

## Teachers-educators of Polish Salesian schools from 1898 to 1939

### Abstract

This article deals with educators, teachers and their work in the Salesian schools, from the creation of the schools up to 1939. The daily pedagogical work of teachers was associated with in shaping the intellect, character and religious lives of the students. Many examples taken from the history of the Salesian schools indicate that the Salesian activity brought good educational results during the Partitions, as well as during World War I or the interwar period. The social context in which Poles lived called for bringing up the culture of the Polish society. These activities involved Salesian priests and coadjutors. Lay people were also invited to collaborate. The necessity of education and upbringing allowed to open schools, as well as other institutions, such as dormitories, educational institutions, oratories and parishes. Salesians' work always focused on children and youth. In education, the teachers lived and worked by the "educational triad", comprised of reason, love and religion stemming from the Preventive System developed by St. Giovanni Bosco. It is precisely this "triad" that became a syncretism of values and strategies proposed to the students in their educational process.

**Keywords:** Salesian schools, Catholic education, Salesians, pedagogy of religion, religious education

### 1. Salesian teachers and their preparation to teaching work

Until 1918, Poland was under partitions and national schools were systematically liquidated.<sup>1</sup> The number of religious orders involved in education was significantly reduced and the students were nationalized, which is why many young Poles went to Turin

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. SZELAŃGOWSKI A., *Historia nowożytna*, Warsaw, Krakow 1921, p. 240; DRAUS, J. TERLECKI, R., *Historia wychowania*, vol. 2, Krakow 2005, p. 65-104.

to study there in schools founded by Father Giovanni Bosco. Jan Konieczny, who analyses the times discussed, presented the example of August Hlond and other people like him: "In 1893, many groups of youth left Silesia for Turin with words "Salesiani Torino" ("Salesians Turin") on their chests. In the capital of Piedmont, where they were cared for by the Italian Salesians and Father Wiktor Grabelski, they were accepted as students of schools in Lombriasco and Valsalice".<sup>2</sup> In these institutions, they found joy, friendship and above all peace and the possibility of systematic learning and preparing for future work in Poland.

The figure of Father Wiktor Grabelski was very important and significant for many young Poles in that period.<sup>3</sup> The priest taught them various subjects, but above all he emphasized Christian pedagogy and the Preventive System developed by Giovanni Bosco. In order to spread the Salesian thought, he published a magazine titled *Wiadomości Salezjańskie* (*The Salesian News*) in Polish. The paper was published in the territory of all three partitions.<sup>4</sup> One of his students and future bishop and primate of Poland, Cardinal August Hlond called him "the founder of Polish branch of the Salesian congregation", while Father Piotr Tirone, one of the senior superiors of the Salesian Congregation, used to say that he could be called a universal master of Poles. Grabelski was a valued teacher and pedagogue, educated in theology, philosophy and law, he was also interested in Bible studies, history and archaeology. Moreover, he also knew ancient languages and was a man of outstanding culture, which he passed on to his students. He was a respected and appreciated teacher and friend of Polish youth.<sup>5</sup> According to the findings of Waldemar Żurek, 674 Poles studied in Salesian institutions in Italy. Not all the boys formed a permanent connection with the Salesian Congregation, but most of them certainly wanted to learn and broaden their horizons in the spirit of religion and freedom, something that was lacking in

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<sup>2</sup> KONIECZNY J., *A servizio di Dio, della Chiesa e della Patria. Il Servo di Dio Card. August Hlond (1881-1948)*, Rome 1999, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> "The last Pole to be accepted into the Salesian Society by Fr. Giovanni Bosco was Wiktor Grabelski. He was born in the Poznań region (Glesno, born on the 17th of October 1857). After graduating from a middle school in Poznań, he studied at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and then went to Innsbruck, Paris and Rome for further studies. There, he became acquainted with the work of Father Giovanni Bosco, which attracted him in a special way with the spirit of work and dedication to young people. After joining the novitiate in San Benigno Canavese in the spring of 1887, later that year Father Bosco and Prince Czartoryski gave him his monastic cassock. After the novitiate, he became a professor, owing it to his studies and command of languages. After his ordination in 1890, he was mainly taking care of Polish youth in Valsalice, afterwards he moved to Valdocco and became the editor of the Polish monthly titled *Wiadomości Salezjańskie* (*The Salesian News*, the equivalent of the Italian magazine *Bollettino Salesiano*, promoting the work of Father Bosco among all strata of Polish society. The first issue of the magazine was published in 1897. Soon the paper reached a very high circulation of nearly 40 000 copies. Burned out and overworked, he came to the first Polish Salesian institution in Oświęcim, where he died on the 9th of October 1902. Cardinal Hlond dubbed him the "founder of Polish branch of the Salesian congregation". HLOND, A., *Przemówienie z okazji obłóczyn nowicjusów Tow. Salezjańskiego w Czerwińsku 30 X 1946. Pokłosie Salezjańskie*, 24(1946)3, p. 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> FRUŻYŃSKI, A., *Początki salezjanów Polsce*, Krakow, mps, p. 177-178.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ŚWIDA, A., *Towarzystwo Salezjańskie. Rys historyczny*, Krakow 1984, p. 49-53.

