

# Teaching Handicrafts as Described in the Methodical Journals of the Polish Teachers' Union (1927-1939)

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**ABSTRACT:** Handicrafts understood as an educational activity combining hands-on practice with aesthetics, appeared in Polish public schools after World War I on the wave of social and educational changes initiated at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the inter-war years, the problems of teaching handicrafts in public schools were described, among others, in publications of one of the largest teachers' organizations in Poland, the Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP). To trace the scope of topics related to handicrafts covered in the ZNP periodicals, the author conducted a library search of titles published between 1927 and 1939. These were: «Roboty ręczne» [«Handicrafts»] (1927-1928), «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki» [«Handicrafts and Drawings»] (1929-1933), «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne» [«Drawings and Practical Classes»] (1933-1934), and «Rysunek i Zajęcia Praktyczne» [«Drawing and Practical Classes»] (1934-1939).

**EET/TEE KEYWORDS:** Handicrafts; Public schools; Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP); Methodical journals; Poland; XIX Century.

## *Introduction*

### *1.1. Handicrafts at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

Handicraft, as a compulsory subject, was introduced in Polish public schools after World War I on a wave of social and educational changes. Combining hands-on practice with aesthetics, it reflected the trend focusing on practice of the pedagogical and aesthetic reform carried out at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. Recognition of the educational and formative functions of handicraft can be found as early as Jan Amos Comenius or Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, however, the idea of activity, which promotes the child's all-around development, was propagated primarily by representatives of the new education movement, i.e. John Dewey, Celestin Freinet, and Alexander Sutherland Neill. Georg Kerschensteiner also emphasized the socializing and moralizing influence of handicrafts. All of the educators mentioned above justified their views with the right psychological, philosophical, and sociological arguments, while unanimously pointing out the need to promote the student agency by allowing the student to act – more or less – freely within the framework of handicraft.

Of the various trends embracing the educational value of handicrafts, the most tangible influence on the teaching of handicrafts in Polish schools in the interwar period was the sloyd (Swedish: *slöjd*) originated in Scandinavia. The origins of the Sloyd movement are traced to the activities of Finnish education reformer Uno Cygnaeus, thanks to whom practical classes such as weaving, wood and metalworking, clay molding, paper molding, basket weaving, and gardening were introduced into the Finnish education system. The Swedish engineer Otto Solomon, educated in Finland, upon his return to his native country, established a sloyd seminary in Nääs, which soon became a European center for popularizing handicrafts in schools. The Swedish system had a didactically and methodologically structured form, based on a critique of handcraft training. After Solomon's reform, craftsmen in Swedish schools were replaced by qualified teachers, and workshops and tools were adapted to the students' needs. Solomon associated his concept mainly with woodwork, to which he attributed the greatest educational value. The students, following the teacher's strict instructions, independently produced the models listed in the curriculum. The main educational goal, however, was not the finished object, but the skills acquired during its construction<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> K. Dormus, *Rozwój form wychowania estetycznego i nauczania rysunku w Krakowie w latach 1850-1914* [Development of forms of aesthetic education and teaching of drawing in Cracow in the years 1850-1914], Warsaw, Wydawnictwo IHN PAN, 1998, pp. 76-100.

<sup>2</sup> M. Dunin-Sułgustowska, *Slöjd: wskazówki metodyczne* [Slöjd: methodological tips], Warszawa, Dom Książki Polskiej, 1924, p. 17.

Aksel Mikkelsen created the Danish version of sloyd. Władysław Przanowski<sup>3</sup>, director of the State Institute of Handicrafts in Warsaw<sup>4</sup> in 1923-1937 adapted the Swedish system to the needs and conditions in Poland. Przanowski, an engineer and pedagogue, throughout his professional activity actively made teachers, parents, and the general public aware of the importance of teaching handicrafts; he also authored handicraft curricula for public schools and teaching courses<sup>5</sup>. At the institute he chaired, future teachers and instructors were trained, and numerous methodological publications were produced to standardize the teaching of the subject nationwide<sup>6</sup>.

## 1.2. *Polish Teachers' Union*

Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) is one of the most important teachers' union organizations in Poland. Polish teachers started developing their organizational life at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then their movement gained momentum in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in all the partitions<sup>7</sup>. The numerous organizations formed at that time were all public. In the Prussian and Russian partitions, they tried to oppose Russification (the progressive process of denationalization of Polish children with the help of schools) to preserve at least some Polish education. In the Austrian partition, where Poles had more civil and national liberties, they focused on improving the educational system. The effects of their activities varied because of the different political, systemic, economic, and social conditions under which they functioned. Nevertheless, the organizations that were created at that time contributed to the general

<sup>3</sup> W. Przanowski, *Dydaktyka pracy ręcznej [Didactics of handicrafts]*, in S. Łempicki (ed.), *Encyklopedia wychowania*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Naszej Księgarni, 1936, Vol. II, pp. 620-632.

