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Richard Wroczyński (1909–1987) – Life and Work

Ryszard Wroczyński (1909–1987) – życie i dzieło

STRESZCZENIE: W artykule przedstawiono główne drogi życia i twórczości naukowej oraz pracy dydaktycznej Ryszarda Wroczyńskiego (1909–1987) – pedagoga i historyka oświaty i myśli pedagogicznej, jednego z głównych twórców polskiej pedagogiki społecznej. W latach 1955–1979 Wroczyński był profesorem Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego oraz Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie. Kontynuował i twórczo rozwijał koncepcję pedagogiki społecznej Heleny Radlińskiej. Główne obszary zainteresowań badawczych Wroczyńskiego dotyczyły dziejów, teorii oraz metodologii pedagogiki społecznej. Dostrzegając i analizując wychowawcze funkcje wpływów środowiska, społeczeństwa oraz kultury, zbudował koncepcję pedagogiki środowiskowej oraz wychowania przedszkolnego, w której pierwszoplanową rolę inicjatora i koordynatora działań wychowawczo-opiekuńczych miała odgrywać szkoła (szkoła środowiskowa). Podkreślał i wprowadzał w życie konieczność kształcenia pedagogów na poziomie uniwersyteckim. Główne dzieła Wroczyńskiego: *Organizowanie środowiska wychowawczego* (współred. Tadeusz Wujek, 1967), *Metodologia pedagogiki społecznej* (współred. Tadeusz Pilch, 1974), *Pedagogika społeczna* (1974, 1976, 1979, 1985), *Powszechne dzieje wychowania fizycznego i sportu* (1979, 1985), *Dzieje oświaty polskiej 1975–1945* (1980, 1987, 1996), *Dzieje oświaty polskiej do roku 1795* (1983, 1987, 1996). Wroczyński wychował wielu uczniów, którzy kontynuują i rozwijają jego dzieło.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Ryszard Wroczyński, Uniwersytet Warszawski, pedagogika społeczna, pedagogika środowiskowa, pedagogika pozaszkolna.

ABSTRACT: The article presents the main paths of life and work of the scientific and educational work of Richard Wroczyński (1909–1987) – pedagogue and historian of education and educational thought, one of the main founders of Polish social pedagogy. Between 1955 and 1979 Wroczyński was a professor at the Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw. In the period of 1957–1979 he led the Department of Social Pedagogy at the University of Warsaw. He continued and creatively developed concepts of social pedagogy of Helena Radlińska. The main areas of his research interests were: history, theory and methodology of social

pedagogy. Observing and analyzing the educational functions of communal, societal and cultural influences he built the concept of social environment education and education outside school, in which school was supposed to play, the leading role of the initiator and coordinator of education and care (concept of community school). He stressed and put into practice the necessity to train teachers at university level. Major works of Richard Wroczyński: *Organizing educational environment* (co-editor Tadeusz Wujek, 1967), *Methodology of social pedagogy* (co-editor Tadeusz Pilch, 1974), *Social pedagogy* (1974, 1976, 1979, 1985); *Contemporary history of physical education and sport* (1979, 1985), *History of Polish education from 1975 to 1945* (1980, 1987, 1996), *History of Polish education until 1795* (1983, 1987, 1996). Wroczyński raised many students who continue and develop his work.

KEYWORDS: Richard Wroczyński, University of Warsaw, social pedagogy, social environment education, outside school education.

Professor Ryszard Wroczyński belongs to those Warsaw University scholars that not only tied their scientific life to its future, but also shaped the didactic practice, curriculum and organization of the university. In 1953, as an Associate Professor, Ryszard Wroczyński actively participated in the organization of the university's Faculty of Education. It was his inspiration which shaped the program such that the Faculty not only trained teachers, but also humanists wishing to be involved in the work of foster care, social rehabilitation, recreation, and with adult education specialists and social life animators. As a result, the Faculty of Education became the template for the modern education of teachers, and other university teacher education faculties soon followed in its wake. The professor was a founder, in 1957, of the Department of Social Pedagogy; the second such unit of the discipline in the history of Polish pedagogy, following the one founded by Helena Radlińska in 1949 at the University of Łódź, which had closed by 1953, only to be reactivated in 1962. For five years, therefore, the Department in Warsaw was alone in bravely defending the discipline in Poland against predations that sought its liquidation as a discipline of bourgeois-Christian roots (sic). The Professor was one of a group of three main developers of social pedagogy in Poland. The group consisted of Professor Helena Radlińska and two of her students: Alexander Kamiński and Ryszard Wroczyńskiego himself.

