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Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's Concept of Rehabilitation and its Contemporary Interpretation

Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz koncepcja resocjalizacji i jej współczesna interpretacja

Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the concept of social rehabilitation developed by Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz, who went down in the history of Polish science as an outstanding and special educator. Her achievements are cited not only by educators: Researchers in juvenile criminology, child psychology and psychiatry also refer to her research in the area of the social maladjustment/derailment of children and adolescents. She was a brilliant methodologist of revalidation work, a talented writer and academic teacher. The article is based on the method of content analysis. Based on selected sources from the literature on the subject, the author explores the concept of social rehabilitation described and practised by Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz and determines its meaning in contemporary social rehabilitation pedagogy.

Keywords: social rehabilitation, treatment, social exclusion, child, youth

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza koncepcji resocjalizacji Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz, która zapisała się w historii polskiej nauki jako wybitny pedagog specjalny. Jej dorobek jest przywoływany nie tylko przez pedagogów, gdyż kryminologia nieletnich czy psychologia i psychiatria dziecięca także odwołują się do jej

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badań w obszarze niedostosowania społecznego/wykolejenia dzieci i młodzieży. Była genialnym metodykiem pracy rewalidacyjnej, utalentowaną pisarką i nauczycielem akademickim. Artykuł oparto o metodę analizy treści, by na podstawie wyselekcjonowanych źródeł z literatury przedmiotu, poszukać odpowiedzi na pytanie, na czym polegała koncepcja resocjalizacji opisana i praktykowana przez Natalię Han-Ilgiewicz i jakie jest jej znaczenie we współczesnej pedagogice resocjalizacyjnej.

Słowa kluczowe: resocjalizacja, rewalidacja, niedostosowanie społeczne, dziecko, młodzież.

Introduction

The figure of Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz occupies a special place in Polish pedagogy. The texts that she has left behind, as well as the testimonies of her students and pupils¹ allow us to recognise her contribution to Polish pedagogy as outstanding. Her biography could be a screenplay for an action film with a romantic theme. She was born into a patriotic family, who emigrated to Siberia due to her father's political activity. She returned to the Republic of Poland and, at an early age, married a White Guard, which had its, also political, consequences. She and her family often moved home, which affected her primary, secondary and higher education. Later, she was involved in grassroots work in institutions for special needs children, which were created for the first time in the interwar period. Finally, she took part in the first pedagogical experiment – a camp for delinquent boys at Lake Baikal. In post-war times, she faced new challenges and worked in care and educational institutions for war orphans and children with disabilities. She was also involved in research and

1 'We have always felt her kindness to people – to homeless children, whom she looked after at Baikal Lake after the revolution, juvenile criminals from the Powiśle district in Warsaw and to us – her students' (from the memories of Professor M. Braun-Gałkowska), E. Talik, A. Dobrowolska-Nowak (based on information prepared by Professor M. Braun-Gałkowska), *Prof. dr Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz*, https://www.kul.pl/art_18836.html, accessed: 15 February 2020; E. Umińska-Tytoń, *Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz pedagog leczniczy (1895–1978)*. 'Wspomnienie w setną rocznicę urodzin', *Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne*, 1 (4) (1995), pp. 35–42; E. Umińska-Tytoń, *Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz (1895–1978) – pedagog leczniczy. Wspomnienia o prof. Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, w: *Chrześcijaństwo*, Vol. 20, (ed.) bp B. Bejze, Niepokalanów 1993, pp. 9–134.

the education of students. Her concept of pedagogy of children and young people 'with special educational needs' and descriptions of pedagogical experiences have been the subjects of many studies.

Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz was a student and then a collaborator of Maria Grzegorzewska (who wrote the introduction to her books: *Dziecko w konflikcie z prawem karnym*² [A Child in Conflict with Criminal Law] and *W naszej szkole*³ [In Our School]) and shared the view about the need to include rehabilitation pedagogy in special needs education as a sub-discipline and direction for student education.

Methodology of research on source texts

This article is based on the analysis of the content of works by Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz published between the 1920s and 1960s and available in the collections of the Jagiellonian Library.⁴ The literature search was primarily in the catalogue of digitised works. Moreover, the sources are publications that fit in with the reception of Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's pedagogical thought, that is, studies of her original texts, scientific articles and monographs on her output. The content analysis used in the research of sources is a non-reactive research method, which consists of the creative development of a set of existing data and the creation of useful summaries.⁵ The selection of source materials was initially to be carried out on the basis of key words contained in the titles of her publications, yet unsatisfactory results from the search conducted in this way necessitated the use of full printed texts, available in the library's collections as separate texts (books and articles in journals), as well as studies. I have therefore analysed

2 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Dziecko w konflikcie z prawem karnym*, Warszawa 1965.

