

Real Gymnasium and its Importance in the Context of Rebirth of Poland in 1918 – Poznan Case

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The subject of the article is the real gymnasium and its implementation in Poland after the restoration of its independence in 1918. Real gymnasium is a type of institutional education, functioning in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a secondary general education school that typically emphasizes mathematics and natural sciences. Its goal was to educate in a practical, useful and polytechnic spirit. This type of school was developed in Poland under Prussian partition, but also since Poland's independence.

Key words: *pedagogy in the 19th and early 20th centuries; New Education; US pragmatism; real gymnasium; real secondary; Realschule; Poland after the restoration of its independence in 1918; organization of education system in Poland after 1918*

Introduction

This paper analyses Real Gymnasium and its Polish implementation after regaining independence of Poland in 1918, using as an example a 'real' secondary school operating in Poznan at that time. The theoretical framework of this text are the following areas and their characteristics: Poland after regaining independence in 1918; school organisation in Poland after 1918; pedagogy at the turn of the 20th century; New Education; naturalism, pragmatism; real secondary school.

The main methodology used in this paper is the analysis of source documents and literature of the subject.

The objective of this paper is to show the significance of this type of schools and education in the development of the reviving Polish state, after 123 years of national bondage. The subject is especially important, since the so-called 'New Education' – a current in pedagogy was developing at that time. It propagated both naturalism and pragmatism in upbringing and education and inspired numerous experimental enterprises in institutional education. These premises are a perfect fit for the real school at the turn of the 20th century, as a school of general education with deepened training in mathematics and natural sciences. Such a type of school educated in the spirit of polytechnics, therefore it was practical.

The type of real schools is the effect of the fight it started to be accepted among secondary schools which realised the classical path, including Latin and Greek – sciences adopting realism as their main course. Neophilological secondary schools were a result of this, and they were called Realschule in Germany and Austria. In the context of Polish education of the period, principles and the concept of such a type of school were an important reference for the needs and search for rebuilding institutional education in the reviving Polish state.

The example of a real school in Poznan aims at showing the different character of social-political situation in the Prussian partition, compared to the other two partitions, i.e. a much greater difficulty in realising institutional education in the spirit of Poland, and innovative at the same time. After Poland regained independence, it was also a result of the fact that Wielkopolska was more traditional and conservative than other regions of Poland. Many pedagogues were also convinced that it is necessary to preserve the classical-humanities style of education, rather than open for pedagogical innovations, i.e. practicality and usefulness of education. In this context, the real school and realisation of the then-developing trend of ‘New Education’ were different and much harder than in the other two partitions. Nonetheless, it was realised, which proves the special character of the development of this type of education and the necessity to preserve it.

The ‘New Education’ trend and its role in institutional education in Poland after 1918

‘New Education’ is a reform movement in pedagogy which was created at the turn of the 20th century almost across the world as a reaction to the so-called traditional pedagogy, with its schematic teaching process. The child was not the subject, but the object of education. In western Europe and in the territory of Poland at the turn of the 20th century, it was an opposition to Herbartianism. Its main assumption was to focus the educational process on the child, his or her own activity, needs and interests, but with his or her cooperation.¹ For that reason ‘New Education’ claimed that in the education and upbringing process it was necessary to refer to naturalism, paidocentrism, but also to pragmatism and progressivism. Widely understood changes in America and Europe, resulting mainly from capitalist production relationships connected to scientific discoveries, the development of technology and natural sciences, they all had an influence on the rise and development of ‘New Education’. The revival of psychology and social sciences took place at the same time.

¹ Sośnicki, K. (1967). *Rozwój pedagogiki zachodniej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*. Warszawa, p. 20.

An explicit definition of 'New Education' is extremely difficult to formulate, since the movement was very varied, thus offering numerous perspectives of interpretation. A Polish researcher of this movement, Danuta Drynda, asks the question whether a universal definition of 'New Education' is needed at all, but also if it is possible to agree on one. Education, and the more so 'New Education' does not have a definite form, it is changeable and dialectical. In its core it should react to human needs and develop man in a creative way. Nevertheless, in view of the period of this movement's rise, and confronting it with changes in the Polish territory at the turn of the 20th century, it was accepted that 'New Education' is a pedagogical movement aiming at the renewal of school and at a radical change in upbringing.²

In Poland, the 'New Education' trend caused a lot of interest. Its principals were – at the initial stage, i.e. until the outbreak of WW1 – cautiously perceived, and as Kazimierz Sośnicki describes, it was the time of 'awakening of a new upbringing'.³ In the years to come, almost all trends of 'New Education', especially the concept of laboratory school and American pragmatism, had a great influence on Polish thought and pedagogical practice.⁴

In Polish conditions the reasons of the rise of this movement are of a specific character. It was generated through the complex socio-political-economic situation, cultural circumstances, and the educational situation in three partitions. Focusing on schools, the most difficult situation was in the Prussian Partition, where schools were Germanised to a large extent. In the Austrian Partition, i.e. in Galicia, the situation was best, with a functioning Polish school system. The Kingdom of Poland, under the Russian rule, offered mixed conditions for Polish education.