It is difficult to assess which of the works of the Professor's busy life was, or is, of the utmost significance. One may ask "Isn't this role played by the first fully systematic handbook of social pedagogy released by R. Wroczyńskiego in 1966?" The same can be said of his pioneering monographs; one devoted to the emerging concept of lifelong learning – "Permanent Education" (1973), and the second born of the Professor's personal investigative passion – *A world history of physical education and sport* (1979). No less extraordinary was his

28 year editorship of the quarterly “Historical and Educational Review”, providing an extremely rich “archive” of the history of Polish education system, one which came about organically, on a local level, through the efforts of educators, teachers, and social activists. The “Historical and Educational Review” stands as a monument to the work of organic social activists and is an invaluable source of knowledge concerning the history of Polish culture. As was emphasized by his co-workers, his editorship was perfectionist and innovative. Perhaps the most important achievement was indeed the Department of Social Pedagogy at Warsaw University’s Faculty of Education. After all, it became a centre for creative work and the birthplace of important scientific works and social initiatives from which countless graduates of social pedagogy emerged that went on to work in educational, cultural and social service facilities throughout the country.

I

Ryszard Wroczyński was born in Białystok on 29 March, 1909. It was there that he spent his youth and underwent primary and secondary education, taking his final exams in 1928 at the King Sigismund Augustus Secondary State School. For his further studies he went to distant Krakow where, in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, he studied Polish philology, philosophy and pedagogy. In 1933, he gains a master’s degree in philosophy and returns to Białystok, where he takes a teaching job, having also completed a year’s study in education at the Jagiellonian University. The fiveyear stay in Krakow leaves an indelible imprint on R. Wroczyński’s memory which is both scientific as well as “social”.

During his studies in Krakow he meets eminent representatives of Polish science, including Zygmunt Mysłakowski. A big impression is made on him at the time by an educational movement active in this part of Malopolska. Its instigators belonged to an influential social intelligentsia, and cooperating with them was his future “teacher” Helena Radlińska.

In Białystok he takes up a teaching career, firstly at a vocational higher education school and later at a technical secondary school. In 1936 he moves to Brest, on the river Bug, where he works at a railway company school and later at the R. Traugutta secondary school. In addition to this, he becomes adult education instructor for the region. This function permanently directs Wroczyński’s interest to adult education, with which he becomes involved in many ways throughout the remainder of his academic career, and devotes his important life works to it: *Educational Work* (1965), and the two-volume

History of Polish education (1980–1983). During this time he cooperates with the Warsaw Adult Education Institute. This multi-faceted professional involvement also results in publications on education. His comments, observations, and projects are published in the professional press; among others, in “Post-school education” (“Oświata Pozaszkolna”), “School-club evenings” (“Wieczory Świetlicowe”).

A testimony to his creative independence is his doctorate obtained in 1938 at the Jagiellonian University, while simultaneously working in the borderlands in eastern Poland, with a thesis entitled: “The Weekly Review as the program of Warsaw positivism”; the typescript of this dissertation went up in flames during the German invasion of Russia in 1941.

The time of war and occupation are a specific period. First, in 1939–1941, Wroczyński works at a school in Grodno. Then, in 1942, he moves to Białystok and engages in the underground movement in providing education. He becomes one of the four members of the Regional Commission for Education and Culture, which at the time organizationally answered to the Department of Education and Culture of the Government in Exile. R. Wroczyński is acting head of the Department of Vocational Schools and of Adult Education.