3 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *W naszej szkole. Reminiscencje o warszawskiej szkole dla chłopców społecznie niedostosowanych*, Warszawa 1962.

4 The Jagiellonian Library collections are included in the national library resource, see appendix to the announcement of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 3 October 2017 (item 1948) on the publication of the uniform text of the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of 4 July 2012 on the national library resource (Journal of Laws of 19 October 2017).

5 M. Makowska, *Analiza danych zastanych. Przewodnik dla studentów*, Warszawa 2013.

the author's scholarly and journalistic achievements, available at the library until the end of 2019.⁶

The cognitive goal of the research described in this article was to reconstruct the concept of social rehabilitation of socially maladjusted youths in the works of Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz. On the other hand, the main problem of the research undertaken was the question: what is her concept of social rehabilitation of socially maladjusted youths? The main problem was complemented by detailed questions about: the ways of defining social rehabilitation and its principles; the determinants of the social maladjustment of children and adolescents; the importance of the diagnosis of social maladjustment and diagnosing methods; and methods of rehabilitation activities in Han-Ilgiewicz's concept of rehabilitation.

Analysis of the collected research material Rehabilitation and its principles in Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's concept

Barbara Smolińska-Theiss has described the historical and social contexts of the beginnings of Polish pedagogy as follows:

The end of the century – a magic sign of the times in culture and history. Hope for independence. A mixture of expectations and the belief in the power of ideas and symbols. Opposing positions. On one hand, there was scientism – the hope for exploring the truth and, on the other side – mysticism and even occultism. On one side, the revolted masses and the spectre of communism were growing in force in Europe and, on the opposite side, there were *Rerum Novarum* and the ever-growing voice of the Church and Catholic social teaching. The industrial revolution and agrarianism followed by cooperatives. Mystical Bronisław Trentowski with his pedagogical journal *Chowanna* and utopian-leftist Edward Abramowski with his *Rzeczpospolitą Przyjaciół* [Republic of Friends]. The social life dominated by the Polish educational movement, which Ryszard Wroczyński and later Norman Davies have described as a phe-

6 The direct inspiration for writing this article was my own research carried out in 2017 on the category of a child's welfare in conflict with the law in Polish pedagogy. The analysis of this research category in the pedagogical thought of Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz has been described in my publication: J. Kuształ, *Dobro dziecka w procesie resocjalizacji. Aspekty pedagogiczne i prawne*, Kraków 2018, pp. 108–110.

nomenon on a European scale. Warsaw salons in social service. The beginnings of academic psychology, pedagogy and social work. Under such conditions, the psychology and pedagogy of a child was born and solidified. A child was a symbol of change, hope for change and also a symbol of goodness and purity. A child became the centre of attention of scientists gathered in the laboratories of Brussels and Geneva. Psychological tests, development measurements, detailed observation sheets concerning a child's biography gave hope that it would finally be possible to explore, measure and discover the rules of how a child thinks, learns and develops. This movement, called the New Upbringing, aroused continued interest. Child-centred, personalistic pedagogy and academic psychology were born, supporting a child who, in their own child's way, actively and creatively tried to get used to the world.⁷

In this spirit, Han-Ilgiewicz gained her first pedagogical experience, initially studying, then working in care facilities and schools, and then developing a scientific career. At that time, a scientific reflection on upbringing and then on the upbringing of 'delinquent' youths was born. Researchers began to develop the language of scientific description and research methods, which grew out of pedagogical reflection on the development and upbringing of a young person:

... unlike its European counterparts, the model of social rehabilitation did not become the exclusive domain of a practically oriented version of criminology, clinical psychology or the sociology of deviation. From the very beginning, it was articulated in the language of knowledge about upbringing, when doctors, lawyers and social activists also used this language.⁸

Social rehabilitation is traditionally understood as a sub-discipline of special needs education, because the subject of interest is a child or young person with special educational needs, as defined by Maria Grzegorzewska, the first Polish special needs educator. Its pedigree was described as medical, clinical and practised

7 B. Smolińska-Theiss, *Korczakowska idea praw dziecka*, in: *Pedagogika społeczna przestrzeń życia i edukacji*, (eds) M. Winiarski, W. Theiss, M. Konopczyński, Warszawa 2010, p. 345.

