder, professor and longtime director of the State Institute of Special Pedagogy founded in 1922, the first institution of higher education of teachers for children and youth with special needs in Poland.

tion. After moving to work at the Ministry of Education, he took care of renewing contacts with international organizations working to implement the idea of children's rights. At his initiative, the materials of the World Congress of FICE, which was held in Yugoslavia on 30 August – 4 September 1954, were published in Poland. They were published in 1959, entitled *Opieka nad dzieckiem i rodziną* (Caring for a child and family) with a preface written by Papużyński.

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*Albin Kelm*

## **STARCZEWSKI, JAN (1904–1981)** **LAWYER, ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL CARE ORGANIZER**

Jan Starczewski was born on 8 February 1904 in Warsaw. He graduated from the Adam Mickiewicz Secondary School and passed the graduation exam in 1921. He then entered the Faculty of Law at the University of Warsaw. After graduating in June 1926 he started working at the Warsaw Voivodship Office in the Department of Labour and Social Care. In his first job, he was associated for years with issues and organization of social care.

In 1935, he moved to the Ministry of Labour and Social Care, from where he was transferred to the position of director of the Health and Social Care Department of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw after a year. In the 1930s, the reorganization of municipal social services began at the initiative of the previous director of the Department, Dr. Czesław Wroczyński, as a result of the political change in the position of director caused a lot of controversy among the people involved. However, personal culture and administrative experience enabled Starczewski to continue these reforms. In the years 1934–1943, he coordinated the activities of social welfare services with family health care. In each district (the city was divided into 10–12 districts), Health and Social Care Centres were established in which social care workers were employed. From 1 October 1936, a periodical for employees of social care *Opiekun Społeczny* (The Welfare Assistant) began to be published, in which Starczewski published a number of articles also after the war (1947–1948). An campaign was initiated to prevent single mothers from dropping off babies. To this

end, orphanage-foundling homes were transformed into mother and child homes, and foster families were created. All these changes and improvements were possible thanks to of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University and the many specialists prepared in Poland and abroad to solve care problems according to the modern understanding of psychosocial needs.

The ability to cooperate and organize work, which Starczewski had to a large extent, favoured the implementation of modern social care, which proved to be so useful at the outbreak of war, and participation in numerous associations facilitated his activities during the occupation. In addition to managing the department, he took part in underground campaigns: he managed a military unit at the Department of Labour and Welfare of the Government in Exile Delegation for the Country. He was a member of the executive bodies of the Social Self-Help Social Committee, and the Polish Care Committee (agenda of the Principal Protective Council). He helped to save Jewish children, participated in organizing help for children of the Zamość region. For his activities, he was arrested by the Gestapo on 13 February 1943 and imprisoned in Pawiak prison, and then deported to camps in Vennengamme, Drath, Bergen Belsen. After the liberation of the camp on 15 April 1945, he went to Sweden for medical treatment, directed there by the Swedish Red Cross. He returned to Poland in 1946.

Initially, he worked in the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, then later from 8 January 1951 at the State Committee of Posts, and from August 1956 at the Ministry of Finance, where he continued to deal with the issue of financing social and cultural facilities. Having retired from work in the field of help and care, apart from working in state offices, he participated in social activities in the editorial office of *Opiekun Społeczny*, in the Society of Friends of Children, in the Social Anti-Alcohol Committee and in the Historical Committee of the Society of the Free Polish University in the field of social and cultural matters.

He died on 30 December 1981.

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*Wanda Wyrobkowa-Pawłowska*

## UZIEMBŁO (NÉE KALIŃSKI), MARIA JANINA (1894–1976)

### SOCIAL EDUCATOR, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND WELFARE ORGANIZER

Maria Janina Uziembło was born on 24 June 1894 in Częstochowa as the daughter of Władysław, a railway engineer, and Stanisława (née Rudnicki). Patriotic attitude of the home meant that she studied in clandestine classes. In 1909, she went to Italy and Austria for several years for tuberculosis treatment. After recovering, she settled in Zakopane with her mother in 1911, where they jointly ran the “Modrzejów” guest house. During the war, they organized a “hospital” for legionnaires in their home, which was looked after by Dr. Henryk Lewicki.