the educational institutions in partitioned Poland.<sup>6</sup> It is also worth noting that book publications on pedagogical issues have proved to be a great help in education.<sup>7</sup>

In systematic work, the Salesians saw a way to prepare new educational personnel for Poland and perceived it as a chance to promote the Preventive System developed by Fr. Giovanni Bosco. Thus, Fr. Bosco's educational activity became increasingly visible in Italy and throughout Europe, as well as supported by many Poles. Here, I need to mention Prince August Czartoryski and his family.<sup>8</sup> Prince August Czartoryski<sup>9</sup> joined the novitiate in the Salesian Congregation and became ordained as a priest in 1892 after completing his studies. For arriving youth, he was an example and a symbol of sacrifice for Poland and other Poles. *Memorie Biografiche* mentions that: "the fact that Prince August joined the congregation positively impacted the number of Polish boys coming to the home of Father Giovanni Bosco."<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Father August died just a year after his ordination. After his death, however, thanks to the funds left behind and the foundation he established, he provided education for many future Salesians. Stanisław Zimniak also mentions this point, claiming that Fr. August Czartoryski and Fr. Wiktor Grabelski laid

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<sup>6</sup> ŻUREK, W., *Salezjańskie szkolnictwo ponadpodstawowe w Polsce 1900-1963. Rozwój i organizacja*, Lublin 1996, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Among the well-known publications and books published at that time were: *Wiadomości Salezjańskie* monthly, which was well-received by Polish society and published in dozens of thousands of copies. According to Fr. Ślósarczyk, in the third year the magazine had between 25 000 and 55 000 subscribers. ŚLÓSARCZYK, J., *Historia Prowincji św. Jacka Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego w Polsce*, vol. 1-7, Pogrzebie, 1960-1969, mps. Other works included: *Książd Bosko opiekun i nauczyciel sierot*, Warsaw, 1886; *Książd Jan Bosko – jego żywot i czyny podług różnych źródeł*, opracowany przez L. NOELA, Poznań, 1887; D'ESPINEY, K., *Książd Bosko*, Lviv 1886.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. CERIA, E., MB, vol. 18, Turin, 1937, p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> Prince August Czartoryski (1858-1893), born on the 2nd of August 1858. Kazimierz Czartoryski, who was a general in Podolia, was an important figure in his family's history. His political position was so strong that after the death of Augustus III of Poland, he became the first candidate for the Polish throne. August's father, Władysław, was one of the advisors to Napoleon III and continuator of the Hotel Lambert policy, an educated man, founder of the Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, as well as the "Polish Library" in Paris. Part of August's family came from Spain, because his mother was Princess Maria Amparo Munoz di Vista Alegre, the daughter of the Queen of Spain, Cristina of Bourbon. Unfortunately, his mother's life was cut short by tuberculosis. She died prematurely in 1864, leaving August – her first-born son – with a family inheritance and an opportunity for a prosperous life. He was educated in the Catholic spirit by well-known and esteemed teachers. One of them was Józef Kalinowski, who later became a monk and a saint of the Catholic Church. The style of Józef Kalinowski's upbringing strongly influenced August's decisions, as he thought about the meaning of his life and his calling. The meeting with Fr. Giovanni Bosco at his residence in Paris influenced August's decision to join the Salesian Congregation. At first, Father Bosco did not want to allow the young prince to join the newly created Order, but after the plea of Pope Leo XIII in 1887, he decided to open the door of the novitiate. August's priestly ordination took place on the 2nd of April 1892. He died next year at an age of 35. His remains were brought to Przemyśl. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on the 25th of April 2004. Biography based on: SZMIDT, S., *Święci, Błogosławieni, Słudzy Boży Rodziny Salezjańskiej*, Warsaw, 1997; BOJARSKA, T., *Ucho igielne*, Warsaw, ATK, 1983, p. 48-50; Książd Bosko a Polacy, *Wiadomości Salezjańskie*, 13 (1909), p. 37; ŚLÓSARCZYK, J., *August Czartoryski*, Warsaw 1931, p. 209, 220, 225, 237. ZIMNIAK, S., *Salesiani nella Mitteleuropa. Preistoria estoria della provincia Austro-Ungarica della Società di S. Francesco di Sales (1868 ca. – 1919)*, Rome, 1997, p. 70-75.