Straight after the war, still in the 1944, he returns to teaching and becomes head of the High school and Secondary School for Adults in Białystok. Suddenly, however, in 1945 he moves to Warsaw and takes a job at the People’s Institute of Education and Culture as head of the Department of Adult Education. After the organizational changes in the Institute, which at the time were quick and radical, he briefly works as a counselor in the Department of Science of the Ministry of Education in 1947, and in that same year takes classes commissioned at the University of Warsaw. In 1948, he becomes an assistant at the Pedagogy and Education Organization Department of Social-Philosophy. Here begins the longest adventure of his professional life – scientific work.

He gets academically involved with Professor H. Radlińska, who organizes the University of Lodz Department of Social Pedagogy. He becomes a volunteer assistant to the Department. There in 1949 he completes his habilitation on the basis of his paper entitled “The educational programs of Positivism in Poland against the background of social and economic life”. After Helena Radlińska is “sent” into retirement by the powers that be in 1949, Wroczyński continues the educational program and MA seminar she conducted, leading many students to the successful completion of their studies. He does this in collaboration with Prof. H. Radlińska, who continues to be involved despite being exempt

from duties'. In 1952 the Chair of Social Pedagogy at the University of Lodz is liquidated.

II

Ryszard Wroczyński permanently devotes his work to the University of Warsaw, where he had previously taught on commission or served in a voluntary capacity. In 1952 he is made an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Philosophy; at the same time he takes on the duties of Vice-dean. Meanwhile, work proceeds on the creation of the Faculty of Education which is completed in 1953. He becomes its first Dean and holds this position until 1958. Later, he will serve another term as Dean of the faculty from 1962–1966; as Vice-dean of the faculty from 1969–1970. Changes in the structure of the Faculty and the establishment of Institutions results in R. Wroczyński becoming the director of the Institute of Education in the Faculty of Psychology and Education from 1971–1975.

In 1957, amidst the 'political thaw' and inspired by the National Congress of Social Educators of 13–14 April 1957, professor Wroczyński organises the Department of Social Pedagogy which he will direct for 22 years until pensioned in 1979. The Department becomes the central point of his scientific concern and of the scientific life of our discipline. After Helena Radlińska's removal from academic work, Richard Wroczyński was the only independent educationist in the country working in the field of social pedagogy. With hindsight, it can be clearly seen how much depended on him at the time. Here are some of the main tasks before him: the introduction of social pedagogy to university education programs, preparing young scientists, the continuation and undertaking of new research, the preparation of academic textbooks. He had to bear the weight of the trust placed in him by H. Radlińska's former students, who were scattered throughout various education and social work centres. He needed also to complete the tasks handed down by the aforementioned National Congress of Social Educators. He was 48 years old at the time.

Ryszard Wroczyński proceeded rapidly and with great dedication with the new aims and tasks. He put scientific research at the top of the list. The fruits of this research were to confirm the purpose and value of the new facility. From the start, the research program drew on the classic enquiries relating to the relationship between the social environment and schooling so that with time it grew to encompass the broader issues of adult education, worker education, school education, and stretched even further to the concept

of the environmental school and the idea of lifelong learning. A separate, important place in the register of tasks was occupied by issues of environmental educational research methodology. Research on traditional pedagogy was also given prominence. Among the latter, a special place is held by a three-volume publication containing the selected writings of H. Radlińska (1961–1963).

The research topics undertaken were clearly aimed in the direction of problems that were socially important and which concerned the life of the whole country. The research was also characterized by robust practical methodology. It was not concerned with submitting to a top-down science policy as recommended by the PRL (Polish People's Republic) or with navigating the narrow rules of scientism, which at the time had a monopoly on scholarship and reigned supreme in contemporary pedagogy. It was a kind of pedagogical "logical positivism", a change in practice from the roots, resulting from sound and pragmatic deeds.