In 1917, she married a journalist, Adam Uziembło, and moved to Warsaw. In 1926, during a period of rising unemployment, she and Maria Janicka with the help of the Polish-American Committee to Help Children, started the action to collect dinners in private homes for children of the unemployed. She became so interested in this activity that in order to deepen her knowledge in the field of social care, she entered the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. In 1927, together with her classmates Halina Frejmanowa, Bronisława Luidor, Nina Mohucz and Regina Rudzińska, she developed a project of an institution introducing new forms of care. Referring to the concepts of social politicians and educators emerging at the time, the authors assumed that you cannot help a child without taking care of the whole family, and secondly that poverty resulting from long-term unemployment or other life failures is a kind of psychological state which cannot be overcome by receiving only material help. Furthermore, the task of social care should therefore be to help free yourself from this mental state, so that man himself can act to get out of poverty. These theses were formulated in the article *Kilka słów o całości* (A few words about the whole), included in the book *Walka z nieszczęściem* (Struggle with Misfortune), Warszawa, 1933, published by the Civic Social Assistance Committee.

She implemented this concept in the Section for Helping the Mother and Child of the Civic Social Assistance Committee existing in Warsaw in 1928–1935. The section became a reference institution where students of the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University and

other centres educating social care workers were placed for field practice. There, the field supervisors of the Municipal Board's Health and Social Care Department were trained. Uziembło cooperated with Dr. Czesław Wroczyński in preparing the reform of the Department. She presented the assumptions and course of her work in a number of articles and in her, unfortunately, missing work *Nowe formy opieki społecznej* (New forms of social care) commissioned by the Institute of Social Issues. In the years 1936–1937, she prepared the Child Congress, organized by the Association of Participants in the Struggle for the Polish School under the direction of Stanisław Dobrowolski.<sup>28)</sup> In 1938, she returned to the Civic Social Assistance Committee, where she developed the concept and prepared the organization of the House of Women – a dormitory and homeless rehabilitation centre.

During this period, as part of the initiative of the Association of Former Students of the School of Social-Educational Work she cooperated with, among others, Anna Chmielewska and Robert Froehlich, in organizing the Trade Union of Social Workers. The Union's concept was based on the belief that care and social activity is a professional specialty that professionals should prepare, devoting all their time to it, and not – as was usually the case – people randomly selected, without appropriate qualifications, or “charity activists”, devoted to this activity on the margins of other activities. Until the outbreak of war, the Union was not registered.

During the occupation (1939–1940), Uziembło organized and operated a manufacturing cooperative, which employed about 100 people, giving them earnings and a work certificate. At the end of 1940, she moved to Krakow with her family. Here, she worked in cooperatives, organizing work, which today is called “social action”, for employees of the cooperative. At the same time, she participated in conspiracy work, preparing press reviews for the Kraków Radio Agency, operating as part of the Information and Propaganda Bureau and the Polish Socialist Party – Freedom-Equality-Independence.

In the years 1945–1947, she lived in Dzierżoniów, where she worked in consumer cooperatives. In 1947, she moved to Janowice and managed the

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<sup>28)</sup> Stanisław Dobrowolski (1883–1978) was an outstanding independence activist and educational, teacher in a number of teacher training institutions, prominent independence activist and educational, teacher of teachers in a number of teacher training institutions. During the occupation, he was active in underground teaching in Warsaw.

Mother and Child Home here. After returning to Warsaw in 1948, she worked for some time in the Scientific Studies Section of the Care Department of the Board of the Capital City of Warsaw.

She published the results of the work in her Department's publications. She prepared a questionnaire for research on the education of social workers for the United Nations, she prepared studies on war orphans and others. At the request of the State Office for Spatial Planning, she developed *Uzasadnienia ideologiczne i organizacyjne dla planowania sieci instytucji społecznych* (Ideological and organizational justifications for planning networks of social institutions). In the years 1949–1952, at the Institute of Housing Construction she conducted research on the social problems of housing. In 1957, she actively participated in the preparation of the Congress of Social Pedagogues and led one of its sections. She belonged to a group of organizers of the Society the Free Polish University and entered its Executive Board. There, she prepared training plans for social care employees and housing estate administrations at the level of semi-senior and short-term courses.

In the seventies, she undertook on its own initiative research on the subject of patient-doctor relationship. She forwarded the results to the Institute of Sociology at the University of Warsaw.

She died on 21 February 1976 in Warsaw.