The complexity of the political situation in Polish territory at that time, aspirations for national liberation, and in the context of intellectual development – Polish thinkers' search for the best solution and way to regain the independence of Poland, all this resulted in the necessity to search for the best solution also, or perhaps mainly, in the area of education, to find the best school and education for Poland and Poles. The traditional school of that time, with its Herbartian basis, was not able to fulfil those tasks, to meet those needs and expectations related to the education and upbringing of different man. 'New Education', however, with its different, new look at the child, was a perfect ground for the creation and building of educational bases, thus – a new, reformed, Polish school.

² Drynda, D. (2000). *Geneza „Nowego Wychowania” w Polsce*. In A. Meissner, Cz. Majorek (Eds.), *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, vol. 14, *Pedagogika nowego wychowania w Polsce u schyłku XIX i w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, Rzeszów, p. 29.

³ Sośnicki, K., *Rozwój pedagogiki zachodniej...*, (op. cit.), pp. 20, 45.

⁴ Araszkiewicz, F. (1978). *Ideaty wychowawcze Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa, pp. 98, 114–115.

Educational situation in Poland at the time of regaining independence (with special focus on secondary education)

The year 1918 was and is for Poland and Poles a significant date. It was then, after WW1 finished, that Poland returned to the world map, regaining independence after 123 years of occupation of three countries, i.e. Russia, Austria and Prussia.⁵

In the long period of national bondage, Polish schools underwent various changes and transformations, depending on educational policy, but also on the nationality of the three partitioners. In the period of our focus, it referred to secondary education as well. In Galicia, i.e. in the territory of the Austrian partition, the development of Polish secondary school was favourable for Poles. Galicia used the autonomous rights within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where from 1867 National School Council had direct control over all Galician education.⁶ A more difficult situation for secondary education was in the Russian partition, i.e. on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. Until 1905 there were only state secondary schools (Russian) and private-owned schools with the rights that were in practice identical with the state schools. It was only after the Revolution of 1905 that the situation was less strict. Then it was finally allowed to have Polish literature and Religious Education classes in Polish. It was also permitted to set up schools without rights.⁷ The most difficult educational situation, resulting from the policy of denationalising, was in the Prussian partition, the area connected to the subject of this paper. Prussia was systematically limiting the Polish language in schools, eventually removing it completely. The system of the Prussian secondary school was created during the December conference in 1892, with personal involvement of Emperor William II. Then, in accordance with the decisions of the conference and the work of 'Committee of Seven' in Prussia, new types of general

⁵ Partitions of Poland is a period in the history of the Republic of Poland, falling on 1772-1795, when the Republic of Poland, due to a complex socio-political situation, and the resulting inability to reform the country, was forced to cede parts of its territory to neighbouring countries, i.e. Russia, Austria and Prussia. Three partitions took place: 1st partition in 1772; 2nd partition in 1793; 3rd partition in 1795, as a result of which Poland disappeared from the world map for 123 years (see:) Cegielski, T. – Kędziela, Ł. (1990). *Rozbiory Polski 1772–1793–1795*, Warszawa; Eversley, G. (1915). *The partitions of Poland*, London.

⁶ National School Council (in Polish: Rada Szkolna Krajowa (RSK)), was an autonomous body of Polish elementary and secondary education, operating in the Austrian partition. RSK was set up in 1867 and had a direct control of the whole education in Galicia, it operated until 1921. RSK helped Polish Galician education, develop it and raise the educational level, (see:) Juško, E. (2013). *Rada Szkolna Krajowa i jej działalność na rzecz szkoły ludowej w Galicji (1868–1921)*, Lublin, pp. 25–47.

⁷ Araszkiewicz, F. W. (1967). Szkoła średnia ogólnokształcąca na ziemiach polskich w latach 1915–1918. *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, No. 10/1967, pp. 161–162.

education secondary schools were introduced. From then on they existed in the territories taken away from Poland. Work on syllabuses for secondary schools continued until 1911. The syllabuses were in force thenceforth until 1918.⁸

In such educational circumstances, Poland regained independence in 1918. As the educational situation in Poland, inherited from three partitioners, was quite varied, the process of educational unification was gradual and took several years.