8 M. Sztuka, *Anachronizm i aktualność. Idea resocjalizacji w sporze o nowoczesność*, Kraków 2013, p. 85.

in the manner of natural sciences, which was in line with the positivist, then the dominant, research paradigm. Currently, scientific reflection on social rehabilitation is developing in two ways: on the one hand, we observe the emancipation of social rehabilitation from special needs education towards social sciences with a dominant interactive paradigm. On the other hand, aetiological research on the endogenous causes of crime, as well as neuro-biological and neuro-genetic research are developing.⁹ The competences of a special needs educator in educational institutions and the professional training of employees of the adult social rehabilitation system are now emphasised when educating social rehabilitation educators. The educational component gives way to interdisciplinary preparation, drawing on management science, criminology and political science.

In her scientific and journalistic works, Han-Ilgiewicz used the notions of rehabilitation pedagogy and revalidation to describe those activities that are currently referred to as social rehabilitation. In addition to them, she used the term 'criminal pedagogy'.¹⁰ The very concept of 'social rehabilitation' appears relatively less often than 'revalidation' or 're-education' and 'raising morally neglected or delinquent children': 'raising morally neglected children involves constant, incessant searching for ways to help and deepen our knowledge about a child in order to understand the complex processes occurring in their soul'.¹¹

Han-Ilgiewicz looked for adequate expressions for her pupils and their problems, but also actively opposed the stigmatisation of her students. During the 1st National Congress of Special Needs School Teachers, which took place between 19 and 22 December 1925, she proposed that 'establishments for the morally handicapped should not be called a "borstal", which expresses their criminal nature, but that their educational activity should be exposed'. So, she proposed the name 'special educational institution'.¹²

9 P. Kwiatkowski, *Teoretyczne konteksty profilaktyki niedostosowania społecznego*, Wrocław 2016.

10 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Dziecko w konflikcie z prawem karnym*, pp. 105–106; J. Kuształ, *Dobro dziecka w procesie resocjalizacji*, pp. 108–110.

11 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Dziecko krnąbrne i brutalne', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 8 (1931–1932) No. 4, pp. 196–201.

12 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Pisma: szkice, artykuły, rozprawy*, compilation and introduction by K. Poznański, Warszawa 1995, p. 17.

She identified the process of social rehabilitation with 'the revalidation of socially maladjusted youths',¹³ and saw her work as interdisciplinary, as part of a team and complementary to social activities in a community. She wrote: 'Special needs education, activities for so-called special care children, cannot be fully implemented without support in the form of the simultaneous influence of social pedagogy.'¹⁴ The very process of social rehabilitation – revalidation involves awakening, strengthening and directing a sense of responsibility.¹⁵ Professor Han-Ilgiewicz saw social rehabilitation not only as a process, but also as a system:

... the process of purposefulness of upbringing in an institution is inextricably linked with the need to profile institutions and establishments that are to serve various forms of work, such as: noticing, early diagnosis, counselling, multiple actions to revalidate an individual in a group and individually, prevention and gaining the widest possible base of people cooperating in opposing the phenomena of social deformation of certain factions of the young generation.¹⁶

According to her, the social rehabilitation system as a social subsystem includes educational, diagnostic and counselling institutions, childcare facilities, preventive centres, as well as post-care institutions. Thus, in her scientific works, she emphasised the role of prophylaxis in kindergartens, then at school, in preventive care centres and in post-penitentiary (post-educational) aid institutions:

involving young people who leave their current universities or meet at the educational counselling centre. Growing into a community, as we know, is a complicated process, full of numerous dangers and difficulties. That is why a benevolent hand of support is so desirable during this period.¹⁷

13 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Zagadnienie regulaminu zakładu wychowawczego', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 1 (1961) pp. 1–10.

14 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Z problematyki niedostosowania społecznego dzieci i młodzieży', *Przyjaciel dziecka*, 10 (1963) pp. 1–2.

15 Tamże.

16 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Próba analizy podstawowych założeń wychowania w zakładach dla społecznie niedostosowanych*, in: *Materiały do nauczania psychologii*, series 4, Vol. 1, (ed.) L. Wołoszynowa, Warszawa 1965, pp. 337–356.