Ryszard Wroczyński's concern for the Department's scientific standards was also a concern for the development of the scientific staff. Under the Professor's direction, 46 people received doctoral degrees in humanities while six people completed their habilitation. This was a huge personal success for the Professor. It is hard to overestimate the importance of this fact for the development of education, especially of social pedagogy. Wroczyński's students include such professors as: Tadeusz Wujek, Helena Izdebska, Jerzy Wołczyk, Maciej Demel, Edmund Trempała, Tadeusz Pilch, Mikołaj Winiarski, Wiesław Theiss, Edward Mazurkiewicz, Kajetan Hędzelek, Barbara Smolińska-Theiss. The words spoken about the Professor by Elizabeth Zawacka, the famous "courier" in the underground Land Army, are most telling: "Professor Wroczyński was very dear to me – I recall: first as an assistant professor the Department of Social Pedagogy under Helena Radlińska in Lodz, when I worked there as a voluntary assistant. Then later, as the head of the doctoral seminar, to which I would travel from Torun and which helped me a lot. Finally, at the UMK (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun) as reviewer of my dissertation; He wrote such a generous review that my work was published by PWN". (Private letter from E. Zawacka to W. Theiss)

Towards the end of his career Professor Ryszard Wroczyński was honored with the title of "Distinguished Teacher". It is our opinion that there are only a few people so aptly characterized by this title. This is not simply because he was a promoter and educator of hundreds of masters of education, or that he promoted very many doctors of humanities, or that more than a dozen senior researchers consider themselves to be his heirs. Primarily, this title reflects his attitude to life and science: a passion for research and a readiness to share

his knowledge in the service of others. To create a community of scholars around the idea of connecting people and spurring them into action – this is the leading *raison d'être* of Polish social pedagogy, one instilled in others by Helena Radlińska and creatively continued to this day by her students and successors, at the forefront of which stood Professor Wroczyński.

III

In Professor Wroczyński's busy life, different strands of interests and activities can be clearly distinguished. The first area of activity was science. He dedicated most of his life to it investing all the energy and effort required of a scholar wanting to attain undisputed mastery in their field. The peculiarity of Professor Wroczyński's scientific endeavours was the fact that he was scientifically active and creative not just in a narrow specialty but extended his interests into a variety of other fields.

The following areas of the Professor's scientific and research creativity should be highlighted:

- a) history of education and pedagogical thought in Poland and abroad;
- b) history of physical education and sport;
- c) the methodology of social pedagogy;
- d) the theoretical basis and practice of environmental education;
- e) the theory and practice of the pedagogy of care;
- f) permanent education, parallel training and adult education;
- g) the teacher and tutor in the school and community.

The Professor left significant work in each of these fields. In some cases, these are pioneering works which do not have any counterparts in the existing literature (see: *Bibliography of the works of Ryszard Wroczyński*, compiled by Wiesław Theiss, Urszula Pavlovsk, Warszawa 2001).

Intertwined through all of Professor Wroczyński's scientific work is the subject of history and his interest in it dates back to his early years of study. Further, both his doctoral thesis and particularly his habilitation thesis are completely devoted to the history of education and pedagogical thought. At the end, the Professor's life is marked by two great works on history: one is the two-volume *History of Polish education*, the second the comprehensive handbook *A world history of physical education and sport* covering ancient times to the present day. His studies into the history of Polish educational institutions and of the fleeting, sometimes one-off, educational initiatives that emerged in organizations and informal local groups, were especially valuable to Poland's culture.

The Professor, despite numerous historical works, of which the history of physical culture is the first and only monograph in Polish literature of such breadth, devoted most of his intellectual effort to the issues of social pedagogy. We consider the Professor's work in this area to have fulfilled the work of Helen Radlińska and Alexander Kaminski, and to have completed the transformation of social pedagogy into an autonomous scientific discipline. Symbolic of this is the collective work that came about on his initiative and under his editorship and that of T. Pilch entitled *Methodology of social pedagogy* (1974). An underlying characteristic of Wroczyński's social pedagogy was the integrative way in which it was understood. The Professor did not break up disciplines into departments or sub-disciplines. The highly diverse subject of social pedagogy was subordinate to the primary aim of shaping the human environment through man's own endeavour, and in the name of man's humanistic ideals. This is the guiding principle of the four editions of the textbook *Social Education* (1974, 1976, 1979, 1985), and it is on this principle that the Professor develops the idea of parallel education theory in *Education outside of school* (1968). It is a development and strengthening of the heroic aspect of social pedagogy in which an individual's conditions and way of life depend on their own commitment and effort. This is the way Helena Radlińska understood the meaning of social pedagogy, the way Aleksander Kamiński developed and practically realized it, and, finally, the way in which Professor Wroczyński formulated the tasks required of environmental education. In the theory of organising the environment he raised the role of the planning and integration of the various elements of the environment surrounding the individual. He rejected the concept of social determinism as a force for determining the course of life and for shaping the conditions in which one lives. The Professor's envisioned a social order in which it was a social norm for the material shape of human activity and the organizational duties of the institutional environment to ensure equitable conditions for the growth of the individual.