Secondary education, the subject of analysis in this paper, also required gradual rebuilding. The necessity to reform education of that time was in the focus of analysis by intellectual societies even before that. An example is a group of Cracow's teachers of secondary schools, who, as early as in 1905, created a Committee for the reform of secondary schools, especially of real schools. Work of the Committee was crowned with detailed syllabuses for a real school of eight years, approved by the previous Sejm of Galicia. Even though they were not implemented, they should be treated as the first foundation of organisational principles, which were to be part of syllabuses published by the Ministry in independent Poland. It should be stressed that this work was first published in 1906, in an article titled *Our secondary school, criticism of its basis and the necessity to reform it*.⁹ Another factor that played a decisive role in shaping the syllabuses, also in defining types of secondary schools, was the activity of the Department of Syllabuses of the secondary school Section, set up in 1918. Tadeusz Jan Łopuszański (1874–1955), earlier an active member of the above-mentioned Committee, played a dominant role in the work of this Section.¹⁰ In February 1918 he was appointed head of the secondary school section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment. From 13 December 1918 to 24 July 1920 he was minister of RAaPE in the cabinet of L. Skulski. Later, until 1927, he was deputy minister, always involved in the educational domain. Łopuszański¹¹ was consistently trying to realise the earlier-created concept of general education secondary school. He presented it in full in a publication that was published anonymously as the official document of Ministry of RAaPE, titled 'Syllabus of

⁸ Ibidem, pp. 161–163.

⁹ Nasza szkoła średnia, krytyka jej podstaw i konieczność reformy (1906). *Muzeum. Czasopismo Towarzystwa Nauczycieli Szkół Wyższych*, Y. 22, book 3, pp. 191–214, <http://www.wbc.poznan.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=129615> (21. 01. 2019).

¹⁰ Kielski, B. (1921). Typy szkół średnich ogólnokształcących na ziemiach polskich. *Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, series 2/volume I/, p. 109.

¹¹ Tadeusz Łopuszański, as a supporter and propagator of pedagogical innovation, in years 1928–1939, was Head of Sułkowsy Junior and secondary school in Rydzyna, i.e. experimental boarding school. He realised his pedagogical ideas there – he created a centre of modern pedagogy in the area of secondary education, based on a high level of education combined with a preference for a chosen job (see: *Szkoła Rydzynska dzieło życia Tadeusza Łopuszańskiego*, (2013), Warszawa-Rydzyna.

secondary school. Project created by secondary school Section' (1919). This syllabus combined the main trends of reformatory thought of 1915–1918, proposing co-education, and also a shorter learning period on the level of secondary school. This work underlined the great significance of creating a base in a general education school, for – as it was called in the 'Syllabus...' – 'intellectual education', which was to be a group of related subjects that were the base subjects in a given type of school. The syllabus called for creating four types of general education secondary schools, but it stressed the dominant role of secondary schools with the syllabus of sciences. Thus, it promoted mainly innovative education, with special emphasis on practicality and usefulness. He showed the necessity to combine education and upbringing with life, as well as to introduce methods facilitating independent work of the student.¹² The 'Syllabus...' also stated that the privileged position of the classical secondary school became its enemy. Graduates of this type of secondary school received the greatest privileges when starting university education, also a priority when applying for civil jobs. It did not go hand in hand with the surrounding reality. Therefore, classical secondary schools were criticised. The new syllabus for general education secondary schools, showing four types of secondary schools, suggested the mathematical & natural sciences type as the necessary one above the following types: humanities, humanities with Latin, and classical. The educational basis was clearly distinguished, which consisted of three series, aiming at the continuous realisation in all forms: mathematics, physics-chemistry, natural sciences. Therefore, the reform of syllabuses of secondary school was of great importance, as Ministry of RAaPE postulated. The reform was to focus more on national needs and the requirements of pedagogy and psychology, thus on the innovative trend of 'New Education'. Thenceforth, secondary school was to realise an interesting, practical syllabus, connected with life. Moreover, it should not ignore the role of psychology in the development of the young, whose natural drive is to know life and take control of it. That was the base for rebuilding Polish education after 1918 in the spirit of innovation, a challenge for previously prevailing verbalism, schematism.¹³

¹² Łopuszański, T. (1919). *Zagadnienie wychowania narodowego*. Lublin; Program naukowy szkoły średniej, (1919) MWRiOP (MRAaPE). Warszawa; Araszkiewicz, F. *Ideale wychowawcze Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej, ...* (op. cit.), pp. 113–117.

¹³ *Program naukowy szkoły średniej* (1919). Projekt wypracowany przez Sekcję Szkolnictwa Średniego MWRiOP (MRAaPE). Warszawa.

IV Education inherited by the region of Greater Poland and the city of Poznan from the partitioner

In the region of Greater Poland,¹⁴ under the Prussian rule during the partition period, solely Prussian education with German as the language of lecture was in force until 1918. General education secondary schools were divided into two types, i.e. 9-year and 6-year secondary schools. Both were of three basic types: 1. secondary school and pro-secondary school; 2. real secondary school and real pro-secondary school; 3. real upper school and real school. From 1892 these schools could be organised according to the reformed syllabus, the so-called Frankfurt syllabus, where the only difference was to move Latin into later years. This type was a compromise between classical secondary school and real secondary school.¹⁵

9-year secondary schools were called complete or 9-grade schools, 6-year secondary schools were called incomplete or 6-grade schools.