<sup>4</sup> The State Institute of Handicrafts in Warsaw (PIRR) – an institution for training handicrafts to teachers from all types of educational institutions and teaching courses. It was established in 1923 on the basis of courses organized since 1915 at the Karol Szelekier School of Craftsmanship, founded by the first director of the Institute, Władysław Przanowski. The Institute was a methodological center where curricula and textbooks were created.

<sup>5</sup> W. Ambroziewicz, *Władysław Przanowski i jego dzieło [Władysław Przanowski and his work]*, Warszawa, Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1964, p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Id., *Władysław Przanowski (życie i działalność)*, [*Władysław Przanowski (life and work)*], «Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy», n. 1, 1960, pp. 127-138.

<sup>7</sup> Until 1918, Poland was under the partition of three neighboring European powers: Russia, Austria, and Prussia. The partitions of Poland took place in three stages: in 1772, 1793, and 1795. As a result of these partitions, Poland disappeared from the map of Europe as an independent state. This situation lasted for many decades until Poland regained independence in 1918 as a result of the end of World War I and the collapse of the empires that controlled Polish territories. After Poland regained independence in 1918 territories that had been under partition were unified and the state of the Second Polish Republic was created.

awakening of activity among Polish teachers, which ultimately determined the final formation of the entire Polish teachers' union movement during The Second Polish Republic<sup>8</sup>.

ZNP was founded on December 11, 1918, in Warsaw, although the origins of its structures date back to 1905. It was formed by two teachers' organizations: Związek Polskiego Nauczycielstwa Szkół Powszechnych (the Union of Polish Public School Teachers) operating in the Russian partition and Związek Polskiego Nauczycielstwa Ludowego (the Union of Polish People's Teachers) operating in the Austrian partition, Galicia. Stanislaw Nowak was the first president of ZNP. Undoubtedly, the biggest and most important event for Polish schools and teaching after the restoration of independence in 1918 was the first nationwide educational convention, commonly referred to as the Teachers' Parliament. The session was held in Warsaw, from April 14 to 17, 1919. It was attended by 802 delegates representing 44 teachers' organizations with a total of 34,000 members. The most numerous of these was the Union of Polish Public School Teachers, which had 17,000 members. The convention deliberated in 11 sections. Delegates presented views of various political options: right-wing, left-wing, and centrist. Among the key issues addressed by the attendees were: establishing a state school system, the functions and educational directions of the school, the role of the state in the school councils, the creation of a separate school administration independent of the general administration, and ensuring the independence of education from the direct influence of the churches. The convention, despite much controversy, was a great success<sup>9</sup>.

ZNP was actively involved in the struggle for the independence of the Polish education system and the shaping of educational policy in interwar Poland. It sought to make education independent of religious influence and to ensure civil liberties for teachers. From the beginning, ZNP attached great importance to teacher training. The most common forms of self-education organized by ZNP were teachers' conferences, usually from a single municipality. An effective form of teacher training, primarily in the areas of didactics and detailed methodology, was the journals published by ZNP. In addition to general-union publications, such as «Głos Nauczycielski» («Teacher's Voice»), «Praca Szkolna» («Classwork»), «Ogniwo» («Link»), «Kalendarz Nauczycielski» («Teacher's Calendar»), specialists periodicals were also published: «Gimnazjum» («Junior High»), «Przedszkole» («Kindergarten»), «Szkoła Specjalna» («Special School»), «Szkoła Doksztalcząca Zawodowa» («Vocational Training School»), «Szkoła Rolnicza» («Agricultural School»), «Praca w Klasach Łączonych» («Working in Combined Classes»), «Rysunek» («Singing at School»), «Wychowanie Fizyczne w Szkole» («Physical Education at School»). Individual municipality boards

<sup>8</sup> J. Doroszewski, *W 110-lecie związku nauczycielstwa polskiego [On the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Teachers' Union]*, «Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy», n. 3-4, 2015, pp. 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

conducted their publishing activities, resulting in a wide availability of pedagogical presses. Readership of the union's periodicals was popularized by the fact that members received «Głos Nauczycielski» as part of the union dues, as well as discounts on subscriptions to other periodicals<sup>10</sup>.

During World War II, ZNP's activities were banned by the German occupiers, but the organization operated in secret, supporting Polish underground education. After the war ended, ZNP played an important role in the reconstruction of the Polish education system and the further development of education in the Polish People's Republic. However, during the communist period, the organization was under the supervision of the communist authorities, and its independence was limited. After Poland's political transformation in 1989, ZNP regained its independence and acted as a professional organization representing teachers in Poland. Today, ZNP remains one of the largest and most influential trade unions in Poland, representing teachers and education workers. The organization is involved in shaping educational policy, fighting for teachers' professional rights, and promoting quality education in Poland<sup>11</sup>.