A development of these thoughts is the research he devoted to the issue of adult education, and includes one of the first works in Polish literature devoted to lifelong learning. In the book *Education work* (1965), which consists mainly of historical reflections, as in *Permanent education* (1973, 1975), dedicated to education prospects, the Professor strongly expounds the idea of the subordinate role of educational institutional to individual human needs and to the development of the individual. W.M. Grabski, reviewing "«Permanent education» in the paper entitled «Education», promotes these particular aspects as primary in the work: «To the author's credit – he writes

– is the attempt to go beyond the various notions concerning the catastrophic consequences allegedly entailed in the progress of science and education, and the mental effort to create a positive set of proposals for mitigating the consequences of the scientific and technical socio-educational revolutions and the resulting social tensions that paralyze the life aspirations of individuals and their communities»”.

From its inception, social pedagogy sought ways to mitigate the conflicts and threats present in the sphere of interpersonal relationships. It was born out of opposition to the evil and misery that plagued European communities in the second half of the nineteenth century. It seems that the pathology of human relations has now become so distinctive a feature of our times that the search for the means to overcome it becomes a critical need. The world is such that there is an increasing abundance of danger, helplessness and loneliness – the main sources of social disorganization – surging through everyday human life. Professor Wroczyński realised this and, in his own specific and pragmatic manner, understood the role of his discipline in the scheme of mending human relations worldwide and in providing social safeguards. It should, after all, be remembered that this was a time of hostile division in the world, when feelings of fear, threat and uncertainty were common, and restrictions, both material and political, were part of everyday life.

It was not without tribulations that social pedagogy managed to gain a place in the pantheon of academic disciplines. It was brutally attacked by dogmatic Marxism as a science with Christian roots, stemming from a charitable voluntarism movement, and subsequently accused of having a “bourgeois” provenance. *Nota bene*, even today it is difficult to understand the basis of such an accusation. Deliberations concerning the nature of social pedagogy were focused around the choice: “Social pedagogy or socialist pedagogy?” Social pedagogy was attacked by means of scientific discourse for being ambiguous in methodology and as an insufficiently defined subject of study. It defended its scientific position by means of its increasingly precise diagnostic apparatus, the clear research it undertook, and its capacity for interdisciplinary sharing of results by means of concepts common to related disciplines. Social pedagogy was further accused of inserting judgements into its descriptions of reality, and of putting generalization and casuistry on an equal par. According to representatives of social pedagogy, and it has always been their belief, trying to remove values from social teaching always ends tragically, while escaping into the world of generalizations, without individual solutions, makes such a pedagogy only partially successful. This methodological and pragmatic attitude is today reaffirmed by one of the common methods

in research namely research through action. In the social sciences and in humanities, another way of getting to objective and reliable knowledge, which at the same time is free from an axiological context, is yet to be found.

These accusations and disputes hit at the Professor directly; he did not for instance hide his Christian convictions, or that they engaged him intellectually. Among Ryszard Wroczyński's important scientific and educational university accomplishments, making social pedagogy an autonomous discipline, founded on well-established methodological grounds, was a momentous one, one that decided on the status of discipline of pedagogical science, which it holds to this day.