Secondary schools were classical schools with Latin and Greek. They included, as all complete secondary schools, 9 years, divided into: 1) VI – Sexta; 2) V – Quinta; 3) IV – Quatra; 4) U III – Untertertia; 5) O III – Oberteria; 6) U II – Untersekunda; 7) O II – Obersekunda; 8) U I – Unterprima; 9) O I – Oberprima.

¹⁴ The region of Greater Poland – part of Poland, the cradle of the Polish state. After the first partition of Poland in 1722 Greater Poland lost for Prussia the northern part, i.e. about 20% of its territory. As a result of the second partition it was fully incorporated into Prussia, in the province of South Prussia. From 1807 it was part of the Duchy of Warsaw. Then, as a result of the Congress of Vienna, it became again part of Prussia. After WWI, as a result of victorious Greater Poland uprising of 1918–1919, and based on the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, the region was almost completely returned to the Republic of Poland, (see:) Topolski, J. (1999). *Wielkopolska poprzez wieki*, Poznań.

¹⁵ Araszkiewicz, F. W. *Szkoła średnia ogólnokształcąca ...*, (op. cit.), p. 223.

Syllabus in a classical secondary school, real school and real upper school was as shown in the table below:

	Syllabus of classical secondary school with Latin and Greek – number of hours of individual subjects and total hours a week	Syllabus of real secondary school – number of hours of individual subjects and total hours a week	Syllabus of real upper school – number of hours of individual subjects and total hours a week
Religious Education	19 hours (3 hours from year VI)	19 hours	19 hours
German	26 hours	28 hours	34 hours
Latin	68 hours (from year VI)	49 hours	–
Greek	36 hours (starting in year U III)	–	–
English	–	18 hours	25 hours (starting in year U III)
French	20 hours (starting in year IV)	29 hours	47 hours
History	17 hours (starting in year IV; in year VI and V combined with German)	17 hours	18 hours
Geography	9 hours (starting in year VI till U II)	11 hours	14 hours
Accounts and mathematics	34 hours	42 hours	47 hours
Natural sciences	18 hours	29 hours	36 hours

Calligraphy	4 hours (in years VI and V)	4 hours	6 hours
Drawing	8 hours (from year V to O III)	16 hours	16 hours
Gymnastics	27 hours	27 hours	27 hours
Singing	4 hours	4 hours	4 hours
Total	290 hours weekly	293 hours weekly	293 hours weekly

Source: own elaboration based on Jabczyński, M. (1929). *Dziesięć lat szkoły polskiej w Poznańskim Okręgu Szkolnym*. Poznań, pp. 18–19.

As the table shows, the difference between real secondary school and classical secondary school consisted in replacing Greek with English. In addition, higher requirements were applied in mathematics, natural sciences and drawing – it may be concluded from a bigger number of hours of teaching these subjects. In the reformed real secondary school (which is not included in the table), Latin started in year U III – 40 hours a week, English from year U II – 18 hours a week, French – from year VI. There were no other changes. In real upper schools Latin and Greek were not taught at all.¹⁶ More hours were devoted to modern languages, i.e. English and French, compared to classical secondary school and real secondary school. More hours were also devoted to geography, natural sciences, and especially to mathematics.

Full rights, i.e. admission to university, were achieved only on graduation from the full secondary school and real upper school, graduates from other types of schools obtained the right to serve a year in the army, which was a serious promotion in militarised Prussia.

The above list of syllabuses and the number of hours taught of individual subjects show the realisation of mainly scientific education in real secondary schools, hence modern, useful, and practical. Thus, in the type of real secondary school – which is the focus of our interest – mathematics and natural sciences were taught extensively, and they became main subjects in the didactics of real schools. In real secondary school they constituted 71 hours, which was over 24% of total hours, in real upper school they constituted 83 hours – 28% of total hours of all subjects taught. Modern languages were an important subject – they constituted 16% of total hours taught in real secondary school, and in real upper school – as many as 24%.¹⁷

¹⁶ Jabczyński, M. (1929). *Dziesięć lat szkoły polskiej w Poznańskim Okręgu Szkolnym*. Poznań, pp. 18–19.

¹⁷ Calculated based on: Jabczyński, M. *Ibidem*, p. 20.