### 1.3. *Handicrafts in ZNP methodical journals*

Pedagogical press developed intensively during the interwar years. Improvements in printing techniques and an increase in the number of publishers resulted in lower prices for periodicals and higher readership. Among the wide range of publications were numerous periodicals devoted to contemporary trends in pedagogy, problems of general, secondary, and vocational education, extracurricular education, as well as methodological and specialist periodicals. During this period, ZNP also published intensively. A total of eighty central and regional periodicals were published under ZNP at various times between the wars. The main publishing centers were large cities such as Krakow, Warsaw, Lviv, and Poznań, but there were also Augustów, Będzin, Biała Podlaska, Bochnia, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Grudziądz, and Łuków. There was a noticeable increase in the number of publications after the ZNP Delegates' Convention in 1934, during which it was recommended that all districts publish their own regional organizational periodicals<sup>12</sup>. In the interwar years, ZNP also had a publishing offer for young readers. The editorial beginnings

<sup>10</sup> T. Gumuła, *Aktywność wydawnicza Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego (1905-2015)* [Publishing activity of the Polish Teachers' Union (1905-2015)], «Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy», n. 3-4, 2015, pp. 72-98.

<sup>11</sup> Doroszewski, *W 110-lecie związku nauczycielstwa polskiego* [On the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish Teachers' Union], cit.

<sup>12</sup> J. Jarowiecki, *Powstanie i rozwój czasopism pedagogicznych w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej na tle tradycji* [The emergence and development of pedagogical periodicals in the

of the union's periodicals for children were modest, as until the mid-1920s, only «Płomyk» [«Flame»], a magazine for children and young adults on varied topics, was published on the books market, with a four-page supplement for younger children called «Płomyczek» [«Little Flame»]. Starting in 1927, «Płomyczek» became an independent magazine. Six years later, a completely new publication appeared – «Szkolna Gazetka Ścienna» [«School Wall Newspaper»]. The year 1935 brought «Młody Zawodowiec» [«Young Professional»] and «Mały Płomyczek» in an urban and rural version. In the interwar years, ZNP published five such periodicals<sup>13</sup>.

Concerned about the quality of handicrafts education in schools, from 1927 the Section of Teachers of Handicrafts and Drawing of the Union of Polish Public School Teachers (later: Section of Teachers of Handicrafts and Drawing of the Polish Teachers' Union) began publishing a methodological journal in Warsaw, distributed as a free supplement to «Głos Nauczycielski». For the first years, the periodical was bimonthly, and from 1933 monthly. From 1927 to 1939, the periodical was published under the following titles: «Roboty ręczne» [«Handicrafts»] (1927-1928), «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki» [«Handicrafts and Drawing»] (1929-1933), «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne» [«Drawings and Practical Classes»] (1933-1934) and «Rysunek i Zajęcia Praktyczne» [«Drawing and Practical Classes»] (1934-1939). Despite the relatively frequent changes of the title, aptly reflecting the evolution of the thematic scope, the periodical constituted a conceptual and ideological continuum. The titles were also linked by the person of long-time editor Wiktor Snopek<sup>14</sup>.

The periodicals mentioned above were intended primarily for common school teachers, often working in difficult economic conditions at schools without prior professional training. In the first issue, the *Editorial* reads:

The goal for the periodical is to raise the topic of teaching handicrafts by pointing out the causes of existing inadequacies and the important role that this subject plays in education; to share with readers the experience acquired in school practice and life, in our and foreign education; to provide guidance and advice in times of need<sup>15</sup>.

Unlike the more encyclopedic «Praca Ręczna w Szkole» [«Handicrafts in School»]<sup>16</sup>, the periodicals were open to cooperation with teachers. Materials took into account thematic suggestions coming from practitioners, and

*People's Republic of Poland against the background of tradition*], «Kwartalnik Historii Prasy Polskiej», vol. 24, n. 1, 1985/6, p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> I. Michalska, *Międzywojenne periodyki związku nauczycielstwa polskiego dla dzieci jako pomoc w pracy szkolnej* [Interwar periodicals of the Polish teachers' Union for children as a classroom aid], «Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy», n. 3-4, 2015, pp. 99-112.

<sup>14</sup> A. Tomczak was the first editor of *Roboty Ręczne*. At that time, the editorial committee consisted of W. Snopek, W. Guzek, E. Krysińska, H. Lisicka, and S. Mróz.

<sup>15</sup> *Od Redakcji* [Editorial], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> «Praca Ręczna w Szkole» [Handicrafts in School] – a quarterly methodical journal pub-

articles, comments, tips, and reports on work from around the country were published.

The purpose of this study is to present the thematic range of articles published in the methodical journals of ZNP in 1927-1939. The periodicals reached a wide range of teachers, shaped their views, and influenced the implementation of their activities. Moreover, through their direct connection with school practice, they are a valuable and as yet inexhaustible source of knowledge about the educational reality of the period in question. Due to the continuous nature and conceptual coherence of the publications, they will be treated as a whole.