The Professor contributed significantly to the development of the theory of pedagogical care, inspiring collective research on the issues of education and the function of pedagogy in society. In the introduction to the collective volume *Problems of care* (1964) he wrote: "Great is the weight of theory and practice of nurturing care and that is focused around the issues of prevention, compensation and social assistance. It would seem therefore that the most effective barrier against educational problems and moral derailment is the development of the institution for care and education". He saw that teachers had a special role in the organization of society, and instigation of preventive and compensatory measures. Thus, the subject of the teacher-educator was a constant theme of his work, one which he saw would become increasingly legislated for. For example he wrote that the teacher: "will not only implement guidelines and educational programs, but must also develop a model of human personality which takes into account the developmental horizons of our society" (*Pedagogy and social needs*, 1974). These two aforementioned works form collections of papers that were written under the direction of Professor Wroczyński. They are highlighted here in order to show this great and important area of the science professor's engagement, which was to organize research and collaborative work.

For more than twenty years Professor Wroczyński headed the Department of Social Pedagogy at the University of Warsaw (1957–1979). He was head of the Institute of Education and Physical Culture for even longer. First, while at the Scientific Institute of Physical Culture (1953–1971), and then while at the Academy of Physical Education (1958–1979). These are the two major scientific institutions with which a great part of Professor's scientific activity is associated. It was there that a large group of his students were concentrated and where a variety of collective research and other scientific initiatives were organised. The results of this collective organised scientific collaboration of many teams, sometimes working on joint projects, were several collective

publications that were to become very important to the development of social pedagogy. Worth noting here is a series of publications which resulted from an international conference in 1974 devoted to the issues of lifelong learning, as is the long-term cooperation of the Faculty of Education with industry, in particular the automobile factory in Bielsko-Biala. Also deserving mention is the extensive collective work on the methodology of social pedagogy, a work devoted to the pedagogy of care and to education outside of school, to the theory and practice of environmental organizations, to numerous source studies and much more. This integrating activity of the Professor was ahead of its time. Today, we strive for union of theory and practice; we aspire to create interdisciplinary research teams. Whereas R. Wroczyński, by involving the Department with the Bielsko-Biala Car Factory, secured a valuable source of empirical knowledge essential to the proper diagnosis and modelling of everyday reality. Also, by linking the research teams of the University with the Academy of Physical Education, the process of studying phenomena was mutually enriched and supplemented.

We should also mention two quarterlies the Professor edited in this field: “Historical and Educational Review” and “Physical Education and Sport”. Requiring recognition is the fact that in both cases he carried on as editor for a very long time and in both cases with very beneficial results. These quarterlies were extremely valuable in documenting research, collecting historical and current knowledge in the field of history of education, and from educational and recreational initiatives, and all together form a picture of the culture of our times and of past generations. He did not manage to complete his *Lives of the Polish Teachers*’ book project, in which – as he said in “Voice of Teachers” (1986, No. 43) was going to be an outline of “major figures in the history of Polish education and the trade union movement”. The Professor participated in many other editorial teams and committees that organized learning, of which I shall only mention, among the many others, his directorship of the Scientific Council of the History of Education Laboratory and of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Educational Research.

IV

Finally, Professor Richard Wroczyński’s third enormous and very important area of activity was in teaching. The educational achievements of a man can be measured in many different ways. There is no doubt, however, that all the inspirational, nurturing, and controlling influences, along with any other ones that teachers can be said to have on those in their care, are

hard to pin down by empirical judgment and have no objective criteria or indicators. The only measure of this influence is circumstance – how many students admit to an emotional relationship with their teacher, and how many believe important features of their professional careers are due to their teacher. Measuring the Professor's educational merits in this way, it can be clearly discerned that he gathered a large following of students and alumni for whom just being identified with him was enough.

At the University, Professor Wroczyński promoted more than 300 masters' students in just the Department of Social Pedagogy alone. He always took his seminary responsibilities very seriously. He personally read all the theses and, in addition, assigned a mentor from among his assistants to each seminarian. For us it was an excellent lesson in dependability and responsibility. After all, it was he who had to approve our decisions so these needed to be especially balanced and prudent. He was aware that his seminarians would go on to take very responsible positions in various fields and locations. A symbolic manifestation of this awareness and of his relationship with his pupils was his work dedicated to them entitled *Education outside the classroom* (1968).

