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Introduction

The History of Education: Jesuits and Schooling

The 80th birthday of Fr. Prof. Ludwik Grzebień SJ—a Jesuit, historian and researcher of the history of the Jesuit Order in Poland—was the inspiration for the preparation and publication of the 4th issue of *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana* on the history of the Jesuits and their educational activity. Until now, the Professor has published almost 1400 texts, which include “the history of African missionaries and a text about the pastoral ministry among the Polish immigrants in America at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, works about Khyriv (...), about Jesuit schools and the WAM Publishing House, [and] about Jesuits in Lviv, Toruń, Pułtusk, Kraków, and Sandomierz” (Terlecki 2010: 21), as well as a two-volume bibliography of the history of the Society of Jesus in Poland. The newest of his books include *The Inventory of the Southern Province of the Society of Jesus in Kraków. Manuscripts up to 1820*. Apart from those historical images, editions of sources, biographies and bibliographies, lexicons, and other tools supporting the future

generations of researchers in developing their scientific skills, we have to add local monographs, such as his history of Dobrzechów or of the parish in Strzyżów. This is because Prof. Ludwik Grzebień is the “master of details, historical features, little things that constitute the monument of the past ages” (Terlecki 2010: 21). In order to celebrate the above-mentioned anniversary in the proper manner, the editorial board invited a group of foreign researchers whose scientific activity and published works are connected with restoring the history of the Society of Jesus and developing the knowledge of Jesuit education.

The first small group of Jesuits came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1564 to support and develop the Catholic Church’s educational activities. Within only two decades, the new Order significantly extended the area of its influence, opening new educational institutions, teaching more and more local students, getting involved in theological discussions, and promoting the patterns of piety referring to the decisions of the Council of Trent. The presence of the Jesuits in Poland, which lasted for 200 years, was naturally connected with their involvement in almost all fields of social activity. Their involvement in the life of the Catholic Church, in the humanistic education of intelligent and religious people, exerted a good influence on the country’s political life. Piotr Skarga was the symbol of such interactions and correlations, and, at the same time, contradicting evaluations. Other people important to shaping the Polish intellectual, political, and spiritual culture include Jakub Wujek, Grzegorz Piramowicz, Adam Naruszewicz, and Franciszek Bohomolec.

The suppression of the Order of Jesuits (1773) has not removed them from the Polish educational space, tradition and pedagogical culture. Almost 500 former Jesuits got involved in the actions and works of the Commission of the National Education. Others lived in the former Polish lands annexed by Russia after the first partition, and educated people were under the supervision of the tzars until the Order was restored. “Belarus, with Polotsk, became the international centre of the Order’s activity, which morally supported the works of former Jesuits scattered all around the world” (Grzebień 2014). Expelled from Russia, they settled in Galicia, other European countries and other continents, but they did not give up the management of schools, seminars, universities or use of other forms of education. In the changing political and social-economical conditions of the 19th

and 20th centuries, the Society of Jesus, faithful to its own educational tradition, was looking for pedagogical inspirations, reaching out, first of all, to the sources of Ignatian spirituality, “giving the man of the 21st century the tool of a personal, full development based on values, openness to the world and its challenges, and teaching critical thinking, which is so useful in the context of the postmodern pluralism” (Królikowska 2010: 8).

We hope that the texts included in this issue shall help the readers to extend their knowledge of the Jesuits’ pedagogy and the circumstances and conditions of its functioning, and to reflect on searching for inspirations for educational modernity in tradition.

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