Real schools in the region of Wielkopolska were not supported by older generation teachers of classical secondary schools, who considered classical education as the proper education of adolescents. Therefore, they were introduced as late as at the beginning of the 20th century in the Prussian partition. Classical secondary schools were most numerous. Nevertheless, in most schools, to a smaller or larger extent, there were real forms, alongside other types. In Poznan alone, where five general education secondary schools existed – mainly classical secondary schools – Frederick William Secondary School realised the real form type. The reformed real secondary school type was found in Mary Magdalene Secondary School; the classical secondary school form combined with the reformed real secondary school was found in Augusta Victoria Secondary School, and Berger Real Upper School in Poznan realised the real upper school type. All types of general education secondary schools were boys' only schools. Mixed-sex education did not exist at that time.¹⁸

The process of organising education in the region of Greater Poland after 1918

In the territory of Greater Poland, education rebuilding after a long period of national bondage took a different form from that in other districts of reborn Poland, where institutional education depended on the other two partitioners, i.e. Russia and Austria.

After Poland regained independence, in 1918 and in later years, the process of rebuilding Polish education, following such a strongly Germanised education system in Wielkopolska was an extremely difficult task. Another difficulty was unification of the education system, inherited from three occupants. The whole process of de-Germanisation in the former Prussian partition on the one hand, and of unification of previously varied institutional education with the other regions of Poland on the other hand, was gradual in the first three years, i.e. until 1921, when a unified education system started to exist in all Poland.¹⁹

As early as in 1919, National People's Council,²⁰ through its executive body, i.e. 'Tygodnik Urzędowy' ('Official Journal') passed the decision regarding Polish

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 57.

¹⁹ Araszkievicz, F. *Idealy wychowawcze...*, (op. cit.), p. 86–87.

²⁰ Supreme People's Council (Naczelna Rada Ludowa – NRL) – a Polish party in the Prussian partition of Poland, set up in 1916 in Poznan as an Interparty Committee, also referred to as Central Citizens' Committee. It was created from a group of Polish Deputy Clubs of the Prussian and German Parliament, and of the executive department of Central Citizens' Committee. NRL was illegal until 11. 11. 1918, and later discovered itself as People's Council (RL). RL commanded the Greater Poland Uprising. It was dissolved on 19 August 1919, after Ministry of Former Prussian District was set up on 12 August 1919, (as cited in:) Jabczyński, M. *Dziesięć lat...*, (op. cit.), p. 39.

language for all Polish schools, also upper schools for men and women in the Grand Duchy of Poznan. It introduced immediately Polish instead of German as the subject of instruction²¹. This decision was confirmed with the Act of 25 January 1919 by Upper-President of Poznan Province, Wojciech Trąmpczyński. This act lifted the 27 October 1873 Act of Upper-President and any other acts of Prussian authorities that limited or removed Polish from schools²².

Work aimed at Polonising secondary schools and all general education schools in Greater Poland and in the city of Poznan was done very diligently. For secondary schools it was carried out by secondary school Commission, under Prof. Łęgowski. However, the greatest difficulty in effective Polonisation was a lack of Polish teachers. It was decided that in order to solve this problem, Polish teachers from other areas of Poland, i.e. from Małopolska (former Austrian partition) should be brought. It was then that Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment promised a three-month holiday to all teachers who decided to move to Greater Poland. In April 1919, with accord of National School Council operating in Małopolska, over 150 secondary school teachers arrived in Greater Poland, and were sent out to work in secondary schools.²³ Polish forms were opened in 15 secondary schools then existing in Greater Poland, keeping German classes for German students. In Poznan all German students who attended classical secondary school were placed in one German secondary school, i.e. Frederick William secondary school. Polish students attended the other four secondary schools. The following general education secondary schools for Polish youth in Poznan were set up on 1 May 1919: 1) Mary Magdalene Secondary School (21 Polish forms, 3 German forms); 2) Karol Marcinkowski Secondary School – renamed from German Augusta Victoria Secondary School (13 Polish forms, 8 German, 3 mixed); 3) Berger Real Upper School (8 Polish forms, 14 German forms); Dąbrowka School, renamed from Girls' School of Princess Luise's Foundation.²⁴

Among the above-mentioned schools of Poznan was Real upper school in Poznan – the focus of this paper.

Origins of Real upper school in Poznan

The suggestion of setting up a Realschule in Poznan was as early as in 1838, in a meeting of the City Council. It was a way of raising the intellectual development

²¹ *Tygodnik Urzędowy Naczelnej Rady Ludowej*, Poznań, 23.01.1919, Year I, No. 2, p. 6.

²² Jabczyński, M. *Dziesięć lat szkoły polskiej ...*, (op. cit.), p. 46–47.

²³ Gašiorowska, N. (1921). Stan wykształcenia nauczycieli szkół średnich w Polsce. *Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, series 2/vol. I, part II, p. 51.