17 *Ibid.*

The aim of any activities in Han-Ilgiewicz's concept of rehabilitation work¹⁸ was to educate and care for socially maladjusted children and youths, and the care was responsible, active and organised:

We are faced with the question of what position an educator should take in relation to such a child because, of course, everything that they do cannot be tolerated. We cannot remain indifferent where a child hurts the community, tyrannises the weaker and is approaching a life catastrophe. Passivity in relation to evil is no less immoral than evil itself. We cannot fail to react to a child's mental derailment, the more so as such a derailment is always a painful process that makes the child suffer.¹⁹

Reasons and conditions of social maladjustment of children and adolescents in Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's concept

In 1957, Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz lectured in psychological and pedagogical subjects as well as elements of criminology related to the issues of juvenile delinquency at the State Institute of Special Needs Education. The values of her scientific and popular science publishing as well as radio activities were the clarity of the message and references to examples of everyday life and her own professional and private experiences.²⁰ In this way, she defined categories that we would consider today as scientific and research, such as social maladjustment and juvenile delinquency. In her book entitled *Nieznosni chłopcy. Typy plastyczności psychicznej w diagnostyce szkolnej* [Unbearable Boys: Types of Mental Plasticity in School Diagnostics], she described the results of many years of work on determining the types of individual reaction style to various community stimuli. The language of the work is characterised by a high level of clarity and undoubted teaching talent.²¹

18 This subsection is an abridged version of the chapter of my publication entitled *Dobro dziecka w procesie resocjalizacji. Aspekty pedagogiczne i prawne* [A Child's Welfare in the Process of Rehabilitation: Pedagogical and legal aspects].

19 H. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Dziecko krnąbrne*, pp. 196–201.

20 Cf. e.g.: H. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Mozaikowe ścieżki*, Warszawa 1975; eadem, *W naszej szkole. Reminiscencje o warszawskiej szkole dla chłopców społecznie niedostosowanych*, Warszawa 1962.

21 H. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Nieznosni chłopcy. Typy plastyczności psychicznej w diagnostyce szkolnej*, Warszawa 1960.

In the following years, Professor Han-Ilgiewicz's works entitled *Potrzeby psychiczne dziecka. Refleksje charakterologiczne* [Psychological Needs of a Child: Characterological Reflections] and *Trudności wychowawcze i ich tło psychiczne* [Educational Difficulties and Their Psychological Background] were published. They introduced elements of clinical psychology to a teacher's preventive activity, 'which, after all, cannot be separated from teaching activities'.²² As Karol Poznański writes in his book entitled *Trudności wychowawcze i jej tło psychiczne* [Educational Difficulties and Their Psychological Background], she included 'a popular review of rehabilitation measures at the disposal of schools for both special needs and normal children'.²³

In the area of the aetiology of social maladjustment of children and adolescents, Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz presented a positivist point of view, perceiving social pathology as a disease of the entire society, and the methods of preventing and combating it as a social, not an individual obligation. As she wrote: 'Juvenile delinquency grows and becomes permanent in the absence of proper cooperation between a weak individual and their local community, which also did not come into contact with wider society at the right time'.²⁴

She searched for the causes of maladjustment in a child's personality and in external conditions, which also fits with the then dominant deterministic way of explaining social and individual phenomena:

... we take too little into account of the seemingly secondary upbringing factor: the type of contact between a child and an adult. Our pupils come to us with strongly defined frameworks of distorted contacts. They already have their proven, though not always fortunate, mode of behaviour. They have life experience formed based on previous conflicts with their family, neighbours and also with their previous school or schools.²⁵

22 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, in: N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Pisma: szkice, artykuły, rozprawy*, p. 26. Poznański quotes Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's ideas published in her work: *Trudności wychowawcze i ich tło psychiczne*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 32–34.

23 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, pp. 32–34, Poznański quotes a fragment of Han-Ilgiewicz's work entitled *Trudności wychowawcze i ich tło psychiczne*.

24 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Refleksje pedagoga na temat wychowania młodzieży niedostosowanej', *Nowa Szkoła*, 7/8 (1964) pp. 64–67.

25 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Łamigłówki pedagogiczne*, in: eadem, *Mozaikowe ścieżki*, pp. 191–192.