## 2. *Handicrafts in the ZNP methodical journals*

The methodical journals published by ZNP had a specific structure but it was not always strictly followed. In addition to theoretical articles and proposals for methodological solutions, regular columns appeared including announcements of the Boards of Directors, reviews of current publications and periodicals, answers to readers' questions, information about training courses, reports, and discussions<sup>17</sup>. Among the authors who regularly published in the periodicals were: Wiktor Snopek, Jan Mazurek, Janina Antoniewiczówna, Czesław Karp, and Zofia Żerańska.

Soon after Poland regained independence, handicrafts appeared in the curricula of public schools under the name of *roboty ręczne* (manual work), and in addition to handicrafts, they included women's work and housekeeping. After the so-called Jedrzejewicz reform (after Minister Janusz Jedrzejewicz) of 1932, the subject was renamed *zajęcia praktyczne* (practical classes). They

lished between 1927 and 1939 by the Society of handicrafts Enthusiasts operating at the PIRR in Warsaw. Editors: W. Przanowski and S. Malec [since 1937].

<sup>17</sup> Sample texts: *Komunikaty Zarządu Nauczycieli R.R.Z.P.N.P.* [Announcements of the Board of Teachers of the R.R.Z.P.N.P.], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 18-19; *Organizujemy Koła Robót Ręcznych i Rysunków* [Organizing Circles of Handicrafts and Drawings], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 1-4; *Z życia Sekcji. Z dotychczasowej działalności Koła Okręgowego Sekcji Nauczycieli Robót Ręcznych i Rysunków woj. Śląskiego w Katowicach* [From the Life of the Section. From the Past Activities of the District Circle of the Section of Teachers of Handicrafts and Drawings of the Silesian Province in Katowice], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, p. 28; *Komunikaty Zarządu Sekcji N.R.R. i R.* [Announcements of the Board of Directors of the N.R.R. and R. Section], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 29-30; *Sprawozdanie z IV Walnego Zjazdu Sekcji Nauczycieli Robót Ręcznych i Rysunków* [Report of the Fourth General Meeting of the Section of Teachers of Handicrafts and Drawings], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 17-25; *IV-ty Walny Zjazd Sekcji Nauczycieli Zajęć Praktycznych i Rysunku Z.N.P.* [Fourth General Meeting of the Section of Teachers of Practical Classes and Drawings of the Z.N.P.], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 8, 1933/4, pp. 249-253.

included classes in handicrafts, women's work, manners in everyday life, gardening, household chores, farming, and animal husbandry<sup>18</sup>. Among the goals of teaching handicrafts in public schools were primarily to train the senses (mainly sight and touch), to develop students' sense of beauty and creative abilities, to form an attitude of self-reliance, perseverance, perceptiveness, and accuracy in work, and to awaken a love of manual labor and develop respect for it. From the point of view of the educational authorities, it was also important to generally strengthen students' mental and physical strength, and to practically familiarize children and young people with the physical properties of materials and the use of basic tools. The curricula also recommended the practical use of knowledge gained in other subjects such as mathematics, physics, and drawing during handicrafts<sup>19</sup>. Thus, handicraft classes had a general educational character; and their concept encompassed reconstructive, adaptive, and emancipatory goals.

The leading theme, and the point of reference for most of the considerations made in the journals, were the ministerial curricula for teaching handicrafts in public schools<sup>20</sup>. Individual articles discussed the goals of teaching handicrafts<sup>21</sup> and presented specific suggestions for exercises in wood sloyd, metal sloyd, paperwork, cardmaking, bookbinding, modeling in clay, products made of bast or straw, and basketry. Few texts raised the topic of the limitations of Swedish sloyd, as perceived by theorists and practitioners of the subject. An isolated example of a response to the above limitations is Jan Mazurek's article *New Ways in Teaching Handicrafts*<sup>22</sup>, where the author described a creative (individual) method aimed at eliminating the schematism of sloyd, by giving

<sup>18</sup> A. Lisiecka, *Założenia realizacji przedmiotów artystycznych w polskim szkolnictwie powszechnym w latach 1918-1939* [Assumptions for conducting artistic classes in Polish public schools in the years 1918-1939], Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Sample articles: J. Mazurek, *Roboty ręczne w pierwszym i drugim oddziale szkoły powszechnej* [Handicrafts in the first and second grades of the public school], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 10-14; H. Policht, *Nauczanie rysunku w niższych oddziałach szkoły powszechnej* [Teaching drawing in the lower grades of the public school], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 11-14; J. Mazurek, *Wstępne zajęcia rękodzielnicze w I i II klasie szkoły powszechnej* [Introductory handicrafts classes in the first and second grades of a public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1933, pp. 11-17; W. Snopek, *Pogawędźmy sobie... – kilka uwag na temat realizacji programu zajęć praktycznych w szkole powszechnej* [Let's chat... – some remarks on the implementation of the practical classes curriculum in a public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1933, pp. 2-6; K. Hanusz, *Rysunek techniczny w szkole na podstawie nowych programów zajęć praktycznych* [Technical drawing in school on the basis of new programs of practical classes], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1933/4, pp. 223-227; Cz. Karp, *Rysunek w klasie drugiej szkoły powszechnej* [Drawing in the second grade of common school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1933/4, pp. 211-214.