²⁴ Jabczyński, M. *Dziesięć lat szkoły polskiej ...*, (op. cit.), p. 57.

of future industrial merchants. Unfortunately, the costs of running such a school were too high for the city of Poznan, and the occupant, i.e. Prussia did not want to accept them. Finally, the City Real School in Poznan was set up on 9 June 1852, and the ceremonial opening took place on 15 October 1852.

Organisation of the unit was facilitated by the fact that two existing secondary schools, i.e. Mary Magdalene Secondary School and Frederick William Secondary School already had three highest years of the real type, subsidized by the city. A special education office was entrusted with care over the new school. The office consisted of representatives of the City Council and the Municipality. Dr Brennecki from Kolobrzeg was appointed Headmaster of the school. He created a special education plan, according to which Polish and German students from the lowest sexta to tertia studied in separate forms. Then these forms were joined in the two highest years, keeping the bifurcation in the teaching of Polish, German and history. The language of instruction in those forms at that time was German. The teaching plan was approved by Berlin. The seat of the school was a private-owned building located at 18 Wroclawska street, purchased by the district. Another plot, number 1.4 in Strzelecka street was also purchased.²⁵

Several years later, thanks to the foundation set up by a merchant, city councillor and the deputy to the Prussian parliament, Gotthilf Berger, a new school building was opened on 16 April 1866. It was located in Strzelecka street (Berger bought another plot, number 1.3). In his foundation act, Gotthilf Berger wrote, 'I was persuaded to do this, in addition to humanitarian principles and Christian religion, also by my experience of a long life, that a communal life of young people, under one roof, bonds the ties of friendships and propagates mutual understanding.'²⁶ In addition to purchasing the building, he also financed two scholarships for students who would like to devote their time to higher technological studies. In due time, to honour G. Berger, the school was named after its founder.

The educational level of the School was very high from the very beginning, thanks to which the first school-leaving exam could take place in autumn 1854. In 1859 Real School in Poznan was accepted in the first category of real schools in Prussia.

After many changes of the School, when in 1882 it transformed from real upper school into real secondary school (with Latin included), the number of students fell, which proved the small popularity of this type of secondary schools

²⁵ *Geschichte der Königlichen Berger = Oberrealschule (früher Realschule und Realgymnasium) zu Posen während ihres fünfzigjährigen Bestehens 1853–1903* (1903), Posen, pp. 3–4; *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji Państwowego Gimnazjum Matematyczno-Przyrodniczego im. Bergera w Poznaniu za lata 1919–1929* (1929), Poznań 1929, p. 3.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

among inhabitants of Poznan. Several years later, real secondary school was closed, and classical junior and 6-year real upper school without Latin (with limited rights) opened instead. Later, thanks to the efforts of its Headmaster, Dr Moritz Friebe, it was transformed into a 9-year real upper school. It is worth mentioning that Poznan at that time did not have a trade school. Therefore, a school with lectures in mathematics and natural sciences gave the most appropriate basis for the training of future tradesmen. Thus, this type of school appealed most to inhabitants of Poznan and it was what they were seeking. As a result, in 1904 Berger Real Upper School started to operate as follows: 3 lowest years were the common foundation. Then, for the next four years students of real forms and trade forms studied separately. The two highest years were the common superstructure.²⁷ In 1918 Polish authorities took over Berger Upper School in this shape.

Organisation and operations of Berger Real upper school in Poznan after 1918 as an example of innovative and useful education of Poles in the reviving state

At the moment of regaining Poland's independence, Department of Education in Poznan, similarly to other schools in Poznan, removed the German Headmaster from Real upper school in Poznan, entrusting temporarily Father L. Rankowski with the responsibilities of managing the school. Father Rankowski had been working in the school from 1903, in the role of catechist.²⁸

The first Polish form in the school was opened in spring 1919. The first Polish Headmaster was Dr Józef Kniat, appointed to this position on 7 April 1919. The school, run by Polish authorities, had both Polish and German forms, and two sets of teaching staff – Polish and German. The school was still run based on German teaching plans, but they were realised in native languages in Polish and German forms, with obligatory Polish language classes taught in German forms. Over time, i.e. by the end of 1919/1920 school year, all German forms along with German teaching staff were moved to Frederick William secondary school, which was devoted to German adolescents. At the beginning of 1920/1921 school year, Berger Upper School in Poznan was named Berger Mathematical-Natural Secondary School in Poznan.²⁹

Over time, Berger Secondary School in Poznan transferred to the Polish teaching programme.

²⁷ *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji Państwowego Gimnazjum Matematyczno-Przyrodniczego im. Bergera w Poznaniu za lata 1919–1929* (1929), Poznań 1929, pp. 4–5.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 6, 39.

Syllabus changes introduced in Polish schools did not influence Berger Realschule so much, since it had a definite 'real' character, and a precise teaching basis, which still indicated the main direction of the school. Nevertheless, realisation of the syllabus itself and the educational aspect were modernised, which is manifested by the transformations taking place in Berger Secondary School in Poznan.

