

the sphere of education and upbringing. The Congress also upheld the universality and truth of the assumption about the importance of education in development of society and state through forming particular competence and social conduct.

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Arleta Hrehorowicz: Report From the 1st International Seminar “Behind the Curtain of Resocialization: The Way to Freedom”

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The Supreme Chamber of Control (SCC) – the principal authority of state control in Poland – announced that in autumn 2014 it would conduct an inspection of social readaptation of persons sentenced to long-term imprisonment. The SCC plans to inspect the living standards of the condemned persons; how penal, therapeutic, and resocialising activities are performed; and how the condemned persons are supported in social readaptation, both during the imprisonment period and after release from prison. Inspection activities taken up by the SCC seem to be appropriate not only due to the necessity for complying with the penal code, as emphasised in court rulings rendered by the European Court of Human Rights and the associated doctrine, but also to support the intention to improve the effectiveness of actions that prevent recidivism. Another important mission of the state is to protect society from people who

have served their sentence and may continue to pose a substantial threat to the life or health of other citizens¹.

It is worth emphasising that the burden of a convict’s resocialisation rests above all on qualified resocialisation workers: probation officers, therapists, and tutors. With regard to the indications mentioned above, the Resocialisation Section at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, which is in the Faculty of Education Sciences, organised the first international seminar “Behind the Curtain of Resocialisation: The Way to Freedom”. It was intended for academics, students, and workers of resocialisation centres. On March 28, 2014, the lecture hall located in the Collegium Humanisticum became the venue for an interdisciplinary discussion on the phenomena of demoralisation, resocialisation, and readaptation.

Those in attendance included representatives of the National Council of Probation Officers, representatives of the Wielkopolska Association of Probation Officers, and probation officers from the United Kingdom. Among the speakers were Colonel

¹ The Act on proceedings against mentally disturbed persons who pose a threat to life, health or sexual liberty of others, legally binding from 22 January 2014, aims to implement in the domestic law new post-penal preventive measures in the form of preventive supervision or detention in the National Centre for Prevention of Dissocial Behaviours. New solutions are to protect society by supervising or isolating persons who display mental disorders of mental handicap, personality disorders or disorders of sexual preferences while serving imprisonment sentence; see: Act of 22 November 2013, Journal of Laws [Dz.U.] of 2014, item 24.

Dariusz Szatkowski (District Director of the Prison Service in Bydgoszcz), Sarah Mainwaring (Head of the Probation Service in Rotherham), and Robert J. Cottrell (deputy director in Barnsley Probation Trust). Honorary patronage of the event was provided by the head of district inspectorate of Prison Service in Bydgoszcz, the Wielkopolska Association of Probation Officers, and the dean of the Education Science Faculty of Nicolaus Copernicus University.

The “Pre-Seminar Meeting”, organised in the Education Science Faculty the day before the main seminar, proved to be an interesting idea. Deliberations focused on the question of “comparative perspectives of the concepts of probation transformation” (translated from Polish). Issues that were raised included: probation transformation in the U.K. (J. Hannant), operation of probation services in Poland (H. Pawlaczyk), probation from the perspective of the Wielkopolska Association of Probation Officers (I. Szostak, W. Mroczkowski), and educational aspects of imprisonment in the opinion of probation officers (A. Janus-Dębska). It is worth noting that active probation officers gave lectures, which undoubtedly expanded the depth of the discussion. Debate focused not only on theoretical understandings, but also on reflective analysis of operating processes, exchange of observations, and presentation of examples of best practices.

Prior to their attending the conference’s three simultaneous track sections, the beneficiaries of this international event had been

officially invited to the event by Professor Beata Przyborowska, the pro-vice chancellor of Nicolaus Copernicus University, and Professor Piotr Petrykowski, the dean of the Education Science Faculty. During the plenary session, participants listened to papers on myths of resocialisation (Professor M. Konopczyński), the readaptation of convicts through voluntary service for the seriously ill and disabled (Reverend P. Krakowiak, Ph.D.), and transgressive patterns of sexual violence in the behaviour of women who sexually abuse children (Professor M. Kowalczyk).

In a session about the phenomenon of demoralisation, conducted by Professor M. Kowalczyk, the leading topics included analyses of suicide and serial murder. Those aspects were analysed in relation to juvenile and minors, whose demoralisation-revealing behaviour seem to be most apparent to people with whom they socialize. According to reference material, symptoms of juvenile social maladjustment include physical and psychological sensitivity to specific stimuli, insomnia, emotional hyperactivity, sense of threat and depression, helplessness, ineptitude, negative attitudes towards school, family and friends, etc.² Awareness of symptoms of social derailment and circumstances that reflect demoralisation seems to be vital in interpreting the concept, which is not clearly defined even in the Law on the

² See: C. Cekiera, *Pojęcie i formy nieprzystosowania społecznego* [Concept and Forms of Social Maladjustment], “Zagadnienia wychowawcze a zdrowie psychiczne” [Educational Issues vs. Mental Health] 1979, No. 5, p. 15.