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*Aniela Uziembło*

## **WAWRZYŃSKA, WANDA, (LAST NAME AFTER FIRST MARRIAGE, ADYNOWSKA) (1901–1990) PEDAGOGUE, EDUCATOR, EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE ORGANIZER**

She was born on 30 June 1901 as a daughter of a Polish Socialist Party activist, an accountant by profession. She spent her childhood in Otwock, then moved to Warsaw. In 1920, she graduated from the Maria Tołwińska Secondary School (later the Maria Konopnicka State Secondary School). From an early age she was associated with social organizations, primarily from the circle of Polish Socialist Party. In childhood and youth, she belonged



to the Polish Scouting Association, and the youth organization for progress and independence (*Związek Młodzieży Postępowej-Niepodległościowej*) connected to the PPS.

She started her economic studies at the Free Polish University, but she to interrupt them due to the necessity of taking up a paid job and her poor health. She worked as a private teacher. In 1926, she completed a training course for care attendants in children's day centres, in 1928 – a course for managers of Children Centres of the Workers' Society of Friends of Children. In the same year, thanks to a scholarship received from the Ministry of Labour and Social Care, she enrolled to the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University, which she completed in 1931.

In the years 1926–1929, she taught pre-school education and at the same time worked at the Club of Working Women in Wola district, and without remuneration carried on an instruction of children centres. In the years 1928–1931, she was a member of the Main Board of the Kindergarten Teachers' Union, chaired the Cultural and Educational Committee in it and was a member of the editorial office of *Zagadnienia Przedszkolne* (Pre-school Issues). In 1928, she co-organized the cultural and educational section of the Women's Workers' Sports Club "Start" and became the manager of its community centre.

In the years 1928–1939, she was a member of the Warsaw Branch of the Society of Workers' Universities. In 1929, she became a member of the Polish Socialist Party. From 1930, when she lived in the Warsaw Housing Cooperative in the Żoliborz district, she worked in a children's club and in the school of the Workers' Society of Friends of Children. She also acted as a cultural instructor at the Żoliborz Red Scouting Command.<sup>29)</sup> In the years 1932–1934, she worked in the Aid Section for the Mother and Child of the Citizens' Social Assistance Committee as a registration worker and then as a field care worker in the centre in Wola. In 1934, she changed her place of employment for the Institute of Social Issues, in which she developed materials from research on Ochota district youth, conducted by Anna Oderfeld-Kowalczevska. In the years 1935–1938, she worked at the Central Statistical Office, from where she was dismissed for political reasons.

During the occupation, she was active in sanitary aid and assistance to prisoners. After the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, she was appointed by

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<sup>29)</sup> Red Scouting (1926–1939) was a leftist organization for girls and boys aged 12 to 16 years operating under the patronage of Polish Socialists Party.

the deputy starost of the Żoliborz district, Robert Froehlich, to look after mothers and children at the Warsaw Housing Cooperative estate. She co-edited children's daily magazines – *Jawnutka* and *Dziennik Dziecięcy* (The Children's Daily).<sup>30)</sup>

After the war, in the years 1945–1946, she was employed as an instructor and then deputy head of the Department of Care of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw. She joined the Polish Socialist Party. She managed the artistic work of the Youth Organization of the Society of Workers' Universities in Żoliborz, and then became the head of the Women's Department at the Central Executive Committee of the Polish Socialist Party. In the years 1948–1950, she managed the personnel training department at the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. In 1950, she moved to the independent office of social action in that ministry, and then to the Ministry of Culture and Art, where she was a training counsellor in the Department of Community Centres and Houses of Culture. In 1956, she was directed to the Central House of Folk Art (later the Central Guidance Service for the Amateur Art Movement). When the counselling for the amateur art movement was transferred to the Society of Popularization of Knowledge, she worked there in the same field until her retirement in 1962.

Since the establishment of the Free Polish University Society (*Towarzystwa Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej*) (1958), she was an active member of this organization, and in the autumn of 1963 organized and maintained the TWWP (*Towarzystwa Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej*) Social Worker's Archive. She died on 19 February 1990.