These transformations concerned both the building and equipment of the school. They were of innovative character and were driven by the need to educate and prepare large groups of graduates to future work serving their home country, mainly in the area of industry and trade, but also in state offices. Professions of the students' parents also suggest that they wanted to place their children in this school in order to prepare them to do similar jobs. The school report, in the part describing statistics concerning students in 1928/1929 school year, lists merchants and trade entrepreneurs as the most common jobs – 63 cases. Other Professional groups were: post office and railway clerks (39), craftsmen (38), state officials (38), industrialists (35) and freelance occupations (31).³⁰ The involvement of parents into the work of the school is worth mentioning. After 1918, state general education schools in Poland were no longer paid schools, which significantly worsened their financial situation, especially regarding equipment. Since parents of students going to Berger Mathematical-Natural Secondary School understood the need to continuously supply the school with various study aids and its innovative development, they decided to subscribe to a fund for the school. In 1923 a parents' association was set up, which subsidized various educational needs of the school every year.³¹

After Polish authorities took over the school from Germans, also its equipment was transferred. However, in spite of an earlier action aimed at preserving the good condition of the school, the equipment was damaged and devastated. In 1918 Polish authorities appointed Father Rankowski as the school's Headmaster. He, seeing that the school laboratories and library were already partially plundered, ordered German teachers – still heads of individual laboratories – to make an inventory of the collections. Should they fail to do so, they would be charged for the whole collections. This certainly helped protect the school's collections, which, over time, were completed and modernised.³²

The teachers' library was quite well equipped. Although, due to Bismarck's policy, most of the works were in German, there were also many books in Polish. All the volumes were stamped with official stamps in Polish and German. The

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 16.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 9.

³² Ibidem, p. 5.

library, of mathematical-natural character, could pride itself on having incredibly rich collections of mathematical works. They were praised by professionals, and frequently used by specialists from the Mathematical Department at Poznan University, set up in 1919. The library was regularly complemented with new works. In autumn 1919 a students' library was opened and its collection was also expanded on a regular basis.

Due to the character of Berger Secondary School in Poznan, science laboratories were equipped and developed with great care. For this reason, in 1920–1921, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Enlightenment gave a subsidy of a significant amount of 4,500,000 Polish marks for the purpose of furnishing the physics, chemistry and biology laboratory, which was allotted by the Education Office of Poznan District to Berger Secondary School. The subsidy was also complemented largely thanks to the understanding and support of the parents' association, and thanks to private donations, both from parents and students.

The physics laboratory, damaged and neglected during the war, was under special care after 1919. Instruments necessary for experiments were completed, partially created by students themselves. In 1929 there were 1990 items on the inventory. A physics exercise room was also organised. There was a room 10m by 6.5m, with 8 tables connected to electricity, gas, water, with the teacher's table. Next to it was a room for exercises – equipped in devices to perform experiments in mechanics and optics. There was also a mechanical workstation with a lathe. The physics laboratory was a place for after-school meetings of special-interests groups, during which students ran independent workshop activities.³³ Physics club, and especially its radio-amateur section was of widely recognised, since it could pride itself on serious achievements. In October 1927 this section organised a radio exhibition with student-made exhibits, such as two working short-wave transmitters – they caused great interest and admiration among visitors. As proof of recognition, the section received the highest award, i.e. 'recognition certificate', and a tangible reward. The section had a separate room, from which it connected over short waves with practically the whole world. The ceremony of the 75th anniversary of Berger Secondary School in 1927 was broadcast by the section with the help of self-constructed transmitter.

This type of secondary school required good equipment and activity of a biology laboratory, which was rebuilt and furnished in 1920–1921. There were four rooms in the biology laboratory, with: an exercise room, a teacher's laboratory, a cultivation room and a reference library. There were about 1800 items on the inventory of the laboratory, with teaching aids and scientific devices, as well as natural history collections gathered in twelve cupboards in the halls of the

³³ Ibidem, p. 29.

building. The municipality gave the school a botanical garden for their use, located next to the building.³⁴

A chemistry laboratory was taken over from Germans in a lamentable condition. Since the type of the school required a laboratory of this kind, there were systematic efforts put into re-creating it. In 1929 the school had average equipment in the chemistry laboratory, i.e. 427 devices, 556 chemicals, 15 new devices were purchased, and many containers and reagents that were used in the classroom on a daily basis.³⁵