The Department of Social Education has always been an intensely populated place. It is thronged by the employees of the Department itself, doctorate students, and by colleagues from various institutions and publishing houses. Practically all of the Department staff worked with Professor for many years.

The Professor retired at the time the Faculty was moved to ul. Smyczkowa. He never was to visit the "University led up the garden path" as the move was later described by prof. Bogdan Suchodolski.

A marked characteristic of the scientific and human silhouette of Professor Richard Wroczyński was his emotional presence within the surrounding reality. This quiet, thoughtful man was very warm in personal contact, and a friendly partner, both when inviting us to his house for coffee, as when hearing our "confessions" of our accomplishments. This emotional presence was also expressed in fidelity to moral choices and intellectual orientation. The Professor defended scientific objectivity, but rejected breaking with the principles of humanistic ethics. He also rejected flight into the world of generalizations and the avoidance of individual solutions, and he placed a duty on the discipline to be practiced in the service of man and his environment. I hold, therefore, that the most important intellectual achievement of Professor Ryszard Wroczyński was his vital contribution in ensuring social pedagogy was granted autonomous status while simultaneously strongly intertwined within the axiomatic context, and of great social service.

Ryszard Wroczyński – this social science teacher acted in several roles: as a practitioner and theorist, a teacher and educator, a researcher of “what was” and a designer of “what will be”. He showed his students and colleagues by his own example that hurdles in science can and should be overcome – even the greatest – by working courageously and consistently and ... a lot. He developed a consistent, complete, and fully reasoned concept of social pedagogy. His historic achievement was in accepting and developing the creative heritage of Helena Radlińska, conducting social pedagogy through unfavorable times, and the introduction of this discipline to the ranks of academia as a permanent element of pedagogical education. Today, Social Pedagogy, nurtured at the Study of the Socio-Educational Work of the Free Polish University (1925), developed through the first two learning centers for this discipline, Departments of Social Pedagogy at the University of Lodz and Warsaw, is taught institutionally in twenty-two centers of learning and is the canon of academic education in pedagogy.

Professor Ryszard Wroczyński died in Warsaw on August 23, 1987. He was buried at the Farny cemetery in his home town of Białystok.

Ryszard Wroczyński's most important works

Idee dramatów Aleksandra Świętochowskiego na tle pozytywizmu warszawskiego [The concepts of Alexander Świętochowski's dramas set against the background of Warsaw positivism], “Prace Historyczno-Literackie”, Kraków 1934.

Programy oświatowe Pozytywizmu w Polsce na tle społecznym i gospodarczym [Positivism's education programs in Poland and their social and economic background], Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1949.

Mysł pedagogiczna i programy oświatowe w Królestwie Polskim na przełomie XIX i XX w., [Pedagogical thought and education programs in the Polish Kingdom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century], wyd. 2, PZWS, Warszawa 1963.

Praca oświatowa. Rozwój, systemy, problematyka [Education work. Development, systems, problematics], Nasza Księgarnia, Warszawa 1965.

Pedagogika pozytywizmu warszawskiego [The pedagogy of Warsaw positivism], Ossolineum, Wrocław 1958.

Wprowadzenie do pedagogiki społecznej [An introduction to social pedagogy], PWN, Warszawa 1965.

Wychowanie poza szkołą [Education outside of school], PZWS, Warszawa 1968.

Edukacja permanentna. Problemy. Perspektywy [Permanent education. Problems. Perspectives], PWN, Warszawa 1973, wyd. 2, 1976.

Pedagogika społeczna [Social Pedagogy], PWN, Warszawa 1974, 1976, 1979, 1985.

Powszechne dzieje wychowania fizycznego i sportu [A world history of physical education and sport], Ossolineum, Wrocław 1979, 1985.

Dzieje oświaty polskiej do r. 1795 [History of Education in Poland to 1795], PWN, Warszawa 1983, 1987, 1996.

Dzieje oświaty polskiej 1795–1945 [History of Education in Poland 1795–1945], PWN, Warszawa 1980, 1987, 1996.

Marian Falski i reformy szkolne w Rzeczypospolitej [(Marian Falski and school reform in the Republic), PWN, Warszawa 1988.