<sup>10</sup> MB, XVIII, p. 468.

solid “foundations” for the development of the Salesian educational activity in Poland.<sup>11</sup> Polish society, which learned more and more about the situation of their countrymen in Turin and Valsalice, repeatedly made offers for Fr. Giovanni Bosco and his successors to establish schools and educational institutions, for example taking over an educational institution founded by Prince Lubomirski in Krakow<sup>12</sup>. However, the leaders of the Salesian Congregation delayed the decision, claiming that it was too early to send inexperienced Salesians to a country with an upset cultural and religious identity. According to Fr. Pływaczyk, young Poles in Turin and in the neighbouring area had a “small homeland”, where they studied and prepared for work.<sup>13</sup> After graduating middle school, students could continue their education in the novitiate and study further to become priests or coadjutors.<sup>14</sup> Following Fr. Andrzej Świda, one could say that the “Polish work of the Salesians drew nutrients from Italian soil, because it sprouted during the lifetime of Father Bosco and in the warm climate of Italy.”<sup>15</sup>

Father Bronisław Markiewicz,<sup>16</sup> who returned to Poland in 1892, became a pioneer of the Salesian mission in Poland. In Poland, Father Markiewicz devoted himself to par-

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. ZIMNIAK, S., *Salesiani nella Mitteleuropa*, p. 73

<sup>12</sup> Cf. MB, XVIII, p. 803-804.

<sup>13</sup> Fr. PŁYWACZYK, S., August Hlond – Salezjanin, *Pokłosie Salezjańskie*, 26 (1948), p. 254.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. WIRTH, M., *Da Don Bosco ai nostri giorni. Tra storia e nuove sfide (1815-2000)*, Rome, 2000, p. 133-143.

<sup>15</sup> ŚWIDA, A., *Towarzystwo Salezjańskie. Rys historyczny*, Krakow 1984, p. 44-45.

<sup>16</sup> Fr. Bronisław Markiewicz was born on the 13th of July 1842 in Pruchnik. near Jarosław (Galicia). In spite of the fact that he was not born into a rich family, many of his siblings received proper education. At elementary school, Bronisław was an exemplary student. After graduating middle school, he joined the Higher Seminary in Przemyśl, where he studied philosophy and theology and prepared for pastoral work. He worked for a while in Harta and Przemyśl parishes, from where he moved to Lviv in 1873 in order to start philosophy studies at the University of Lviv, which he continued at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. He interrupted his studies to serve as a parish priest in Gać, and later in Błażów, ordered by bishop. In 1882, he was appointed a teacher at the Higher Seminary in Przemyśl. He always wanted to work with young people, so he was looking for his way even in religious congregations. In 1885 he left Poland for Italy, he intended to go to the congregation of Theatines in Rome, but before that he visited Turin, where he was enchanted by Father Giovanni Bosco, who allegedly greeted him with words: “Welcome, long-unseen brother, awaited and missed.” These words made such an impression on him that he decided not to go further, but remain in Turin with the permission of the curia in Przemyśl. There he began his novitiate on the 1st of January 1886, and after he completed the novitiate, he took his religious vows in San Benigno in front of Fr. Bosco on the 25th of March 1887. Afterwards, he left to Poland in order to prepare the ground for the arrival of the new Salesians, in accordance with the plans of his superiors in Turin. Cf. ŚWIDA, A., *Towarzystwo Salezjańskie*, p. 53-54; KRAWIEC, J., *Powstanie Towarzystwa św. Franciszka Salezego oraz jego organizacja i działalność na ziemiach polskich*, Krakow 2004, p. 99; KUSTRA, Cz., *Powściągliwość i praca w wychowaniu człowieka. Współczesne odczytanie koncepcji opiekuńczo-wychowawczej ks. Bronisława Markiewicza (1842-1912)*, Toruń, 2002, p. 66-76.

Father Bronisław Markiewicz’s life and work were covered by a number of recently released publications, including: STACHURA M., *Wszedł między lud. Rzecz o studze Bożym ks. Bronisławie Markiewiczu*, Warsaw, 1981; KUSTRA, Cz., *Znaczenie pokory w wychowaniu chrześcijańskim w ujęciu ks. Bronisława Markiewicza (1842-1912)*, Toruń, 1998; 2002.; as well as *Pedagogika narodu polskiego w świetle narodów Europy w ujęciu ks. Bronisława Markiewicza (1842-1912)*, [in:] *Duchowość Europy*, eds. S. URBAŃSKI and M. SZYMULA, Warsaw 2001, p. 307-325.; *Pedagogika życia zakonnego w świetle pism ks. Bronisława Markiewicza (1842-1912)*, Marki 1999.; *Powściągliwość i praca w wychowaniu człowieka. Współczesne odczytanie koncepcji opie-*

ish work, which opened up prospects for founding an educational institution. It was the first institution for poor youth in Galicia.<sup>17</sup> Fr. Markiewicz had a vision of working with youth, which was met with reservation by his superiors in Turin, but after carefully assessing the situation, they accepted the educational institution that he had set up. Despite this, the priest left the ranks of the Salesians to form his own order of the Archangel Michael, which was based on the educational method developed by Fr. Giovanni Bosco.<sup>18</sup> Fr. Markiewicz was dubbed the “Polish Giovanni Bosco” in Poland, due to the fact that he remained faithful to the educational ideas of the saint from Turin.