Treatment of Juveniles³. However, legislators use the term “demoralisation” in specific situations, e.g., while defining the aim of the regulation and relevant scope of treatment of juveniles, or indicating situations in which it is permitted to initiate proceedings on the grounds of the aforementioned law⁴.

Another idea that met with a warm reception from the participants was the concept of dance, which was presented as an alternative to current forms of working with youth that live in halfway houses for addicts. The presentation was valuable not only because of the idea, which may look somewhat odd at first glance, of resocialisation through dance, but also because of the evaluations conducted and presented by the teachers of dance workshops.

The complexity of the resocialisation process – e.g., due to the complexity of categories of resocialised persons – became visible for the participants of the track section led by Reverend Professor Czesław Kustra. Lectures focused on analyses of phenomena as well as descriptions of the present social reality and specific groups that undergo the resocialisation processes. The discussion themes included the self-awareness and the values of socially maladjusted youth, problems of adapting to prison life, and selected aspects of the “victim-perpetrator” relation in domestic violence. However, assuming that “resocialisation is a kind of educa-

tional process which transforms a person who is socially maladjusted into a person who is resocialised, i.e., socially compliant, independent and creative” (translated from Polish), should we not signal the difference between social compliance and socialisation⁵? These terms, even if they are usually treated as synonyms, do differ in meaning: socialisation that is supported by education is a process that leads to social compliance⁶. To treat socialisation as social compliance is therefore a mistake. Thus, in order to give added value to the discussion, it would be advisable to define the conditions, behaviours, and patterns in the family environment that stimulate proper development of children. Learning about the pathological course of a resocialised person’s primary socialisation would help to more effectively select methods of work.

Regardless of resocialisation measures, all socially excluded individuals are subject to readaptation process⁷. Readaptation

⁵ See: M. Kalinowski, *Struktura procesu resocjalizacji* [Structure of Resocialisation Process] [in:] *Resocjalizacja* [Resocialisation], B. Urban, J.M. Stanik (eds.), p. 235.

⁶ Education in this perspective is deliberate, is restricted to planned interactions with pupils, and is held during formal, institutional education. cf. R. Borowicz, *Socjalizacja* [Socialisation] [in:] *Encyklopedia socjologii* [Encyclopaedia of Sociology], Z. Boksański et al. (eds.), Warszawa 2002, pp. 42–46.

⁷ Cf. W. Ambrozik, P. Stępnia, *Readaptacja społeczna i reorganizacja środowisk lokalnych, jako warunek skuteczności oddziaływań resocjalizacyjnych* [Social Readaptation and Reorganisation of Local Environments as a Prerequisite to Effectiveness of Resocialisation Works] [in:] *Resocjalizacja. Teoria i praktyka pedagogiczna*

³ See: Act of 26 October 1982 on the treatment of Juveniles, Journal of Laws [Dz.U.] No. 35, item 228.

⁴ See: Ibidem, Preamble, Article 2, Articles 4 & 1.

– a concept that is inextricably connected with resocialisation – was considered by participants in the third section, conducted by Michał Szykut, Ph.D. and Associate Professor Przemysław Frąckowiak, Ph.D. The individual who started the panel session, a German speaker, also presented the topic of evaluating the implementation of social support programs. Subsequent papers focused on resocialising workers in the sense of the effectiveness of probation officers, the power of the daily work of resocialisation teachers, and the role of tutors in young offenders' institutions. In addition, lecturers raised the question of digital supervision systems, still relatively new in Poland, as an alternative form of serving imprisonment. Other papers that aroused interest discussed "participation of the society in the execution of court rulings" and "social attitudes towards condemned persons" (translated from Polish). With regard to the fact that convict's readaptation to social life not only depends on an individual (on his or her level of social deviation in the criminal world), but also on the environment to which the former criminal returns. That is why the results of studies on social attitudes towards condemned persons/former condemned persons are an indicator of success in adapting to life after release from prison. A lack of support or failure to receive appropriate support from one's environment has a negative impact on one's ability to

cope with readaptation efforts; it also increases the sense of exclusion.

"Behind the Curtain of Resocialisation: The Way to Freedom" was the first international seminar which aimed at exchanging experiences from the daily work of people who deal with resocialisation in a broad sense. It was an important and socially useful initiative. Two days of debate, during which both university teachers and experienced practitioners spoke, showed the need for continuation of discussions begun on this occasion. The debate attested to the necessity for continuing discussions started on this occasion. Due to constant economic and social change, the problem of people who are socially excluded and socially maladapted will continue to worsen. It is necessary to furnish those individuals that are well adapted for living in society with tools that can help those for whom help may be necessary. It is worth remembering that "characteristic features of human nature are derived from the society, yet at the same time society exists and lives only in and through individuals" (translated from Polish)⁸.

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[Resocialisation. Theory and Educational Practice], B. Urban, J.M. Stanik (ed.), Warszawa 2007.

⁸ R. Borowicz, *Socjalizacja...* [Socialisation...], op.cit., p. 42.