<sup>21</sup> F. Pększyc, *Cel nauki robót ręcznych w szkołach ogólnokształcących* [The purpose of learning handicrafts in general schools], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1933/4.

<sup>22</sup> J. Mazurek, *Nowe drogi w nauczaniu robót ręcznych* [New paths in teaching handicrafts], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 3, 1930, pp. 8-10.

students more freedom and independence in their work. An important theme in the context of the programs was the adaptation of individual techniques and tasks to the difficult economic conditions of schools and the appropriate organization of crafts studios<sup>23</sup>, as well as consideration of the social, psychological, and physical foundations of teaching manual work, and the assumptions of the industrial school and the creative school<sup>24</sup>.

The industrial school and the creative school were two different theoretical proposals for manual labor education. The industrial school, inspired mainly by Georg Kerschensteiner's theory, which was well-known<sup>25</sup> and discussed<sup>26</sup> in interwar Poland, emphasized the utilitarian significance of the human-society relationship. Educating people in the spirit of the industrial school meant forming people who were useful to society, and whose personality would conform to the prevailing moral ideals. In the assumptions of the industrial school, an individual could only be morally formed 'by the state' which is the highest external moral good. The point of the industrial school was to educate

<sup>23</sup> Eg.: J. Sulczyński, *Narzędzia do nauki robót ręcznych w pracowni szkolnej* [Tools for learning handicrafts in a school crafts studio], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 14-16; A. Tomczak, *Wskazówki praktyczne* [Practical tips], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, p. 16; A. Tomczak, *Oprawa notesu* [Notebook binding], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 17-18; T. Seweryn, *Ludowe wyroby zdobione rozżarzoną piętą* [Folk handicrafts decorated with branding iron], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 6-9; A. Tomczak, *Roboty z kartonu i tektury* [Cardboard and paperboard robots], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 25-26; K. Łotocki, *Pisak drewniany i jego zastosowanie* [Wooden pen and its use], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 3, 1930, pp. 11-14; J. Mazurek, *Zastosowanie tektury do ozdób choinkowych* [The use of cardboard for Christmas tree decorations], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, pp. 7-10; Z. Wierciak, *Kącik radiowy* [School radio], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 2, 1930, pp. 17-20; A. Zaręba, *Mechanizacja pracowni* [Introducing machines to a crafts studio], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 2, 1930, pp. 12-13; I. Huber, *Urządzenia zastępcze do prowadzenia rękodziela drzewnego w szkole powszechnej* [Replacement equipment for conducting wood handicrafts in a public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 8, 1933/4, pp. 260-265; W. Zieliński, *Szybowiec w szkole średniej* [Glider in high school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 6, 1934/5, pp. 218-223; F. Buczkowski, *Urządzenie pracowni dla zajęć praktycznych* [Equipping a practical classes studio], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 8, 1934/5, pp. 285-291; K. Baranowski K, *Formy użytkowe ze szkła* [Utility items made of glass], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1-5, 1937/8, pp. 40-43.

<sup>24</sup> Eg.: W. Rajewska, *Psychologiczne podstawy w dydaktyce robót ręcznych* [Psychological foundations in the didactics of handicrafts], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 9-11; W. Snopek, *Szkoła pracy* [Industrial school], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 11-12; MS, *Prace ręczne w szkole twórczej* [Handiwork in creative schools], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 12-14; W. Snopek, *Nauczanie robót ręcznych i rysunków a zainteresowanie dziecka* [Teaching handicrafts and drawing vs. child's interest], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 4-8; Z. Wierciak, *O twórczość w nauce* [Creativity in learning], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, pp. 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> W. Gacki, *G. Kerschensteiner i Ad. Ferriere jako twórcy nowej szkoły* [G. Kerschensteiner and Ad. Ferriere as founders of the new school], Łódź, Nakładem Drukarni Państwowej w Łodzi, 1931; S. Stendig, *System pedagogiczny G. Kerschensteinera* [G. Kerschensteiner's pedagogical system], Cieszyn, Dom Książki Polskiej, 1933.