## 2. Organisation and development of teachers’ work in Salesian schools in Poland

In order to educate and shape “good Christians and honest citizens”, the institution of the oratory founded by Fr. Giovanni Bosco was not sufficient – professional and general schools were also needed.<sup>19</sup> The Salesians in Poland thought the same way. They wanted to start educating young people in well-organized schools, under the guidance of trained teachers and educators.<sup>20</sup>

In 1897, the Salesian Congregation had 3 priests, 20 coadjutors and about 100 clerics from Poland. With a large number of new vocations in mind, the Metropolitan of Krakow, Fr. Cardinal Jan Puzyna pleaded with the leaders of the Salesian Congregation to establish new schools.<sup>21</sup> The Salesians accepted the proposal and started working in the former Dominican church and the chapel of St Jack in Oświęcim.<sup>22</sup> One of the higher superiors, Father M. Veronesi, had a very positive opinion about Oświęcim after visiting. He mentioned the town’s location on the border of all three partitions – Austrian, Prussic and Russian. This location could help in maintaining better contact with youth in Poland in the

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*kuńczo-wychowawczej ks. Bronisława Markiewicza* (1842-1912), Toruń. The latter book contains the complete bibliography regarding Father Bronisław Markiewicz

<sup>17</sup> Cf. ŚWIDA, A., *Towarzystwo Salezjańskie...*, p. 54.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. KUSTRA, Cz., *Powściągliwość i praca w wychowaniu człowieka...*, p. 67-68.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. BOSCO, G., *Il sistema preventivo nella educazione della gioventù...*, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> At the end of the 20th century, various publications were published regarding Polish Salesian education, which helped people to look at the reality of teachers’ work from an objective perspective. Particularly noteworthy were publications by Father Jan Krawiec, Father Andrzej Świda, Father Waldemar Żurek and other ones.

<sup>21</sup> AKMKr, 202 Salezianie, Kard. Puzyna to Fr. Rúa 19th of June 1897; SŁÓSARCZYK, J., *Historia prowincji*.

<sup>22</sup> The monastery was funded by Władysław, Duke of Oświęcim (1313-1326). It was destroyed many times by Hussites and Arians, until its complete destruction during Swedish invasion. The Dominicans rebuilt it, but Emperor Joseph II dissolved the monastery by decree of 1783. Ultimately, the Dominicans had left this place in 1816, and the unfavourable people robbed all the things left behind. Cf. ŻUREK, W., *Salezjańskie szkolnictwo ponadpodstawowe w Polsce 1900-1963*. p. 26-27. For further reading on the subject, see: GAŃKOWSKI, J.N., *Rys historyczny księstwa oświęcimskiego i zamorskiego*, Lviv 1867, p. 10-89, 118 and 148.

future. The Salesians officially arrived in Poland on the 15th of August 1898<sup>23</sup>. In 1901 the first school and educational institution was established<sup>24</sup>. The development of the institution was supported by Cardinal Puzyna, who painted the fact that the Salesians came to Poland in a positive light. The Salesians, in their search for allies in the noble work of education, also referred to the group of the so-called “Salesian helpers”.<sup>25</sup> Fr. Trawiński, one of the Salesians at the time, said: “If the significance of the Oświęcim institution will be that of a craftsman’s factory in Galicia [...] in the Prussian partition it will also be a Polish college, where the superiors will put all their strength in teaching their students about the spirit of love and attachment to their homeland.”<sup>26</sup> Thanks to this approach, this institution became a symbol of the renewal of Catholic schools in the partitions.

The Salesians themselves were the educators and teachers in the newly-established school. They worked in accordance with the educational methodology developed by Fr. Giovanni Bosco and promoted it among their students, their parents and lay teachers. The Oświęcim institution was dubbed *casa madre* (family home). It still remains the main reference point for all Salesians working in Poland.<sup>27</sup> The school’s activities were overseen by the headmaster, but the inspector – the head of the Venetian inspectorate, which in 1898 comprised 14 institutions – was also interested in the work of this institution.<sup>28</sup> The new buildings of the institution were blessed by Cardinal Puzyna. This event was attended by the Superior General of the Salesian Congregation, Father Michał Rua. This celebration was a good opportunity to once again present the education system of Father

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<sup>23</sup> There is no consensus among historians regarding the exact day of the Salesians’ arrival, but some of them like Fr. Waldemar Żurek, Ph. D. and Fr. Stanisław Styrna Ph. D. agree with the date of the 15th of August 1898. The argument is based on the date of the document received for the conferences and sermons in the diocese from Cardinal Jan Puzyna. ŻUREK, W., *Salezjańskie szkolnictwo ponadpodstawowe w Polsce 1900-1963*. p. 29; *75 lat działalności salezjanów w Polsce. Księga pamiątkowa*, R. POMOWSKI, S. WILK, M. LEWKO (eds.), Łódź-Kraków 1974, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout history, Salesian schools have been called Salesian institutions, most probably because they were not limited to teaching but also to education by means of boarding houses, dormitories and nursing homes.

