

Scientific Activity in Pedagogy and Education Field of Polish Students at John Casimir University in the 1930s

Maria Kryva / e-mail: mariya.kryva@lnu.edu.ua
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine
Teodor Leshchak / e-mail: t_leshchack@lnu.edu.ua
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine

Kryva M. – Leshchak T. (2019). Scientific activity in Pedagogy and Education field of Polish students at John Casimir University in the 1930s. *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal*, 11/1, 91–97.

<https://doi.org/10.5817/cphpj-2019-011>

The reestablishment of Poland's independence in 1918 forced academic circles of a new state to the process of learning the history of education and culture of a native land. Polish students were among the most active participants in this sphere. They gathered in scientific societies. The Pedagogical circle of Polish students functioned in the John Casimir University in the 1930s.

Key words: *Polish students; pedagogical science; student scientific work; student scientific circle; the John Casimir University; Second Polish Republic*

The 100th anniversary of the reestablishment of the independence of Poland forces us to draw attention to the first steps of the academic society of a new state in the deal of an investigation of the history of education, science, and culture of their society. Polish students of one of the oldest universities of the central part of Europe, the John Casimir University in Lviv, played vestile role in making these first steps.

The experience of an organization of student scientific life and the methods of self-realization of Polish students during the inter-war period gained the particular value. The historian of education and schooling, Kazimierz Szmyd, pointed out that “The University of Lviv contributed to the process of settling and development of different educational formations, methodological, theory-creative and theological concepts. It also gave a wide range of academic interests in the sphere of sciences about upbringing, creating the possibilities for continuation of the intellectual-scientific tradition.”¹

¹ Szmyd K. (2003). *Twórcy nauk o wychowaniu w środowisku akademickim Lwowa (1860–1939)*. Rzeszów, p. 12.

As is known, the University of Lviv entered a new historical period of its development in 1918. It was caused by the fact of its passing to the jurisdiction of the reestablishment of a Polish state. The University gained the name of its founder – the King of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, John II Casimir. Important structural and methodical changes were made in the functioning of the academic institution. They were dictated by the demands of the formation of a system of the Polish higher education.

The scientific works of the Polish students of this University, it is worth mentioning, that it was a conceptual continuation of the certain researches of their teachers that are shown in the conceptual, methodological, and methodical aspects. Before the 20th century, a low level of the activity of managers of high pedagogical education of Galicia in the arrangement of student scientific performance is observed. It was caused by the low level of a methodological, organizing, and personal separating of pedagogy from general philosophy. The scientific separation of pedagogy was impossible due to the slow rates of development of scientific disciplines regarding upbringing in the University of Lviv and conservative beliefs among the overwhelming majority of the pedagogical staff. The professional preparation of the teachers as scientists in the University of Lviv started at the dawn of the 20th century owing to the proactiveness of Bolesław Mańkowski – in the sphere of general pedagogy and didactics; Kazimierz Twardowski – theory of upbringing and pedagogical psychology; Stanisław Lempicki – history of education and upbringing respectively.²

Scientific works of Polish students of the John Casimir University are withheld in the funds of State archives of a Lviv region. There are 35 (36) doctoral works and 14 (13) master's works (one of the master's works was added to doctoral works by mistake).³

Apparently, the historical-pedagogical theme (75.5% of a general amount) was more popular among students compared to the pedagogical one. It is due to several reasons. First, the history of a native land was more interesting for students on the emotional level during the period of independence reestablishment. The Department of History of Education and Schooling led by S. Lempicki also played an important role in this.

The most popular themes among the students and masters were the ones related to the history of Polish schooling (25 works, i.e. 77% of a thematic group and 55% of others works in general), especially the period of the activity of the Commission of Public Education and the District School Board in Galicia in Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and pedagogical figures (17 works, i.e. 46% of a thematic group and 35% of others works in general). Among the famous figures

² Ibidem, pp. 301–302.

³ Deržavnyj archiv Lvivskoj oblasti [hereinafter: DALO], f. 26, op. 4.

were: Hugo Kołłątaj, Stanisław and Szymon Konarski, acclaimed as renowned classics of the European pedagogical thought.

The scientific preparation of the students was conducted in educational lessons and classes such as “a proseminar of the history of education and schooling”, “a seminar of the history of education and schooling”, “didactic exercises”, and “psychological exercises.” The quality of the results of a student scientific work directly depended on a theory and practice of its organization by coordinators of a development of pedagogical science in the University of Lviv – K. Twardowski and S. Lempicki.⁴

It is obvious, that the main contributor to a student scientific work was professor Kazimierz Twardowski. The accustoming of students to an optimal organisation of an independent scientific work was considered by him as the major task of his work at the Department in the University. Most of his effort was spent on a clear and full understanding of students’ philosophical and pedagogical works as the sources of their knowledge. One of the methods he used was the process of making an abstract of the necessary works in the form of the thesis. For this purpose, the scientist primarily forced his students to comprehend text, deepen in author’s thoughts and their presentation, to express the main content in their own words.