<sup>26</sup> L. Bandura, *Szkoła pracy w ujęciu Kerschensteinera* [Kerschensteiner's industrial school approach], «Przyjaciel szkoły», n. 9, 1932, p. 285.

the younger generations in a civic spirit so that the young people would use the skills and abilities they acquired to work for the state<sup>27</sup>. This approach dovetailed with the ideals proclaimed by the political parties in power in Poland at the time, especially with the thoughts of Józef Piłsudski's camp spreading the cult of civics, the so-called sanation<sup>28</sup>. In the years following the 1932 school reform, carried out by the sanation in power, general «education for the state» became important. The updated curricula in the civic-state spirit envisioned the education of 'a new citizen' who understands and feels the need to work for the benefit of society and care for its security<sup>29</sup>. Henceforth, the school's task was to prepare exemplary and dedicated workers and build a potential base for the army. The curricular change was reflected in the articles published in ZNP journals. An example is a text by Fidziński *Rysunki i wychowanie fizyczne na usługach armii* [*Drawings and Physical Education at the Service of the Army*]<sup>30</sup>. The issue of technicization was connected with defense and work for the state taken up, among others, by Władysław Przanowski<sup>31</sup>.

On the other hand, the creative school – as envisioned by Henryk Rowid – was based on the belief that artistic activities and creative actions are a means of individual expression and a tool for overall human development. H. Rowid's educational ideal was upbringing people capable of independent action, productive work in society, and guided in life by humanistic values. Upbringing had to strive for this ethical ideal.

Through the development of self-reliance and the training of morality, individuals should be able to realize themselves, to bring out the maximum of their creativity, which would enable them to realize the economic and spiritual values of the nation<sup>32</sup>. Both the industrial school and the creative school found their reminiscences in ministerial programs and ZNP journals. It seems, however, that the idea of an industrial school resounded more often (not always articulated explicitly) in union publications.

In the interwar period, handicrafts were included, along with drawing and singing, in the group of the so-called artistic-technical subjects. Jozef Tor, a drawing teacher and textbook author tried to discuss the validity of the above

<sup>27</sup> A. Molak, *Szkoła pracy Kerschensteimera. Model szkoły dla potrzeb cywilizacji technicznej w społeczeństwie kapitalistycznym* [*Kerschensteiner's industrial school. A school model for technical civilization in a capitalist society*], Warszawa, PWN, 1968, p. 114.

<sup>28</sup> Lisiecka, *Założenia realizacji przedmiotów artystycznych*, [Assumptions for conducting artistic classes in Polish public schools in the years 1918-1939], cit., pp. 30-42.

<sup>29</sup> Z. Gryń, *Nauka zajęć praktycznych a społeczeństwo* [*Practical classes vs. society*], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1935/6, pp. 221-226.

<sup>30</sup> F. Fidziński, *Rysunki i wychowanie fizyczne na usługach armii* [*Drawings and physical education at the service of the army*], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 8, 1933/4, pp. 255-260.

<sup>31</sup> W. Przanowski, *Powszechne techniczne przysposobienie młodzieży* [*General technical preparation of young people*], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7-8, 1936/7, pp. 223-224.

<sup>32</sup> A. Szumski, *W walce o postępową szkołę. Rzecz o Henryku Rowidzie* [*Fight for a progressive school — Henryk Rowidz*], Warszawa, PWN, 1977, p. 163.

classification and terminology<sup>33</sup>. However, the topic was not taken up by other authors. Admittedly, issues related to art and aesthetic education appeared in ZNP periodicals quite often<sup>34</sup> but they were usually treated superficially. The grouping of drawing, singing, and handicrafts in school curricula was a conceptually justifiable procedure, but at the same time one that was troublesome to implement. All subjects were seen as shaping a child's aesthetic sensibility in its various dimensions, but they were not always easy to combine within individual lessons, and they did not all rank equally. Traditionally, drawing and singing were valued higher than handicrafts. The comments on the ministerial programs assumed that in the long run, the teaching of handicrafts in elementary schools would lead to a renewed flourishing of Polish arts and crafts. In practice, however, the economic and personnel conditions prevailing in most schools made it impossible to teach crafts at an adequate level. What was valuable, on the other hand, was the sheer familiarity of students, even indirectly, with exemplary artwork and objects (e.g., buildings, furniture) displaying harmony of construction and color. What distinguished handicrafts from drawing and singing was its broad scope: from artistic craftsmanship to farm work, such as growing a garden. Teachers therefore had to find their way in a complex reality where the educational ambitions of the authorities met the mundane and everyday needs of the students. Teachers had to act as an intermediary between cultural assets and students, and even more broadly, the entire local community the school functioned in. This problem was discussed by Leokadia Motel in a single text from the second half of the 1930s<sup>35</sup>. The author pointed out that teachers were put in a difficult position. The idea was that they were to uplift the lower classes by making cultural and artistic achievements accessible to them. Unfortunately, in practice, very often there were no conditions for this. Lack of crafts studios, lack of subject teachers, lack of time, age diversity of students in the classroom, and poverty, all prevented individualization and teaching at an appropriate standard. Moreover, political goals (in the case of singing) and practical needs (in the case of handicrafts) dominated school reality<sup>36</sup>.

