

**REVIEW. E. KULA, A. MASSALSKI. COUNCIL OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION IN THE KINGDOM OF POLAND BETWEEN 1845–1850**

E. Kula, A. Massalski (red.) *Council of Public Education in the Kingdom of Poland between 1845–1850. Meetings minutes*, vol. 1 time period 1845–1846, p. 558, Łódź – Kielce 2014, vol. 2 time period 1848–1850, p. 570, Łódź – Kielce 2015, Marron Publishing.

Council of Public Education in the Kingdom of Poland between 1845–1850. Meetings minutes is a substantial work containing source material highly relevant to researchers of the history of the education system in the Kingdom of Poland. The authors of the paper are Ewa Kula and Adam Massalski of Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce. Within the scope of a project founded by National Science Centre, Kielce scholars researched and developed a significant part of the documentation of the Council of Public Education which is located in the collections of the Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg. In the review's introduction, the authors discussed the role, composition and competences of the Council of Public Education. This part also includes characteristics of the resource material located in St. Petersburg as well as a summary of the methodology used selecting bits for print. Finally, herein there is an analysis of the papers contents.

Published protocols include multiple threads. The main subject of the minutes are cases brought by the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland, school principals, as well as private individuals, such as teachers and students' parents. There are also numerous sections related to such issues as: human resources' management, assigning particular posts in schools, pedagogues' transfers, teachers trainings and obtaining permissions to work, granting leave as well as rewarding and punishing the staff. Thus, readers are provided with rich historical information regarding existence of many schools in different localizations of the Kingdom. They may also learn of staff turnover in these institutions, because the protocols contain thousands of names of teachers assigned to specific schools. In the minutes

we also find information on the employment of educational administration, allocation of pensions, annuities and allowances for teachers and their families. What is more, there is some data on high school or pre-college students identified by their surname. The scope of these information bits includes: decisions about one's transfer or expulsion from school, consents to reduce tuition fees paid by parents as well as awarding scholarships established upon money coming from foundation fees and paid from the public purse.

The council would often make decisions on schools equipment and furnishing academic offices. Due to the centralized decision-making system which was functioning in Tsarist Russia, the protocols provide us not only with details on important, statewide, decisions concerning such issues as developing schools infrastructure including founding new facilities, reconstructing old buildings etc. We also learn about provisions concerning purchasing books and magazines for some particular schools' libraries, acquiring teaching aids or conducting minor maintenance and cleaning works. An inquisitive researcher shall find an abundance of invaluable information, previously not known in the academic circles, and related to functioning of schools, their equipment and maintenance. Furthermore, the minutes contain lists of names of traders and craftsmen from various industries (construction, transportation, carpentry and others) as well as merchants and suppliers of various products for schools, which are an unusually interesting research material. Aforementioned lists may serve to illustrate and document the level of spending on education as much as they may also become an invaluable contribution, among others, to studies on the economic life of the era, e.g. the price levels or nature of the craft services.

The texts of the protocols have been published in the original language that is in Russian. Numerous mistakes and formal errors present in the source material have been meticulously corrected and explained by E. Kula and A. Massalski. Similarly, the authors have expanded and clarified abbreviations often used by the clerks of the period in question. Given the fact that the publication includes 2986 pages of the original manuscript, we cannot deny what tremendous work has been

done in preparing these papers. Undoubtedly, this shall provide future researchers interested in the topic with a much more accessible data. The results of further research by E. Kula and A. Massalski are contained in several thousand of footnotes of explanations on the published protocols. These are primarily biographical notes on people appearing in the minutes (teachers, students from various types of schools, officials, authors, booksellers, publishers) as well as bits of information referring to the many schools functioning in the Kingdom of Poland. However, there are also annotations of different nature, like these describing the socio-political, cultural and scientific realities of the era. Both this and explanations on several archaic linguistic concepts can be very useful especially for the younger generation of researchers. Elaborating the subject matter, the authors completed a comprehensive bibliography, containing previously released source publications, including works of Karol Poznański and A. Massalski, literary bibliographies, historical atlases, a significant number of detailed studies and monographs, as well as a number of publications from the nineteenth-century documenting the social and political life in said period in the Kingdom of Poland.

In addition to the source text with footnotes, reviewed publication includes an extensive index of names (approx. 4,500 items) and an index of places (approx. 1,200 items), which can become a useful research tool for historians studying biographies of teachers and education workers in the Kingdom of Poland, as well as for academics who would endeavor to fathom distribution and functioning of schools in the Kingdom.

The publication was made with great editorial care. Hence, the published source text marks diligently the original pagination. What is more, numbering of pages of the source is also included. Additionally, the protocols preserve dates compatible with the Julian calendar used in the Russian Empire, only to provide in brackets a corresponding date accordingly to the Gregorian calendar. For the ease of use of the material covering sessions' minutes from several years of work of the Council, authors have created a headline containing dates of the next meeting.

Apart from this, there is a table of contents in Polish. Minutes of the Council of Public Education is a scientific publication which undoubtedly will become one of the canonical works on the history of education in the nineteenth century. The wealth of material presented therein elevates the protocols to the role of a testimony of the era; the papers manage to capture the uniqueness, multiculturalism, problems of everyday life, in a vivid image of the society of the mid-nineteenth century.

Thanks to thorough and diligent work of the authors, prof. A. Massalski and prof. E. Kula, the meticulous and rich source material of the minutes permanently enters the canon of source editions.