K. Twardowski also advised using a method of a creative interpretation of a logical proceeding to make an abstract. Its aim was to attain student comprehension of a text even better than the author did himself to continue the flow of thoughts expressed in the work, by overcoming the obstacles that hindered the author’s thoughts. Such researches in scientific texts of determined judgments aligned with attempts of their further individual overworking and logical proceeding, according to the scientist’s belief, have to develop a creative thought and ability to interpret someone’s thoughts constructively. He also advised teachers who supervised student scientific work and forced young researches to use the abovementioned methods after mastering them in their own scientific works. That must have impacted their self-improvement and enable them to foresee the difficulties under way.⁵

Following the mentioned recommendations, the professor of history of education and schooling, a student of K. Twardowski, Stanisław Lempicki, formulated clear demands concerning a mastering of methodological knowledge and abilities to the participants of proseminars and seminars. Over a year, they had to pass a colloquium based on lectures’ content and pass self-assessment works, including summaries, reviews, reports, and analyses of a source of historical-pedagogical materials. The condition of acceptance of a whole period of the

⁴ Szymd, K. (2003). op. cit., pp. 275–283.

⁵ Okoń, W. (1993) *Wizerunki sławnych pedagogów polskich*. Warszawa, p. 378.

preparation consisted in accomplishment of certain individual “pensum” (a volume of didactic tasks) created by the professor out of the beforehand conditioned problems. Every student had to register their written work in a special book of a registration to maintain the rhythm and systematic character of the participants of a seminar and to achieve high level of their scientific and educational self-discipline. These works were kept in a laboratory of a seminar for a further consideration by the professor and his assistant. They decided on a scientific and methodic level of the works done by the students. For the proposes of their preparation, the participants of the seminar had the right to use the laboratory as well as scientific monographies, scientific-didactic collected volumes, and periodicals in a library of the Institute of History of Education and Schooling.⁶

Student scientific activity, within the framework of an educational programme of psychological and didactic practical tasks, was regulated in the same fation. Thus, the participants of the psychology seminar discussed and analyzed the outcomes of their own educational experiments. The knowledge gained in the process of using the equipping, created by Kazimierz Twardowski’s Psychological Laboratory of the University, was closey related to the practice gained during classes in Psychological Consultation of Lviv.⁷

It is worthy to note that a particular role in the process of intensification of scientific-pedagogical work of the students of the Lviv University was given to the forms of work done outside of the lecture halls. For instance, a powerful driver for the formation of young researches was self-organization of student scientific leisure. 43 student communities, circles, and scientific academic organizations were registered during the academic school year of 1926–1927.⁸ According to Polish historian of pedagogical science, Kazimierz Szmyd, they created the environment of intellectual culture, a close-knit community of teachers and students, as well as triggered scientific search of future pedagogues.⁹

Since the 1930s, the archival documents feature the activity of student scientific society, named “Koło Pedagogiczne” (Pedagogical circle), functioning in the University. There are the reports of the society’s meetings of 1932–1939, kept in the funds of the Department of manuscripts of the Lviv National Vasyl Stefanyk Scientific Library of Ukraine. Though, it is known that the Society had even existed before. It is proved by the written message of the Head of the Government of the Society about the existence of the Book of reports about the past years, which disappeared for the reasons unknown.¹⁰

⁶ DALO, f. 26, op. 5, spr. 1060.

⁷ DALO, f. 26, op. 5, spr. 1864.

⁸ Kronika Uniwersytetu Jana Kazimierza we Lwowie za rok szkolny 1926/27: stanowiąca sprawozdanie Rektora i dziekanów. Lwów, p. 169–171.

⁹ Szmyd K. (2003). op. cit., pp. 405.

¹⁰ Lvivska nacionalnaja naukova biblioteka V. Stefanika. Viddil rukopisiv. [hereinafter: LNNB], f. 132, spr. 196/1, k. 1–3.

It is noteworthy that the functioning of student circles in the Second Polish Republic was regulated by the orders of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Education of 1933¹¹ and 1937.¹² According to these documents academic societies of Poland were allowed to gain property and financial rights. The Pedagogic Society of the Students of Lviv also had these rights. It is proven by the librarian funds, which were on its balance, as well as numerous financial operations of the Society.¹³ According to the Minister's Direction dated April 30, 1933, the minimum number of twenty students for the formation of a scientific society was established. There were periods when the Pedagogic society of the Students of Lviv was on the verge of disappearance.¹⁴ Before the World War II, the number of participants slightly increased. For instance, in 1938 it made up 56 people,¹⁵ in 1939–48 people, respectively.¹⁶

The activity of each society had to be regulated by the Statute confirmed by the Senate (Educational Board) of the University. The Senate also supervised the activity of the Society through the specially appointed curator. The Professor of the History of Education and Schooling, Stanisław Lempicki curated the Pedagogic Society of the Students of Lviv during the whole period of its activity.¹⁷

The controlling functions of the curator restricted the independence of the Society, which was shown in an obligatory character of his presence on all the meetings of the Society, confirming plans of the meetings and checking reports etc. The curator had the right of motion on all the meetings. He could also annul all the decisions made by the Society and cancel meetings. Furthermore, all declarations and appeals of the Society had to be approved by the curator.¹⁸ The orders passed on October 14, 1936, narrowed the competences of academic societies even further compared to the former ones. For instance, student societies were prohibited to conduct political activities, while their premises should be located explicitly within campus. A stricter sequence of reports in front of a curator

¹¹ Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 30 kwietnia 1933 r. o stowarzyszeniach akademickich. *Dziennik Ustaw (DzUMWRiOP)* 1933, Issue 30, pos. 259.