Women's work, activities of daily living, and farm activities constituted

<sup>33</sup> J. Tor, *Przedmioty artystyczno-techniczne* [Artistic and technical subjects], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Np.: J. Tor, *Plastyka jako nauka rysunku* [Art classes as a science of drawing], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 2, 1930, pp. 7-9; T. Wańkowski, *Wychowanie estetyczne w szkole ogólnokształcącej* [Aesthetic education in a public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 3, 1935/6, pp. 80-87; E. Kurzyński, *Nauczyciel a sztuka* [Teachers and art], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 9, 1936/7, pp. 273-276; Z. Prószyński, *Zagadnienie kształcenia estetycznego* [Aesthetic education], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 9, 1936/7, pp. 276-280.

<sup>35</sup> L. Motel, *Nauczyciel krzewicielem kultury estetycznej* [Teachers as promoters of aesthetic culture], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7-8, 1936/7, pp. 224-228.

<sup>36</sup> Lisiecka, *Założenia realizacji przedmiotów artystycznych* [Assumptions of conducting artistic subjects], cit.

a separate theme in ZNP's methodological publications. Articles devoted to these topics most often presented activities in sewing and decorating, crocheting and knitting, and repairing damaged clothing. The texts, including those presenting different varieties of sloyd, were often enriched with drawings depicting the activity. The subject of women's knitting was presented primarily by three authors: M. Bereśniewiczowa, Maria Bothe, and Maria Rudzińska<sup>37</sup>. Classes in the culture of everyday life were introduced by Zofia Żerańska (later Żerańska-Lisiewiczowa)<sup>38</sup>. In periodically published texts, she gave practical advice useful in teaching housekeeping, including laundry, sewing, cooking, food preservation, and household economics. Separate publications were devoted to gardening and farming activities suitable for a school garden<sup>39</sup> such as tending hedges, growing plants, raising poultry, or running an apiary. Occasionally, periodicals published texts introducing handicrafts from a historical perspective<sup>40</sup>, as well as reports from abroad<sup>41</sup>, studies discussing the

<sup>37</sup> Eg.: M. Bereśniewiczowa, *Nauka kroju i szycia w szkole powszechnej* [Learning to cut and sew at a public school], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 1, 1930, pp. 20-22; H.T., *Konspekt lekcji robót kobiecych w IV klasie szkoły powszechnej. Temat: fartuszek szkolny* [Lesson plan for women's work in the fourth grade of the public school. Subject: school apron], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, pp. 18-19; M. Bothe, *Trykotarstwo w szkole* [Production of leotards at school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1933, pp. 23-26; M. Rudzińska, *Maszyna do szycia* [Sewing machine], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1933/4, pp. 227-232; J. Olszewska, *Organizacja i metoda pracy w zajęciach rękodzielniczych dla dziewcząt* [Work organization and methods for handicrafts classes for girls], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 2-3, 1936/7, pp. 53-58; M. Łomnicka-Bujakowa, *Guziki* [Buttons], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7-8, 1936/7, pp. 254-256.

<sup>38</sup> Z. Żerańska, *Gospodarstwo domowe* [Household], «Rysunek i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1934, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup> Eg.: J. Antoniewiczówna, *Sadzonkowanie wiosenne roślin i obsadzanie skrzynek* [Spring planting and planting in planter boxes], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1933/4, pp. 242-243; B. Kosmania, *Nasz ogródek* [Our garden], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 4-5, 1933/4, pp. 159-160; J. Antoniewiczówna, *Żywopłoty i ich cięcie* [Growing and cutting hedges], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 3, 1934/5, pp. 105-107; K. Baranowski, *Ciemnia do kiełkowania roślin* [Darkroom for plant germination], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 5, 1934/5, pp. 190-194; J. Antoniewiczówna, *Kurnik dla drobiu w ogrodzie szkolnym* [Chicken coop for poultry in the school garden], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 3, 1935/6, pp. 97-99; J. Antoniewiczówna, *Pasieka w ogrodzie szkolnym* [Apiary in the school garden], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 7, 1935/6, pp. 233-240; J. Antoniewiczówna, *Wycieczki z zakresu zajęć ogrodniczych w związku z programem siódmej klasy szkoły powszechnej* [Excursions as part of horticultural activities within the program of the seventh grade of the public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 6, 1936/7, pp. 188-194.