The school undertook efforts to create a laboratory of craft, design and technology, which – as it was then claimed – ‘should become the organisation centre for this kind of education’. The subject of CDT was realised in accordance with the Ministry’s syllabus for mathematics-natural secondary schools. Initially, due to a lack of one separate laboratory, classes took place in various classrooms. In April 1927 the school received 1,500 zloty from the Municipality for the organisation of a CDT laboratory. Then, from 1926/1927 school year, a separate CDT laboratory was created, with necessary tools for cardboard and bookbinding activities. Since there were no tools for carpentry and metalwork, initially woodwork was done with the use of tools such as: a blade, a rasp, a file, a saw. In this way, in spite of no access to more complex tools, students bound books and made teaching aids from wood. Younger students did work on cardboard, saddle-stitched copybooks. It was also possible to join a course of aero modelling.³⁶

Berger Mathematical-Natural secondary school in Poznan also had a drawing laboratory. The one inherited from Germans was not suitable for the needs, therefore it needed to be furnished and modernised. For this reason, old tables were remade into lighter ones, easy to move, with new worktops and devices to hang and lean the canvas against. Moreover, several models and vessels were bought to replace the damaged and unsuitable ones, as well as several dozen portable tables for drawing outdoors. The room was furnished with wooden painting chests, which were used to sit on for models, but also as models for drawing. Exhibitions were organised using works created in the drawing laboratory.³⁷

Some of the laboratories ran classes using the laboratory method, previously not used and not popular, due to the lack of proper rooms.

Even though the syllabus in secondary schools in the Prussian partition included a large number of gymnastics classes (the largest number of all subjects – 27 weekly in each type), independent Poland made a lot of effort to raise the

³⁴ Ibidem pp. 32–33.

³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 32–33.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 6, 33–34.

³⁷ Ibidem, pp. 34–35.

importance of physical education. Hence, in 1929 in Berger Secondary School, thanks to the efforts of a PE teacher, Dr Kotecki, the help of parents' association, and a subsidy received from Ministry of RAaPE, the construction of a new gym was started. As a result, school students understood better the importance of physical education and became more active in the sports area.³⁸

The school described in this paper existed in this form until 1939, i.e. until the outbreak of World War 2. For the needs of this paper, the end date is 1928/1929 school year, since that was the year of the 75th anniversary, celebrations and meetings related to it, which provoked to reflect and to sum up the ten years of Berger Secondary School in Poznan after regaining independence. It also encouraged going back in the whole history of the school, since its beginnings. On the anniversary of the celebrations, in November 1928, an initiative of setting up an 'Association of Former Students of Berger Secondary School' was undertaken.³⁹

Conclusion

Referring to the main research problem of this paper, i.e. the type of Realschule and its significance in the context of the revival of the Polish state, a few issues should be discussed.

First of all, it is of great importance that various Polish demands for the reform of education were made by Polish thinkers. They postulated the reform of education and school upbringing that would reflect, through patriotic upbringing, national life, the active participation of the young in social life, develop strong characters of the young, and their fitness. The quantity of teaching should be limited, with changes introduced in its quality, i.e. wider practical education, with more mathematics-natural sciences and arts subjects, as well as modern languages.⁴⁰ In this context, a fundamental revival of the school concerning the content, teaching methods and cooperation with students was called for, with more liberal and subject-related teaching, a balance of relationships between teachers and students.

The rising movement of 'New Education' in view of Poland's revival after 123 years of bondage may be described as the one that reflected the national character of pursuits of that time and matched the main direction of then dominant national pedagogy. It was strongly naturalistic, with pragmatism, practicality, and usefulness. It undoubtedly contributed to the strong trends of realising this direction in institutional education in Poland of that time. In this way, it created the foundation for discarding verbal methods, previously dominating in school.

³⁸ Ibidem, pp. 6–7.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 49.

⁴⁰ Drynda, D. *Geneza „Nowego Wychowania” w Polsce, ...*, (op. cit.), p. 36.

Methods promoted by 'New Education', related to practicality and usefulness matched the trend to rebuild Polish school, propagated by Ministry of Education. From now on, school was to educate and raise a new generation of Poles ready to serve the newly-revived state in many fields.

Therefore the 'real' type of general education secondary schools after 1918 gained importance in preparation of future specialists and the country's elite. Hence, it was justified to strengthen the position of real-natural secondary schools as equal secondary schools in the basis for future university education.⁴¹ Berger Mathematics-Natural secondary school in Poznan is a perfect example of this. This school showed how important in the education-upbringing process it was to create conditions and space for unrestrained, independent development of the young. The exceptional character and high level of the school are shown in the fact that after WW2, lecturers and students of Poznan School of Engineers (today: Poznan University of Technology) found their place in the building of the school, continuing its traditions and good practices.

⁴¹ Szmyd, K. (2000). Zachodnia myśl pedagogiczna i jej postulaty reform szkoły średniej na łamach kwartalnika „Muzeum” (1890–1914). In A. Meissner (Eds.) *Cz. Majorek Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, vol. 14, *Pedagogika nowego wychowania w Polsce u schyłku XIX i w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, ed., Rzeszów, p. 194.