<sup>25</sup> In the activity of Father Giovanni Bosco, Salesian Helpers were people who supported him in his educational work either directly with their own help or indirectly, by financing some of his activities. They were priests or laymen. The goals of the Salesian Helpers were: 1. Supporting the Salesians in their educational work; 2. Support the calling to the priesthood; 3. Promote positive information and curb evil; 4. Take an interest in neglected youth. More information regarding Salesian Helpers can be found in the following publications: Krawiec, J., *Powstanie Towarzystwa Św. Franciszka Salezego oraz jego organizacja i działalność na ziemiach Polskich*, Kraków 2004, p. 72-76; Associazione Cooperatori Salesiani, *Regolamento di vita apostolica*, Rome, 1986; MB, vol. XI, 71-73; Związek Pomocników Salezjańskich, *Wiadomości Salezjańskie*, 11(1907), p. 64; SZAFARSKI, M., *Salezjański Pomocnik Kościoła*, Nostra, 1 (1978); AUBRY, J., *Pomocnik Salezjański konkretne powołanie w Kościele*, Rome, 1972; *Program życia salezjanów księdza Bosko. Przewodnik po lekturze Konstytucji salezjańskich*, Kraków, 1997.

<sup>26</sup> TRAWIŃSKI, F., Pokłosie z naszych domów, *Wiadomości Salezjańskie*, 2/1898 (12), p. 318-319.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. KALIŃSKI, L., *Rodzina Salezjańska w Polsce. Wykaz domów i osób*, Warsaw 1988, p. 79-80.

<sup>28</sup> The facility in Oświęcim, under the Venetian inspectorate, was one of the five institutions located in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The list included one institution in Gorizia, two in Trident, one in Trieste and the Polish institution in Oświęcim.

Giovanni Bosco to the public and to present plans for the future. Many of the participants admired the buildings that made up the educational institution, although there were some who criticized the allegedly high standard of living.<sup>29</sup> Addressing these critical voices, the Salesians claimed that it was necessary to prepare the residential spaces and facilities in which the educational process of Polish youth was to take place.<sup>30</sup> It can therefore be concluded that good conditions, education and upbringing had a positive effect in preparing the pupils for adult life.

### 3. The social context and conditions of the educational work

The work of the Salesians as teachers and educators was of particular significance in former Polish lands. The first Salesian institutions were established in Galicia, which was characterised by economic backwardness and a poor degree of industrialisation. Thus, proper preparation of youth was necessary, therefore it was believed that development of education should be considered the most important strategy. Education became an antidote for the de-nationalisation of young people during the partitions. It was therefore necessary to spread Polish culture in education, as well as via other institutions. The Salesians were invited by bishops and priests, provincial governors, district parliaments, charity foundations and private individuals.<sup>31</sup> The need for educators dealing with poor and morally vulnerable young people was recognised, since they were gradually becoming an issue in society at the time. Therefore, religious and patriotic education were a significant challenge for educators, because during the partitions of Poland these aspects were not taken care of.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. ŻUREK, W., *Salezjańskie szkolnictwo ponadpodstawowe w Polsce 1900-1963*, p. 33; Uroczyste poświęcenie inauguracyjne Pierwszego na ziemi Polskiej Zakładu Salezjańskiego w Oświęcimiu, *Wiadomości Salezjańskie*, 5 (1901) (12), p. 253-258.

<sup>30</sup> The newly constructed building of the Salesian institution had three floors. On the ground floor there were: kitchen, pantry, refectories for students and separate ones for their superiors, workshops and bathrooms. On the first floor there were: a post office, a library, a chancellery of the director and prefect, a conservatory, a recreation room, as well as a large classroom for students called "the study". The second floor was occupied by guest rooms, as well as apartments for teachers and superiors. In the attic there were washrooms and bedrooms for boys. Uroczyste poświęcenie inauguracyjne Pierwszego na ziemi Polskiej Zakładu Salezjańskiego w Oświęcimiu, *Wiadomości Salezjańskie*, 6(1902) (1), p. 9-12.

<sup>31</sup> Among the clergy involved in the Salesians' arrival in Poland, we can mention those whose institutions operate to this day and still serve a role of educational facilities. They include: Fr. Andrzej Knyez who worked in Oświęcim, Fr. Jan Bożek in Kielce, Fr. Franciszek Szczygłowski in Kielce and Aleksandrów Kujawski, fr. Witold Sarosiek in Różanystok, Fr. Eugeniusz Gruberski in Czerwińsk, where a Salesian novitiate was established later on and still functions to this day. The Salesians were also invited to Kutno-Woźniaków by Fr. Michał Woźniak, while Fr. Karol Lubianiec prepared them a place to stay in Vilnius. Regarding foundations, the most famous of all was the Foundation of Prince Aleksander Lubomirski in Krakow, the Fr. Siemiec Foundation at Lipowa 14 in Warsaw, the Foundation of Baron de Lenceval at Litewska 14 in Łódź, the Abrachamowicz Foundation in Lviv and the St Joseph Home in Przemyśl, ran by the Care for the Youth Association. Cf. STYRNA, S., "Zgromadzenie Salezjańskie w Polsce w poszukiwaniu form odpowiedzi na potrzeby wychowawcze i duszpasterskie w latach 1898-1974", [in:] *75 lat działalności Salezjanów w Polsce*, p. 33.