She wrote that ‘the very concept of asociality consists of the inability to adapt to the requirements of the environment and to subordinate one’s self to the interests of other individuals’.²⁶ By studying the phenomenon of social maladjustment, ‘criminal delinquency’ and ‘moral handicap’, she described and explained phenomena whose characteristics are close to contemporary social rehabilitation educators who study the phenomenon of resilience:

For many years, I have been keenly interested in the phenomenon of mental immunity, which means that – with the existence of apparently identical systems of conditions not conducive to the normal development of the psyche – we find that only some individuals definitely succumb to the demoralising pressure. Others, on the other hand, not only do not supply the group of delinquent people, but sometimes even make an effective self-regenerative effort...²⁷

In her research on the phenomenon of mental plasticity, that is, the degree of susceptibility to educational influence, she took into account the ability to criticise, select influences, choose a decision and act consistently: ‘Example, coercion, persuasion and the role of a child within their group sculpt their character, leave a trace’²⁸.

The concept of mental plasticity understood in this way seems to largely correspond to today’s concept of responsivity, which is studied and constitutes the basis for constructing a corrective intervention in the contemporary risk-need-responsivity model.²⁹ The research conducted by Han-Ilgiewicz referred to the research results obtained and the psychological and criminological concepts developed by her contemporaries³⁰: she adapted the then popular psy-

26 Ibid.

27 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Więź rodzinna u młodzieży społecznie niedostosowanej*, in: *Materiały do nauczania psychologii*, series 4, Vol. 1, (ed.) L. Wołoszynowa, Warszawa 1965, pp. 337–356; eadem, ‘Immunitet psychiczny i jego rola w pedagogice leczniczej’, *Szkoła Specjalna*, 18 (1957) No. 3, pp. 129–146.

28 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Więź rodzinna*.

29 M. Muskała, *Odstąpienie od przestępczości w teorii i praktyce resocjalizacyjnej*, Poznań 2017.

30 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Zastosowanie terapeutyczne testu Szondiego*, „Rocznik Filozoficzny”, 4 (1958) pp. 39–58.

chological tests by Leopold Szondi, based on 'drive needs',³¹ used Kurt Lewin's concept of conflict³² and her texts included 'F[ritz] Künkl's method of crisis and sometimes her own method of active union'.³³ She very often referred to institutional solutions used in Western European countries. During conferences, conventions and study visits, she gathered experience and literature on the rehabilitation of socially maladjusted youths. At that time, she visited juvenile courts and care and educational institutions, and participated in numerous scientific conferences.³⁴

The importance of the diagnosis of social maladjustment and diagnostic methods in the concept of rehabilitation of children and adolescents

The diagnosis of social maladjustment for the needs of social rehabilitation in Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz's work was of fundamental importance, as she herself stated in one of her popular science texts:

Understanding a child was always not 'the most important' but the most interesting to me. What are you? What made you like this? What are your opportunities? Where does it hurt? Getting to know and understanding each person is a passionate task in relation to a child, it is something mystical. Sometimes it affects their future. It may help them. It may also hurt them if we recklessly judge them or if our diagnosis is static rather than dynamic.³⁵

Diagnostics is a separate area of pedagogical activities:

Pedagogical diagnostics has become an indispensable part of the upbringing process. A thorough and comprehensive knowledge of our student is

31 *Ibid.*

32 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *O możliwościach zastosowania Lewinowskiej teorii konfliktu w akcji rewalidacji i profilaktyki w zakresie przestępczości nieletnich*, „Zagadnienia Karno-Administracyjne”, 5 (1964) pp. 48–49.

33 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Zastosowanie terapeutyczne*, pp. 39–58.

34 Cf. K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, pp. 18, 21–22.

35 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Mozaikowe ścieżki*, p. 193.

the basic element of effective education. To help them, facilitate their development and get them back on track – you need to get to know the child and choose the right steps for their upbringing.³⁶

In pedagogical diagnostics, she used various methods for getting to know pupils, specific to her times; she successfully used both psychological tests and methods that today we would describe as qualitative.

In my search for the sources of the derailment of children and young people, I used numbers, which I have never regretted. However, I always remember the words of our guide that statistics are a reliable collaborator, but can never be our boss.³⁷

In the process of diagnosis, she used individual folders, which she perceived as a special method of collecting diagnostic material:

... thanks to her permanent stay at school, she was also able to observe the boys more closely and study their mechanisms of action. She was interested in every manifestation of the psyche, every fact that allowed her to understand their reaction and behaviour. She also spent a lot of time keeping individual folders, which contained more and more material about the pupils. ... She also presented them as a method of collecting observational material.³⁸

Among the methods and tools for diagnosing a child's upbringing needs, Han-Ilgiewicz listed the following: 'the way of exploring a child's environment' (community interview – the author's note), 'talking with a child', 'careful observation', 'sheets' and 'cards', as well as 'a biographical notebook' which includes comprehensive 'data on a child's environment, atmosphere, physical and spiritual development, character, as well as their hobbies and talents'.³⁹ She also wrote:

36 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Problem indywidualizacji w wychowaniu', *Problemy opiekuńczo-wychowawcze*, 10 (1965) pp. 1–4.