She left many articles. Before the war, she collaborated with the magazines *Życie Dziecka* (The Life of a Child, *Zagadnienia Przedszkolne* (Kindergarden Issues) and others, and after the war with *Praca Świetlicowa* (Day Centre Work, *Człowiek w Pracy i w Osiedlu* (The Human at Work and in Estate, *Polityka Społeczna* (Social Policy, *Praca Socjalna* (Social Work), *Harcerstwo* (Scouting). She wrote many entries for the *Biographical Diction-*

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<sup>30)</sup> These magazines were versions of the same daily published during the Uprising often in the form retyped typescript: "Jawnutka" from August 12 to August 16, and "The Children's Daily" from August 18 to September 23, 1944. The idea of the publishers was to draw the attention of the children of Żoliborz from the horror of the Uprising. See <https://www.facebook.com/udzoliborz/posts/10155672691420291/> (Accessed 2019.10.04) The title "Jawnutka" is not directly translatable into English. It seems to be an allusion to the word jawność – openness in contrast to the conspiracy of the Polish press published under German occupation before the Uprising.

*ary of Activists of the Polish Workers' Movement.* Her memoirs of different periods of her life are stored in the Manuscripts Department of the National Library in Warsaw.

Bibliography see <https://e-pracaszjalna.pl/resources/html/article/details?id=194149>; p. 164

*Aniela Uziembło*

## **ŻEMIS, STANISŁAW (1902–1978) TEACHER, ORGANIZER OF ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH, INITIATOR OF UPBRINGING FORMS, ORGANIZER OF LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND, PUBLICIST**

Stanisław Żemis was born on 27 April 1902 in Kierz, in the Lublin Voivodship. His mother died in his infancy and his father died when he was two years old. He went through a hard school of life. He began schooling in the village of Zakrzówek, but the outbreak of World War I also entailed a four-year break in education. Then he attended a secondary school in Kraśnik. He lived on his own. He earned money to support himself by helping his wealthy colleagues with their studies. The secondary school was teeming with social life. Soon Żemis became the soul of students' social activities – he actively participated in scouts, in student government, and in a peer court. He got a taste in hiking and getting to know his native country. After some time, he left the school in Kraśnik and moved to Kozienice. Here, he graduated grade six of secondary school, but he had to leave it because the secondary school in Kozienice was incomplete at that time.

He went to Warsaw and undertook education at the Waław Nałkowski State Teachers' Training Courses, whose director was Władysław Spasowski. These courses gave him a good preparation for the profession. They also influenced his worldview decisively. In 1928 he completed the Higher Course of Teacher Training. He began teaching, first in Pruszków, then in Łomianki and Legionowo, towns near Warsaw. At school, he did not limit himself to compulsory classes. He organized savings funds for excursions, workshop rooms for teaching geography and nature, and conducted meteorological observations with students.

He saw the harsh living and working conditions of teachers, witnessed the injustice of the school system, which particularly hurt rural children. That is

why he became involved with the teaching left. He fought vigorously in the The Teachers' Union of Primary Schools. As a result of this activity, after six years of work in various schools, he was banned from state education, as well as from the Teachers' Union and as a thirty-year-old teacher – retired.

He took the position of head of a secular school organized by the Workers' Society of Friends of Children in Żoliborz district in Warsaw. In this school, his great achievement was the establishment of a school garden.

In 1934, he entered the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. Here he prepared the diploma thesis: *Czy i o ile Towarzystwo Osiedli Robotniczych poprawia warunki mieszkaniowe robotników?* (How much does the Society of Workers' Housing Estates improve the housing conditions of workers and does it at all?). Housing matters were for a long time the subject of his interest, which was reflected in the study based on his own interviews titled *Z wędrówek po suterenach i facjatak dawnej Warszawy* (From wandering around the basement and attics of old Warsaw). He was also involved in the activities of the Society of Housing Estates.

From 1935, he managed the educational and care work in Koło, a working class district in Warsaw. Thanks to his efforts, a network of cooperative grocery stores was established there. He was also the main initiator and organizer of the Housing Cooperative in Koło. However, he was not allowed to finish this work. In 1939, at the request of the Government Commissariat of the Capital City of Warsaw, Żemis had to leave work and a flat in Koło. His actions were too leftist, too radical in the opinion of the then authorities.

In Radom, he took the position of head of the Department of Education in the municipal council. There, he was caught by the war and German occupation along with it. Threatened with arrest, he moved to Łuków and then to Siedlce. In 1944, he and his wife were arrested by the Gestapo. The offensive of the Soviet army liberated them from the hands of the Germans.

He became the president of the City of Siedlce and thanks to his organizational efficiency the city was the first in Poland to be removed from rubble and rebuilt thanks to voluntary works of its inhabitants. A network of school facilities had begun to form. After a few months as the president of the city, Żemis was appointed for the position of the chief director of state forests. It is amazing that this teacher in the position of director of state forests was able to win the respect, trust and even friendship of “forest brotherhood”.