In many cases educational institutions were established in old and neglected monasteries adapted to become educational institutions.<sup>32</sup> In a number of cases, the already existing buildings were taken, even though they needed to be renovated and adapted to educational activities.<sup>33</sup> There were also new facilities, which were constructed from the very beginning as educational institutions, offering a very high level of education and upbringing.<sup>34</sup> The new institutions brought much joy to educators and young people, but the Salesian Congregation was forced to cover the high costs and repay their long-term debts. Despite the economic problems, the commitment to educational work with young people in need resulted in a great deal of trust in the Salesians, who were not afraid of difficulties of a material nature.

#### 4. Teacher-educator and forms of their work

The Salesians began their educational work by setting up craft and vocational schools. This decision was based on the need for skilled workers in society.<sup>35</sup> Professional education in Poland did not have any extensive traditions, therefore it was necessary to lay a solid foundation and develop it properly. The Salesians therefore sought to ensure that the established institutions were under national laws, which made it possible for the students to continue their education at higher education institutions or using other venues. By 1939, nine schools had been established, teaching various fields of study and branches of industry, including carpentry, mechanical engineering, sewing, shoemaking, gardening and agriculture. There were also some special fields, including organ music, graphic design, energetics, construction and weaving. Among the most noteworthy examples are the Mechanical Middle School and Carpentry School in Oświęcim, the Graphic Middle School with Experimental Graphic Workshop in Warsaw, the Mechanical Middle School and Mechanical School in Łódź, as well as an organist school in Przemyśl.

Kazimierz Szczerba notes that in addition to teachers and instructors, vocational education needed workshops and specialised machinery. That is why in 1921, at the congress of Salesian directors, a decision was made to establish vocational schools with one or two crafts courses. Such a decision was motivated by better organisation of workshops and apprenticeships, the instructors and leaders of which were usually coadjutors.<sup>36</sup> The Salesian priests, on the other hand, taught general subjects, including in middle schools and high

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<sup>32</sup> There were nine monasteries taken over by the Salesians. Among them, the most noteworthy are those that exist to this day: Czerwiński, Lutomiersk, Łąd, Różanystok, Oświęcim, Lublin and Poznań.

<sup>33</sup> These institutions include the houses in: Aleksandrów Kujawski, Warsaw (two houses), Przemyśl, Kielce, Łódź, Vilnius, Antoniewo, Ciechanów, Płock, Lviv, Częstochowa, and Ostrzeszów.

<sup>34</sup> The newly constructed houses were located in: Rumia, Krakow (in Dębniaki), Skawa, Częstochowa (in Stradom), Przemyśl (in Zasanie).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Za Księdzem Bosko Ojcem i Nauczycielem Młodzieży – po stu latach*, ed. M. DZIUBIŃSKI, Krakow 1998, p. 25.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. SZCZERBA, K., *Salezjańskie szkoły zawodowe w Polsce 1901-1939*, Lublin 1973 (mps).

schools.<sup>37</sup> Lay teachers were sometimes invited to assist the Salesians in educational work, which resulted in the development of their charisma. Only the best-prepared teachers were selected for the Salesian schools, which is confirmed by parents and students claiming that the schools offered a high level of education – both scholarly and professional.

In the period discussed in this paper, another form of educational work were minor seminaries, in which teachers educated young men who wanted to join the Salesian ranks in the future. Five such institutions were established until World War II. Some of these institutions, including the one in Daszawa and Łąd were intended for older youth. In minor seminars, the role of educators and teachers was very important because the future staff of Salesian schools was formed there.

Boarding houses were another form of educational institutions.<sup>38</sup> They were established for young people living far from Salesian institutions, they were also places where the Salesians did the biggest amount of work. By 1939, sixteen such institutions had been established, each with about 100-120 pupils.<sup>39</sup> Teachers in boarding houses educated young people in accordance with educational programmes focused on preparing students for teaching and participation in the so-called “hobby groups” aimed to help develop their passion for theatre, music, sport, volunteer work, scouting, etc.