37 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Mozaikowe ścieżki*, p. 204.

38 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, pp. 17–18.

39 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Teczka indywidualna. Metoda zbierania materiału obserwacyjnego', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 8 (1931–1932) No. 1, pp. 27–33.

... in addition to a biographical notebook, each child should have a kind of archive, which the French call a dossier, where they collect all documents that have any connection with the child. Such an individual folder, therefore, contains opinions issued by the school the child previously attended, their school certificate, birth certificate, all photos of the pupil and their family that we have managed to collect, their parents' letters to the school, and all kinds application forms they submitted, more interesting drawings, the work and essays of the child, characteristic notebooks and letters written by the child to their tutor in various circumstances. Moreover, the folder contains a kind of diary, where we record, in chronological order, our comments and observations about the child during their stay at the school and data about them after leaving school. – this folder is a supplement to the biographical notebook, where we present the results of our observations, while referring to the relevant numbers of documents contained in the folder.⁴⁰

In the search for the most adequate diagnostic methods, she used analysis of the children's work, projection methods and the latest tests by foreign authors, which she brought back from her travels to the west and south of Europe.⁴¹

Methods of rehabilitation practised by Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz

The State Institute of Special Needs Education (Polish: *Państwowy Instytut Pedagogiki Specjalnej* – PIPS), where Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz studied and then lectured, was established shortly after the establishment of the Free Polish University in 1920. As Mariusz Sztuka believes, in addition to lecturers (Maria Grzegorzewska, Helena Radlińska, Józefa Joteyko, Sergiusz Hessen, Janusz Korczak), both these universities shared:

... a common educational and social worldview, expressing the idea of working for the weakest with the use of valuable scientific knowledge.
... The ideological legacy of the rebellious intelligentsia of the late nineteenth century is reflected in the way in which Polish interwar pedagogy

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Zastosowanie terapeutyczne*, pp. 39–58.

dealt with problems, while at the same time being an element integrating its then basic detailed branches, that is, social pedagogy, a science about the educational system (M. Falski and S. Radwan), and special needs pedagogy represented by Grzegorzewska's environment.⁴²

Before Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz joined PIPS, she studied law in Vilnius, where she also obtained a doctoral degree.⁴³ Previously, however, she worked in many care facilities for children with special needs, including blind and visually impaired children, and then focused only on working with socially mal-adjusted children. It was then that she took up the unprecedented challenge of organising a summer camp at Lake Baikal. As Poznański describes it:

At the beginning of February, a defectology congress was held in Petrograd. Natalia Hanowa took part in it and presented her Baikal experiment to one committee. Antoni Makarenko, who became very interested in the effects of her work in the camp, also took part in the debate.⁴⁴

When characterising the methodology of work in the educational and correctional facility near Vilnius of the then Ministry of Justice in Wielciany, K. Poznański writes:

She divided the pupils (60 – J. K.) into small groups, which allowed her to get to know each of them quickly and establish personal contacts. She worked for two or three hours a day with each group. She was the first to start teaching in the morning and the last to finish classes before dinner. On Sundays, in the common room, she conducted recreational activities. One day a week was free from school.⁴⁵

Using foreign experience and, above all, the experience of Polish social educators, Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz applied methods of acting on a child, on their peer group and, above all, on their family in her rehabilitation work.

Therefore, I am of the opinion that the hours devoted to individual talks with parents should be seriously included in the general timeta-

42 M. Sztuka, *Anachronizm i aktualność*, p. 81.

43 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, pp. 13–14.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

ble of a teacher-tutor. These are hours of completely real creative work, which cannot be replaced by casual meetings or information provided during parent-teacher conferences. We must have time to be able to calmly, leisurely, in an atmosphere of friendly conversation, talk to the people on whom the success of our efforts regarding children depends to a large extent.⁴⁶

Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz described the system of institutional rehabilitation in the facility she managed in the following way:

The new formula of the impact of social rehabilitation on pupils was as follows: at the beginning of his stay in the institution, a boy was sent to an observation facility, which was organised in such a way that each juvenile referred here received a separate room – a box. He could arrange and maintain it as he liked. In addition to the room with boxes, the observation facility had a small playroom (a common room), where the boys spent their free hours and had books on specific topics and games at their disposal – making it possible to observe their motor skills, patience and experienced emotions. ... After spending time under observation (approximately three months), the boy could return to his home school and the class teacher then received detailed diagnostic information about his character and instructions as to the recommended procedures. If the observation showed that the main reason for the delinquency was improper family relations, the boy was also sent back to his home school and his tutor (guardian) was instructed to start influencing his parents in order to normalise their attitude towards the child, or these tasks were taken over by the employees of the institution, and the boy stayed in the boarding school until the climate for his upbringing by his family improved. If, on the other hand, during his stay under observation, the boy showed significant anomalies and difficulties requiring the influence of a specialist on his upbringing, he remained in the institution.⁴⁷

In both methodology and diagnosis, she used separate 'methods of dealing with specific cases',⁴⁸ emphasising the principle of individualisation in their

46 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Konflikt dziecka z rodziną', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 10 (1933) No. 1, pp. 1–13.

47 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, p. 19.

48 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Psychopedagogika dzieci moralnie upośledzonych. Program wykładów i zajęć w PIPS z lat 1928–1929', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 5 (1928–1929) No. 3–4, pp. 193–194.

selection, while treating both individual and group methods as complementary.⁴⁹ She was not a supporter of the collective approach, which was dominant at that time, and she did not speak in terms of the socialist ideal of a pupil or citizen.⁵⁰ She was an opponent of punishments in upbringing, which was ahead of her time. It is worth noting that she wrote about this problem in 1960, and the Republic of Poland only introduced a ban on corporal punishment in the provisions of the Family and Guardianship Code in 2010.⁵¹ Han-Ilgiewicz unequivocally assessed adults using such 'upbringing methods':

The vast majority of punishments inflicted on children by adults violate the principles of pedagogy and testify to the social immaturity of those who apply them. They are evidence of either ignorance, desperate helplessness, or personal complexes of adults claiming the right to a child... Punishment – sometimes it can only worsen the situation. Disregarding the incident is no less dangerous. Haste and partiality are unacceptable. Sometimes the intervention of a therapeutic pedagogue, a longer treatment, a radical change of the existing upbringing methods will turn out to be necessary. One thing seems indisputable: the deterrent penalties system has gone bankrupt. It only evokes a protest, a desire to retaliate, neurotic states and indifference.⁵²

She saw special isolation institutions as an *ultima ratio* in the social rehabilitation system and their place in the system as a kind of temporary upbringing measure of an intervention nature:

I fully agree with the postulate that the existence of special needs institutions for socially maladjusted children and youth is a *malum necessarium*, associated with insufficient preventive action in the field of upbringing.

49 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Problem indywidualizacji w wychowaniu*, pp. 1–4.

50 *Ibid.*

51 The Act of 10 June 2010 amending the Act on counteracting domestic violence and certain other acts (Journal of Laws 2010, No. 125, item 842) amended the Family and Guardianship Code by adding Art. 96 1 reading as follows: 'persons exercising parental authority and exercising the care or custody of a minor are prohibited from using corporal punishment'.

52 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, 'Karać czy zapobiegać', *Rodzina i Szkoła*, 11 (1960) p. 3.

We cannot, however, close our eyes to a specific fact; there are strikingly atypical individuals.⁵³

She clearly emphasised the necessity of treating institutions as temporary, and she described teachers who said that children became attached to the institution and did not want to return home as not understanding the main purpose of the upbringing measure used. She noticed conformity and fear of being responsible for one's own behaviour in such institutions.⁵⁴

An attempt to synthesise and evaluate Han-Ilgiewicz's concept of social rehabilitation from the perspective of a modern social rehabilitation educator: Interdisciplinary research and pedagogical reflection in the service of the socially maladjusted

Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz was a special needs educator, but she understood both her education and activities aimed at the revalidation and rehabilitation of young people in an interdisciplinary way, which was consistent with the understanding of social activities aimed at serving the socially maladjusted at that time.⁵⁵

Erudition, knowledge of foreign languages (she was a teacher of German, fluent in French, Russian and English) and a patriotic upbringing at home, and then her legal, psychological and pedagogical education allowed Professor Han-Ilgiewicz to combine various cognitive perspectives and holistically capture a delinquent child, along with their 'mental immunity', 'mental plasticity' and also their school and family environment. Today, we continue to develop the basic methods of working with children, the family and the environment in social and rehabilitation pedagogy and social work.