At the end of 1945, he returned to Warsaw and started working for the Workers' Society of Friends of Children. He organized the network of its

branches and initiated various care and educational institutions. Thanks to his energy, numerous orphanages, residential centres for children in poor health, day care centres, kindergartens, nurseries, mother and child care centres were created all over Poland. Large the Janusz Korczak Educational and Training Centre was also created in Bartoszyce. He was a co-initiator of establishing the Peasant Society of Friends of Children. He served this organization with advice and help.

Żemis treated matters concerning children comprehensively. He believed that both the children's health and upbringing, physical development, as well as entertainment, clothing, toys, etc. should be the responsibility of one central institution responsible for the full upbringing of the young generation. Against this background, the drama developed. Independent in thinking and acting, Żemis became involved in conflicts that hindered his further work. He lost his sight due to attempted suicide. A new period began in his life.

He recovered from depression, and adapted himself to the completely changed situation. He became interested in matters of the blind, their psychology, organization of life and possibilities. He devoted himself to the problems of the Association of the Blind, in which he became the president of the Warsaw Branch and a member of the Main Board. He quickly learned to read using the Braille method. He started to organize libraries for the blind.

This period of life "in darkness" was used by Żemis very fruitfully. He was a good publicist, he wrote a lot, commenting on cooperative matters and the lives of invalids, thus raising awareness of pedagogical problems. He was actively involved in social activities at all times. As co-initiator of the founding of the Korczak Committee, he participated in its work for many years. Above all, however, as the chairman of the "Circle of Spasowiacy"<sup>31)</sup>, he managed its work (1927–1977).

He died on 1 December 1978.

Bibliography see <https://e-pracaszjalna.pl/resources/html/article/details?id=194149>; p. 168

*Zofia Mierzwińska-Szybka*

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<sup>31)</sup> This was an association of followers of Władysław Spasowski (1877–1941) pedagogue and philosopher, an activist of the left, developer of the ideas of education for creativity, a man of authority for the teachers of his time.

## **ŻURKOWSKA, STANISŁAWA (1899–1968)**

### **SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZER, EDUCATOR**

She was born on 24 November 1899 in Wólka Mławska. Her father was a railway worker. When she was a few years old, her family moved to Uralsk (Russia). Here, Żurkowska graduated from secondary school. She began studying chemistry, but after a year, she stopped for material reasons. At that time she took a job at the railway management in Uralsk. In 1921, she returned to Poland with her family. In Warsaw she started studying again, this time in mathematics, which she stopped due to illness.

In the years 1922–1931, she worked in various positions – from a printer's assistant on to accountant – at the State Graphic Plants and the State Loans Office of the Ministry of the Treasury.

In the years 1931–1935, she worked in the Mother and Child Aid Section of the Citizens' Social Assistance Committee, first as a care worker in the Centre in the Wola district, then as the head of the Centre in Praga district. During this period, she studied at the School of Social-Educational Work at the Free Polish University. In 1935, she started working in the Health and Social Care Department of the City Board of the Capital City of Warsaw, where she was a clerk for the issues of social care at the 6<sup>th</sup> Health and Care Centre in Okopowa Street (Wola), and from 1943 she was the head of the Centre in Grochowska Street (Praga South district). For some time, she worked at the headquarters of the Department of Health and Social Care, eventually she became the head of the Centre in Miodowa Street. In the underground organization, she joined a group of leftist activists. She organized clandestine teaching and help for Jews – she placed children in educational institutions, provided relief to hiding families.

After the Warsaw Uprising, she found herself in Kraków. She was the day nursery manager. In March 1945, she returned to Warsaw and took up a job at the Health and Welfare Centre of the Municipal Board of the Capital City of Warsaw in Jagiellońska Street in Praga. After the separation of the Department of Health from Social Care, she became the head of the Centre for Social Cooperation. On 1 September 1949, she became the head of the Praga North Social Care Department of the Municipal Office.

In 1947 and 1949, she completed courses for managers of social care organized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Care. In the 1950s, she worked at the Ministry of Culture and Arts and the Directorate of Theatres, Operas and Philharmonics.

She was devoted to helping the weakest, and highly valued by her colleagues.

She died on 18 October 1968 in Warsaw.

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