The Salesians also worked in educational institutions for children and young people who were orphaned, homeless or deprived of adequate living conditions in family homes. Working with these students was one of the most difficult tasks, mostly due to age differences, poor intellectual abilities and educational neglect. Such institutions also offered classes for adults who needed to complete their education. For example, in Różanystok, regular reading and writing courses were taught in order to eradicate illiteracy. Libraries that helped both teachers and students to better prepare their teaching activities were a great support in the entire educational process. Thus, Polish teachers and librarians, who promoted patriotism, literature and culture of language, played an important role in such situations. The work of this type was invaluable for the Polish society, which has been divided under partitions for so many years. Additionally, teachers actively worked in evening and extramural schools, where they taught those who had to interrupt their education due to war or the ban issued by the partitioning forces.

The educational process was also conducted in places called oratories, where young people could spend their free time. This activity was intended in particular for children and young people from the poorer strata of the society.<sup>40</sup> Thanks to the proper understanding

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Za Księdzem Bosko Ojcem i Nauczycielem Młodzieży – po stu latach*, p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup> For example: there were 101 students in Kielce, in Warsaw in 1931 there were 181 students, while in Łódź there were 100 pupils.

<sup>40</sup> Father Giovanni Bosco’s oratory is discussed in an extensive publication by Prof. Jose Manuel Prellezo, presenting Bosco’s educational work in Turin’s Valdocco district. Cf. PRELLEZO, J.M., *Sistema educativo ed esperienza oratoriana di Don Bosco*, Turin 2000. Another publication on this issue is *Wspomnienia Oratorium* by Fr. Giovanni Bosco. This publication was also released in the Polish language, written by Fr. Teresio Bosco. Cf. BOSCO, G., *Wspomnienia Oratorium*, Warsaw 2002. However, the most convincing version of the mem-

of the students' needs, teachers tried to help them to the best of their abilities. That is why it can be said that in Poland, oratories were complementary to schools, boarding homes, parishes and educational institutions.<sup>41</sup>

Parishes were institutions that brought together all the educational activities of the Salesians. Youth ministries, schools and educational institutions were set up in parishes, which became a part of the young people's integration. Parishes focused on catechetical, theological, anthropological and artistic education, often using laboratory methods in study groups, such as altar boys, scouts, athletic groups, choirs, musicians, as well as music and theatre groups.

It is also worth taking a closer look at the statistical data that may confirm the development of the Salesians' educational institutions. The following years have been taken into account in these considerations: 1914, 1933 and 1939.

Forms of Salesian activity in 1914-1939

	Year		
	1914	1933	1939
Number of Salesians	159	500	645
Number of institutions	4	32	46
<b>Salesian educational work:</b>			
Vocational schools	3	8	9
General middle schools	1	5	5
Minor Seminaries	1	4	5
Dormitories	3	15	16
Educational institutions	1	6	11
Oratories	2	11	13
Formation houses	2	3	3
Parishes	1	10	11

Source: STYRNA, S., "Zgromadzenie Salezjańskie w Polsce w poszukiwaniu form odpowiedzi na potrzeby wychowawcze i duszpasterskie w latach 1898-1974", [in:] *75 lat działalności Salezjanów w Polsce*, Łódź-Krakow 1974, p. 17. The following extensive works were also analysed: KRAWIEC, J., *Powstanie Towarzystwa Św. Franciszka Salezego oraz jego organizacja i działalność na ziemiach Polskich*, Krakow 2004. ŚWIDA, A., *Towarzystwo Salezjańskie. Rys historyczny*, Krakow 1984.

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ories from the oratory is the original one, written by Fr. Giovanni Bosco himself, with added critical content. BOSCO, G., *Memorie dell'oratorio di s. Francesco di Sales dal 1815 al 1855*, Rome 1991.

<sup>41</sup> In Italy, almost every single one Salesian institution included oratories with their own structures, i.e. head, teachers, volunteers and educators taking care of youth. The author of this paper worked in several oratories, including Beato Pier Giorgio Frassati Oratory in Turin, Beato Bernardo di Baden Oratory in Moncalieri, St. Giovanni Bosco Oratory in Vallecrosia, Fr. Bosco Oratory in Figline Valdarno, Oratory in Monterotondo near Rome, Salesian Oratory in Arezzo and Genoa. The author is also acquainted with oratories in Florence, Piza, La Spezia, Alassio, Varazze and Savona. The stays at these institutions resulted in gathering experiences and reports from the teachers working there.

The presented data shows that educational activities of the Salesians from 1914 to 1939 were on the rise in all possible sectors. It can be stipulated that if it was not for the outbreak of World War II, their numbers could continue to grow with similar dynamics, since there were many indications that the lay teachers and the Salesians would be able to successfully face the educational challenges in Poland.

The analysis of the Salesian educational activities in the first three decades of the 20th century makes it possible to state that the teachers became “symbols” of upbringing in local communities. Regardless of where they worked, their activities were always primarily focused on children and youth. Therefore, from the above data we can conclude that the Salesian educational activities in Poland until World War II were developing according to Fr. Giovanni Bosco’s thought, since wanted the educational efforts to serve the well-being of the young people and wished for the Salesians to continue his educational legacy, employing his Preventive Education System.