<sup>40</sup> Eg.: F. Pększyc, *Cel nauki robót ręcznych w szkołach ogólnokształcących* [The purpose of learning handicrafts in public schools], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 2-6; Sowiński, *Z historii oprawy książki* [From the history of book binding], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 2, 1930, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> E.g.: Cz. Karp, *Slojd w Danii. Lekcja w Kopenhadze* [Sloyd in Denmark. A lesson in Copenhagen], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, pp. 11-14; M. Rudzińska, *Roboty kobiece w szkołach żeńskich za granicą. Wrażenia z podróży i kursu w Berlinie* [Women's work in schools for women abroad. Impressions from a visit and a training in Berlin], «Roboty Ręczne

correlation of handicrafts with other subjects taught in schools, such as nature, arithmetic, drawing<sup>42</sup>, and articles about teacher training<sup>43</sup>. The authors also shared their – often difficult – experiences in the periodical. In the 1937/8 issue, editor Snopek wrote:

We are all aware of the harsh conditions prevailing in public schools due to the lack of crafts studios, tools, materials, and often understanding on the part of those entrusted with the care and commissioned to help create working conditions. However, because of this, should we abandon our work, stand back, and wait for better times until they come? No. It is our aspiration and desire that every school have a furnished crafts studio and appropriate conditions, and we will not give up on this!<sup>44</sup>

This peculiar enthusiasm unceasing despite adversity was emblematic of the texts published in ZNP journals. Teachers' solidarity and unwavering conviction about the need to democratize education<sup>45</sup>, and, in the long run, to democratize social life, constitute an undeniable and momentous contribution of the trade union environment to the entire education system in Poland.

i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 27-29; E. Weber, *Prace techniczne w sowieckich miejskich szkołach początkowych* [Industrial work in soviet urban primary schools], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 2, 1934/5, pp. 49-53.

<sup>42</sup> E.g.: J. Antoniewiczówna, *Nauka robót ręcznych i nauczanie przyrody* [Teaching handicrafts and nature], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 2, 1930, pp. 1-5; S. Gabriel, *Stosunek robót ręcznych do rysunków i odwrotnie* [Relation of handicrafts to drawing and vice versa], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 8-11; E. Jarmulski, *Stosunek przyrodoznawstwa do robót ręcznych jako przedmiotów nauczania szkolnego* [Relationship of Nature and Handicrafts as school subjects], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, pp. 3-4; S. Wenderlich, *Korelacja zajęć praktycznych z arytmetyką w klasie VI-tej szkoły powszechnej* [Correlation of practical subjects and arithmetic in the sixth grade of public school], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1934/5, pp. 19-25.

<sup>43</sup> E.g.: Cz. Karp, *Programy nauki rysunku w seminariach nauczycielskich* [Curricula for teaching drawing in teacher training courses], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 16-17; Cz. Karp, *Rewizja programów nauki robót ręcznych w seminariach nauczycielskich męskich* [Revision of handicrafts curricula in male teachers' teaching courses], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 5, 1930, pp. 15-16; D. Łuczyński, *Na marginesie programu ministerialnego robót ręcznych dla seminariów nauczycielskich* [On the sidelines of the ministerial program of handicrafts for teaching courses], «Roboty Ręczne i Rysunki», n. 4, 1930, pp. 10-11; W. Przanowski, *Kształcenie i dokształcanie nauczycieli zajęć praktycznych* [Educating and training teachers of practical subjects], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1, 1934/5, pp. 1-11.

<sup>44</sup> W. Snopek, *Pogawędźmy sobie...* [Let's chat...], «Rysunki i Zajęcia Praktyczne», n. 1-5, 1937/8, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> E. Krysińska, *Praca ręczna w szkole powszechnej* [Handicrafts in public schools], «Roboty Ręczne», n. 1, 1927, pp. 6-8.

### *Conclusions*

As part of the publishing activities of the Polish Teachers' Union in the interwar years, methodical periodicals were published, reaching a wide audience because of their direct and practical nature. Thanks to the practical approach presented in the periodicals, embedded in the realities of Polish public schools, there was a loyal group of authors contributing to the publications and readers. The journals provided basic theoretical and methodological knowledge, as well as concrete examples of classroom activities. Most of the articles were devoted to didactic and methodological issues. The authors of the texts, often practitioners themselves, provided readers-teachers with tried-and-true tips and ideas for activities, thus minimizing the shortcomings in the professional preparation of public school teachers, which was a pressing problem in Polish education at the time. The topics taken up by the authors directly corresponded to the goals presented in the curricula for public schools. The articles dealt with the sloyd method and its varieties, women's work, classes in the culture of everyday life, gardening classes, and household, economic, and farming classes. Synthetic and accessible articles dominated, often enriched with graphic material. Experiences of practicing teachers, including those from abroad, and coming from different regions of the country, were an important theme in the periodicals. The periodicals provided a platform for exchanging ideas and competencies. The solidarity of the teaching profession in struggling with difficult economic conditions, lack of understanding from school authorities and local communities, and a sincere desire to raise the issue of teaching handicrafts in common schools are noticeable in the texts.