¹² Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 14 października 1937 r. o stowarzyszeniach akademickich. *Dziennik Ustaw (DzUMWRiOP)* 1937, Issue 78, pos. 572.

¹³ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1.

¹⁴ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1, k. 99.

¹⁵ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1, k. 93.

¹⁶ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1, k. 99.

¹⁷ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 4, 32, 91.

¹⁸ Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 30 kwietnia 1933 r. o stowarzyszeniach akademickich. *Dziennik Ustaw (DzUMWRiOP)* 1933, Issue 30, pos. 259, p. 628–631.

and the Board of the University was also foreseen.¹⁹ A separate chapter of these directions concern the types of punishments for the violating the statute of a Society or the law in the sphere of academic societies, e.g. removing of managers of a society, temporarily stopping of society's activity and even its dismissal.²⁰ It is obvious that under such circumstances of the manifestation of independent activity and initiatives from student societies or separate students were a rare phenomenon and it was quickly pacified by curators. For instance, the official letter of S. Lempicki of March 27, 1939, is being kept in the archive funds. Therein he informed about the abolition of all the decisions of the former general meetings of societies from March 18 and their recurrence. The reason was a tardy informing him about the time of a meeting of the Society.²¹

Despite difficult juridical conditions for its activity, Pedagogic Society was famous for its active work in various statute's duties. The data about current state of the society deals are in the reports of conferences of its managers, which took place approximately once a month, as well as in the reports of general meetings of the society's participants, which took place several times a year.

The current financial deals concerning and ensuring of conducting preparational courses for the candidates for the position of primary school teachers, a report of responsible people on a conclusion of a catalogue of a pedagogical library, a concrete plan of measures on an organising of scientific readings and an invitation of lectors for the proclaiming summaries in front of the members of the Pedagogic society, as well as a financial report of the last teatime ceremony, informal meeting of the society's members, were studied during this meeting.²²

Twelve men comprised to the leading organs, according to the Statute of the Pedagogical Society of the John Casimir University. The Government of a Society consisted of a Head, two assistants, a secretary, a treasurer, and a librarian. In addition, there were three men of the Revisionary commission and three men of the Society's low court.²³

Archive documents show that the settling of the Pedagogical Society was a room of Institution of the History of Education and Schooling. All the meetings and scientific readings took place there and all the librarian funds were there. It was said in the report of the Government of the academic school year of

¹⁹ Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 14 października 1937 r. o stowarzyszeniach akademickich. *Dziennik Ustaw (DzUMWRiOP)* 1937, Issue 78, pos. 572, p. 1426–1428.

²⁰ Rozporządzenie Ministra Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego z dnia 14 października 1937 r. o stowarzyszeniach akademickich. *Dziennik Ustaw (DzUMWRiOP)* 1937, Issue 78, pos. 572, p. 1429–1430.

²¹ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 91.

²² LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 27.

²³ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 97.

1938–1939 that there were 170 positions of scientific-pedagogical literature and 26 periodicals in the funds of the library.²⁴ In the same year, by the power of the Society, 5 scientific readings were conducted, during which lecture speeches on interesting for students didactic, historic-pedagogical or psychological problems took place.²⁵ They could be even followed by a long discussion.

Feasible fundraising means to financially facilitate the realization of the Statute's tasks of the Society was the publication the synopsis by its participants of the lecture's courses of the University. For instance, the third part of the course "The Basis of the Psychology" by professor Mieczysław Kreutz was published owing to student resources.²⁶

A particular attention should be paid to the organization of preparation courses by the participants of the Society those who prepared for the pedagogical qualifying exam and aimed for the positions of primary school teachers.²⁷ They took place in the room of Institution of the Psychology of the University. It is known that nearly 20 people attended the courses in 1939.²⁸

Thus, Polish students organized the scientific Pedagogical Society in the 1930s, which demonstrated bright and effective attempts to join to the development of educational sciences in the John Casimir University of Lviv, existing within the juridically established borders. The society's activity attracted the Polish student environment that favored pedagogical ideas and provided an organized and didactic addition of a pedagogic preparation in the University. It became possible due to the organized and methodic activity of a coordinator of student scientific-pedagogical life in the University of Lviv, a Professor of the History of Education and Schooling, Stanisław Lempicki. The Pedagogic Society of Polish students of the John Casimir University stopped its activity due to the events surged by the World War II.

²⁴ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 99.

²⁵ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 99–100.

²⁶ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 100.

²⁷ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 85.

²⁸ LNNB, f. 132, spr. 196/1. k. 100.