## 5. Educational and didactic methods

The educational method of “Polish Salesians” working at schools and other educational institutions did not differ fundamentally from the original principles developed by Fr. Giovanni Bosco. The Saint of Turin was a model of an outstanding teacher of youth. Among the teachers, we find only a handful of theoreticians who devoted themselves fully to scholarly work, as teachers were mostly practitioners. Their work was directed towards young people in need of appropriate Christian and civic education, as well as towards creating a good atmosphere in family and school life. Educational goals were achieved thanks to the good rapport between teachers and their students. Among the most important tasks faced by teachers were providing adequate education and upbringing of young people. The education process has sought to apply appropriate methods and teaching aids. Classes were designed to motivate students to study and motivate their interest. Thanks to the systematic work of teachers and educators, students had a good intellectual preparation and a better start in adult life. Thanks to using work as an educational factor, they were taught respect for human beings, nature and everything they had. This is confirmed by a study carried out in Łódź, which demonstrated that the graduates of Salesian schools were very eagerly hired after graduating from school. The main arguments for this were their honesty, professional competence and quality of education.<sup>42</sup> Students emphasized that the teachers were demanding, but they all exhibited their love of teaching that allowed students to have freedom, feel joy, practice sports and gymnastics, music, singing, and theatre, as well as go on excursions that allowed them to spend a their time in a pleasant way.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Oral accounts of former students of the Mechanical Middle School and the Mechanical School in Łódź, who mainly emphasised the openness of teachers and educators of these schools and good preparation of apprenticeship supervisors.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. BOSCO, G., *Sistema preventivo nella educazione della gioventù*, [in:] BOSCO, G., *Scritti pedagogici e spirituali*, eds. J. BORREGO, P. BRAIDO, A. FERREIRE DA SILVA, F. MOTTO, J.M. PRELLEZZO, Rome 1987, p. 165-174.

The educational work also focused on the development of religiousness through practising daily devotion in the form of common prayers or the Eucharist for the willing. The religious and intellectual aspects introduced a balance between diligence and zeal in the daily life of the students. Thanks to religion, teachers shaped students' attitude of a lasting desire to live in friendship with God. Studying the "apostolic" work of the teachers, Francis Desramaut claimed that religion in upbringing means above all the commitment of the student to the daily Christian life, thus improving the well-being of the community.<sup>44</sup> Teachers made their students sensitive to the virtues: love of their neighbours, diligence, honesty, obedience and good manners. Another educational factor was the development of students' intellect, which was combined with appropriate education that translated into social welfare built by honest citizens and good Christians. One should also mention the significant importance of religion in Salesian education.

In line with Giovanni Bosco's principles, teachers did their best not to apply penalties, but rather tried to focus on the good as an attribute of every student. Therefore, in the educational and didactic process teachers tried to demonstrate selfless love for young people, spontaneous enthusiasm, educational dedication, joy and competence at work. Another important aspect was a permanent and dynamic presence of the teachers among young people in order to get to know them and their development process. In line with the principles of the Preventive System, teachers used the so-called "educational triad" of reason, religion and love. This triad is a syncretism of values and strategies offered to the students in the process of their education.<sup>45</sup> Like Fr. Bosco, teachers employed various strategies in order to get to the students. Among them we can distinguish spontaneous conversations, as well as observation during classes and leisure time. It is also worth noting that teachers learned the most about the character and personality of their students during team games on the pitch. This method was commonly referred to as "playing field pedagogy", when the teacher could observe what they would never notice during the class.

## Conclusions

From the reflections on teachers and their work from the opening of the first Salesian schools in 1898 to the outbreak of World War II, it can be seen that their daily pedagogical work was combined with the formation of their intellect, character and religious life. Many examples taken from the history of Salesian institutions show that teachers' activities have had good educational results during the Partitions of Poland, World War I and during 20 years of Interbellum. The social context in which Poles lived called for bringing up the culture of the Polish society. These activities involved Salesian priests and co-

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. DESRAMAUT, F., *Il pensiero missionario di Don Bosco. Dagli scritti e discorsi del 1870-1855*, [in:] *Missioni salesiane 1875-1975*, Studi in occasione del Centenario, (=Pubblicazioni del CSSMS, Sudi e ricerche, 3), P. SCOTTI (ed.), Rome 1977, p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Archiwum Inspektoriate Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego w Krakowie, B, 2383 Oświęcim, Historia Zakładu 1911-1918; BRAIDO, P., *L'esperienza pedagogica di don Bosco*, Rome 1988, p. 118-122.

adjutors, as well as laypeople. The necessity of education and upbringing allowed to open schools, as well as other institutions, such as dormitories, educational institutions, oratories and parishes. However, the Salesians' work always focused on children and youth. In education, the teachers lived and worked by the "educational triad", comprised of reason, love and religion stemming from the Preventive System developed by St. Giovanni Bosco. It is precisely this "triad" that became a syncretism of values and strategies proposed to the students in their educational process.

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