53 N. Han-ilgiewicz, 'Zagadnienie regulaminu zakładu wychowawczego', *Szkoła Specjalna*, 22 (1961) No. 1, pp. 1–10.

54 Cf. N. Han-ilgiewicz, *Próba analizy podstawowych założeń wychowania w zakładach dla społecznie niedostosowanych*, in: *Materiały do nauczania psychologii*, series 4, Vol. 1, (ed.) L. Wołoszynowa, Warszawa 1965, pp. 337–356.

55 Cf. M. Sztuka, *Anachronizm i aktualność*, p. 85.

Natalia Han-Ilgiewicz can be a model for contemporary researchers and initiators of changes and reforms in the domestic social welfare system, education system and institutional rehabilitation system. She looked abroad for inspiration for building and reforming the system of education and care for socially delinquent children, where she conducted comparative research. Thanks to her travels abroad, she was able to obtain information, analyse research results and visit establishments and facilities for young people:

So she visited correctional facilities all over Poland: in Herby, Cieszyn, Studzieniec, Szubin, Antoniewo, Kamień Pomorski, Chojnice and so on. During the summer holidays in 1930, equipped with appropriate documents and letters of recommendation, she left for England, Belgium, France, Spain, Germany and Switzerland to visit childcare institutions, juvenile courts and educational institutions there. ... continuing her research, in April 1931 she left for Yugoslavia, and two years later she spent almost a month in Italy.⁵⁶

As a supporter of a systemic approach to the prevention of juvenile delinquency, she was a member of the then bodies established for legislative changes, at both international and national levels. Nowadays, when voices have been raised for about 20 years about the need to amend the 1982 Act on Juvenile Proceedings and the need to create a juvenile code by a commission appointed by successive ministers, composed primarily of lawyers, her experience seems particularly up to date, about which Poznański writes as follows:

She undertook studies on the files of the codification commission. She examined the minutes of the meetings concerning the formulation of the provisions of the penal code concerning minors. Her astonishment and bitterness were aroused by the fact that only a dozen or so distinguished lawyers and scientists were discussing this so important and enormous matter, but there was not a single educator among them, and there was no woman when the fate of the children was at stake.⁵⁷

56 K. Poznański, *Droga życiowa Natalii Han-Ilgiewicz*, p. 18.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

After the end of World War II, Professor Han-Ilgiewicz was delegated on behalf of the Institute of Mental Hygiene to a congress dedicated to the child victims of war, which was held in Zurich from 1 to 28 September 1945. 'She participated in the fourth section – the legal one, discussing the state of needs in the prevention of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice'.⁵⁸ She emphasised the need for interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial teams integrating practitioners, tutors, teachers and the scientific community as follows:

... Therefore, it seems necessary to establish an inter-ministerial institution whose task would be to combine the achievements of scientists and practitioners of various fields in this subject. The scope of its competences, in addition to research, the compilation and collection of materials, would include wide-ranging informative and consultative activities, providing assistance to local organisations, dealing with the issue of counteracting the symptoms of the social maladjustment of individuals and youth groups.⁵⁹

The universality and timelessness of Han-Ilgiewicz's concept of rehabilitation is also evident in today's postulates of social and pedagogical activity aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency, such as the need to synchronise and coordinate actions by as many institutions as possible and 'involving [an effective re-education, rehabilitation, upbringing action, undertaken as part of special needs education – the author's note] representatives of the youths themselves, evoking interest in the emerging problems and opportunities of the healthiest, and thus the most dynamic, fractions of youth'.⁶⁰ She thus emphasised the role of risk behaviour prevention and strategies that we would call today educational, alternative or leadership. She saw the activity of a social rehabilitation educator as a profession needed in her contemporary times and in the future as an educational mission, creative help and service not only for specific people and groups, but also for the entire society. Namely, she saw a reintegrating

58 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

59 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Próba analizy podstawowych*, pp. 337–356.

60 N. Han-Ilgiewicz, *Dziecko w konflikcie z prawem karnym*, pp. 163–164, as quoted in: J. Kusztal, *Dobro dziecka w procesie resocjalizacji*, pp. 108–110.

potential in it, which, thanks to its readiness and activity, can counteract and prevent symptoms of social maladjustment:

I see the future of rehabilitation pedagogy in the sensitisation, creative attitude and the broadest range of pedagogisation of the entire society, which we, specialist teachers, should provide with factual, really necessary information and tips on the various forms of effective counteraction and prevention measures.⁶¹

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